

## Batu Caves

Batu Caves is one of Malaysia's most famous tourist destinations especially for the colourful Thaipusam festival. This attracts up to 800,000 devotees and spectators; the highlight is seeing devotees in a trance carry kavadi, a metal frame attached to the body.

Rising almost 100m above the ground, Batu Caves actually consists of three main caves and a few smaller ones. The biggest, referred to as the Temple Cave, has a 100m-high ceiling, and features ornate Hindu shrines. To reach it, visitors have to climb a steep flight of 272 steps.

Below the Temple Cave is the Dark Cave, with its amazing rock formations and a number of animals found nowhere else. Stalactites jutting from the cave's ceiling and stalagmites rising from the floor form intricate formations such as cave curtains, flow stones, cave pearls and scallops which took thousands of years to form. The Malaysian Nature Society organises regular educational and adventure trips to the Dark Caves.

The other main cave is the Art Gallery Cave located at the foot of the steps. Statues and wall paintings depicting Hindu deities and mythology are displayed here. The walk to the entrance is itself quite a pleasant experience through a lake and ponds filled with hundreds of colourful fish.

Batu Caves is also the centre of rock climbing development in Malaysia for the past 10 years. More famous for its role as a religious centre for Hindus in Malaysia as well a prominent tourist attraction in the country, not many people realise that Batu Caves offers more than 160 climbing routes.

The routes are scattered all around the side of Batu Caves, which is made up of limestone hills rising to 150m. These climbing routes are easily accessed as most crags start from ground level. Getting There Batu Caves is located about 13km North of Kuala Lumpur city centre. Take Intrakota bus No 11D from the Central Market annexe or the Cityliner bus No 69 at Jalan Pudu to get to Batu Caves. Taxis are also available anywhere around city.