

TRAVELOGUE

In the belly of the Earth

Picture yourself standing in half-darkness amid naturally-forming calcite columns, cascades, stalactites and stalagmites sixteen storeys under the surface of the Earth. It is eerily beautiful down there. The ambience is primitive, and your surroundings feel uncanny, because your mind keeps telling you that all of this had formed over an estimated span of four million years. The limestone formations you see around you are still forming and changing every day.

Luray Caverns, in Virginia, USA, is an active cave system. Located in the lush Shenandoah Valley, to the west of Blue Ridge Mountains in Luray, Virginia, Luray Caverns was discovered in 1878. Today, it is a registered National Natural Landmark (NNL), visited by some 500,000 people annually from all over the U.S. and the world.

Before we decided on visiting this awe-inspiring feat of nature, we had to find out if it would be too cold in February. We found out that the caverns' temperature remains unchanged at all times of the year. It is indeed mysterious down below!

No matter what the outside temperature is, the temperature inside the caverns is a constant 12° Celsius. With high humidity resulting from water constantly seeping through the cave's roof, walls, and floor, the temperature may feel as high as 18°.

In short, one can visit Luray Caverns any day, any season.

This marvel of nature is open to the



public 365 days a year. The cost of entry is \$30 for an adult. Tourists are not allowed to enter the caverns alone; you have to take a group tour led by a guide.

As you walk through the cave, you are left in awe of the geological wonders that have formed over millions of years. Once inside, let your imagination soar, because the limestone formations resemble anything from shawls, draperies, scarves and veils to fried eggs, columns and woolly mammoths!

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

Man continues to conquer what is on, above and below the Earth's surface. You will get

a glimpse of the extent of man's relentless expedition inside these caverns. Today, 141 years after its discovery, one can easily marvel at this cave system using its step-free paved walkways. Indirect lighting installed inside the caverns not only creates an aura of mystery, but also allows visitors to take a better look at its best features.

Dream Lake

It is a crystal-clear pool inside the caverns. The water is so clear that it creates an optical illusion, making stalactites hanging from the cave's roof appear to be stalagmites protruding from the bottom of the pool. The Dream Lake and the mirror-image of stalactites that form in its crystalline water are out of the world!

Fried-eggs

These are two stone formations resembling



fried-eggs, sunny-side up. These formations are not natural, though, but the result of damages to stalagmites caused by Luray

Caverns workers three decades ago. You will be impressed by how much these broken stalagmites bear resemblance to the fried eggs so many of us relish over breakfast every morning!

The Great Stalacpipe Organ

Known as the world's largest musical instrument, when electrically activated, it produces mysteriously beautiful musical tones. These rather unearthly tones are produced when rubber mallets hit thirty-seven different stalactites located across the cave!

Standing 164 feet underground, I felt small and negligible in the face of the massive stalactites that formed over four million years. Luray Caverns is one of the best examples of America's rich geological heritage. On the whole, this is a must-see site if a traveller ever visits the country's East Coast.

Let me wrap up this travelogue by sharing the lines from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous poetry, Kubla Khan, that are etched in stone at the entrance of the caverns.

*"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea."*

By Wara Karim

Photo: Wara Karim

THANK GOD IT'S FRIDAY

BY TANZIRAL DILSHAD
DITAN



EMK BOOK CLUB | BOOKS FOR ENCOURAGEMENT

Date: Tuesday, 3 March, 2020

Time: 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Venue: EMK Center, Midas Center Building (9th Floor) House-5, Road-16, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

EMK Center presents a book club for the book worm in you. For the month of March, the designated book is "Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead" by Sheryl Sandberg. The theme for the event is Books for Encouragement, which has been chosen in accordance to the upcoming International Women's Day 2020.

Two prominent contemporary female Bangladeshi writers will be present to discuss the book with the audience. See you there!

The event is free for all.

JOY BANGABANDHU: PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION BY NASIR ALI MAMUN

Date: Friday, 6 March, 2020 to Friday, 20 March, 2020

Venue: La Galerie, Alliance Francaise

Just after the liberation war in 1971 Nasir Ali Mamun's camera defined portraiture in Bangladesh that eventually ushered in portrait photography in the country. Being 'the poet with the camera', Mamun has taken some of the most iconic portraits

Recitals and Music

Bangladesh has ever seen. His black and white images display a beautiful yet enigmatic and equivocal coalescence of light and shadow.

Mamun took many portraits of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the early seventies and recorded his rare moments from close up. Dedicated to the freedom fighters of Bangladesh, this solo exhibition titled 'Joy Bangabandhu' will showcase previously unpublished and historic photographs of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and will celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of the 'Father of the Nation'.

JOY BANGLA CONCERT 2020

Date: Saturday, 7 March, 2020

Time: 12 PM – 10 PM

Venue: Bangladesh Army Stadium

Young Bangla is back again with the biggest event of the year.

Joy Bangla Concert is being held for the sixth consecutive year on 7th March 2020 at the Bangladesh Army Stadium, Dhaka.

Joy Bangla Concert is organised each year by Young Bangla-CRI on the day of the historic 7th March speech of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The event, staged at the Bangladesh Army stadium, Dhaka, is one of largest musical events in Bangladesh.

This year, there will be performances by popular rock bands, modern rock, pop and folk artists who will cover their own music along with modern rock renditions of patriotic songs broadcast by the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra in 1971.

As this year's concert will be the first mega event of the 100th Birth Anniversary, Mujib Borsho, Young Bangla has arranged for a mix of entertaining and patriotic music from the leading musical bands and solo along with a host of other never before seen attractions.

This year's lineup includes: F Minor, Minar, Avoid Rafa, Shunno, Vikings, Fuad & Friends, Lalon, Arbovirus, Chirkut, Cryptic Fate, and Nemesis.

Free registration: https://ticket.youngbangla.org/?fbclid=IwAR1NZ87sDWNKL18LU3iWAlAJ5QNI6Z-yhK_owqtjL4lxvqdBsUuUm42RnPU

STONE FREE ACOUSTIC SESSIONS III

Date: Saturday, March 7, 2020

Time: 7 PM – 9:30 PM

Venue: Roll Xpress Café, House# 34, Road# 21, Block -B, Banani

After a four year hiatus, Roll Xpress Cafe invites Stone Free to play their eclectic set of classic covers. Stone Free will perform their third rendition of Acoustic Sessions with a setlist covering the music of Dire Straits, Jimi

Hendrix, Bob Dylan, Bob Marley, America, Tracy Chapman, Bruce Springsteen, Simon & Garfunkel, and many others.

Come join our favourite musicians for a relaxed evening with friends in the outdoor courtyard at Roll Xpress Cafe.

Limited seating on first come basis. Entrance: Tk. 800 per person of 18 years and above. Please collect your tickets ASAP from the cafe counter. Call 01720100016 for more information.

CÉLIMÈNE DAUDET PIANO RECITAL

Date: Sunday, March 8

Time: 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, 14/3 Segunbagicha, Dhaka

Accomplished French-Haitian pianist soloist Célimène Daudet has performed at some of the most distinguished venues in the world. Daudet also plays regularly at major festivals and concert halls in France all year round. In 2016 she recorded the first volume of an integral of Beethoven's ten sonatas for piano and violin with the violinist Amanda Flavier, published by NoMadMusic.

Open to all, free entry on a first come first served basis.

For more information on the concert, please visit: www.celimene-daudet.com.