

Frasassi

The *Gola della Rossa e di Frasassi* national park, or Frasassi in short, is known for its impressive stalactite caves. In summer the caves are a popular day trip. So, you may find them quite crowded although they are mostly visited by Italians. The Frasassi caves were discovered in 1948 (!) by a local farmer. Later on, Italian mountaineers explored the 13 kilometre caves. Five of them were opened for visitors, the biggest of which, the Grotta Grande del Vento, is also the biggest cave in Europe. Above the caves you will find a wonderfully wooded hilly landscape, deeply cut by the Frasassi and Gola cliffs. Hardly ever visited by tourists.

History

Almost 1.5 million years ago, the Frasassi cave complex existed. Sulphur and water in the local soil eroded the hills from the inside. The caves are richly decorated by stalagmites and stalactites growing several millimetres each year. The biggest cave is the Grotta Grande del Vento: 200 metres high, 110 metres wide and 165 metres long. You only realise how big the cave actually is, when the guide points at a 3 metre long stalagmite. At the end of the soccer field size cave begins the rest of the cave complex.

Excursions and potholing trips

You can visit the Frasassi caves in several ways: from a simple group excursion to exciting potholing trips. There are standard tours for anyone who bought tickets next to the parking place and at the Genga station. From there you can take a shuttle to the cave complex and walk a 1.5 kilometre route over wide footpaths and stairs. Potholing trips must be booked at least one week in advance. There are two trips to choose from: the red trip takes 4 hours and bleu one 2,5 hours. *Sopra e Sotto* can help you book.

How to get there

Entrance to the caves starts at Genga, 107 kilometres from *Sopra e Sotto*, via San Severino Marche. It is good 2.5 hour walk through the caves or a 2-hour drive (156 kilometres) if you take the motorway along the coast.