

So, you're going caving for the first time.



Gear

- You may have heard the difference between cavers and spelunkers is that cavers rescue spelunkers.
 - The right gear can make a caver out of a spelunker.



Spelunker



Caver

The basics

- Water, food, two light sources, first aid kit, emergency blanket or trash bag
- Extra batteries to power all of your lights
- Duct tape (because you never know)
- Camera (optional)
- Everything should be waterproof or in a sealed sandwich bag. Extra sandwich bags are also a good idea.



- Boots with good tread
- Wool socks
- Polypropylene underwear
- Helmet with headlight
- Gloves
- Knee and elbow pads

NO:

- **Cotton** will stay wet a long time. Stick with synthetic fabric.
- **Tennis shoes**. You will walk through mud and climb over wet, slippery rocks.
- **Electronic devices** you cannot stand to see damaged by water and crushed on rocks.

Where do I get this stuff?

- The Cleveland Grotto loans gear to new cavers for their first few trips. You just need to provide batteries, food and water.
- Cavers are a frugal lot. By frugal I mean cheap. Wal-Mart and army navy stores can provide most of the equipment.
 - Watch your new caving friends. See what gear works well for them and ask where they bought it.



Wildlife



- No, you will not see any bears.
- Cave dwellers are on the smaller side and include:
 - Cave crickets
 - Bats
 - Fish
- Please remember that we are guests in their home. The mission of the Cleveland Grotto includes conservation and education around all things cave-related.
 - Visually inspect the animals we find. Take pictures and educate your non-caver friends about animals they have never seen.
 - Smaller does not mean less important.

White Nose Syndrome (WNS)

- First identified in New York caves in 2006, WNS is a fungal infection in bats.
- Bats with this white fungus growing on their snouts (get it, white nose?) wake up earlier than normal from hibernation, burn up energy too soon and die.
- At this time, the origins of the fungus, mode of transmission and even if it is responsible for bat mortality are all unknowns.
- Many caves are closed to cavers under penalty of stiff fines. The intention is to prevent the spread of the fungus. In spite of closures, however the fungus continues to spread.

**Take nothing but pictures, Leave nothing but
footprints, Kill nothing but time**

