

Caving

Explore Some of Japan's Top Limestone Caves



Okinoerabu Island is very geologically distinct from most other Japanese islands. Most of the island was originally formed by rising coral and is covered by limestone, and it is home to some of Japan's largest limestone caves. On Okinoerabu Island, you can do some light tropical cave exploration or some more involved caving with all the proper gear. A wide range of options are available, from a visit to Shoryudo, which you can do in around 40 minutes in regular clothes and shoes, to proper caving tours lasting 2-5 hours with an instructor and full-on gear.

Okinoerabu Island is home to around 200-300 caves, both big and small, and is known as a mecca for cave lovers. The island's underground caverns are full of breathtaking spectacles, including Oyama Suikyodo, which is over 10 km in length, and Ginsuido, known for its dazzling rimstone pools. There are two ways to enjoy the island's caves. If you're looking for something straightforward, check out Shoryudo, which has been set up to accommodate walk-in visitors. Otherwise, you can try some more intense caving tours.

Shoryudo is a "sightseeing limestone cave" so to speak, fitted with signs, set routes, walkable paths, handrails, and so on. You can visit it without a guide or any special gear. The cave is 3,500 meters long, of which a 600-meter-long section is open to the public. The countless silvery-white stalactites on the ceiling are a rare and beautiful sight, as are the flowstones that cover the walls and are among the biggest in Japan.



Meanwhile, caving involves exploring caves in their natural state while wearing protective clothing and carrying helmets, mounted lights and other equipment. Feel the thrill of navigating underground lakes, climbing over huge boulders and treading carefully along sometimes precarious paths.

Rimstone Cave

A relatively easy course recommended for first-timers who want to see a beautifully illuminated cave. The course covers part of 10-kilometer-long Oyama Suikyodo and enjoys frequent media coverage thanks to its many notable attractions.

Required time: Around 2 hours



Daijado

Limestone cavern located in the most downstream part of Oyama Suikyodo and featuring various dramatic limestone structures. Admire the limestone stalactites and witness nature's dynamic beauty while crawling along narrow spaces and navigating underground waterways.

Required time: Around 2 hours

Suirendo

Huge rimstone pools and extremely narrow holes. This intermediate course takes you around a variety of beautiful natural features, including limestone formations, waterfalls and pools.

Required time: 3 hours

Ginsuido

Okinoerabu Island's king of caves. Spectacular scenery awaits those who brave this advanced course, which takes around 2 hours each way.

Required time: Around 5 hours

Shoryu Cavern

Link (English)



Okinoerabujima Caving Union

Link (English)



The Okinoerabujima Caving Association

Link (Japanese)

