

Cave Routes

To raise appreciation of the cave's resources and reduce the need for caver's to mark the passages within Bloomington Cave, routes have been marked. Currently, five (5) routes are marked throughout the cave with different colored flagging. These routes wind throughout the cave providing a variety of experiences in a range of lengths.

The marked routes correspond to a route map of the cave. Without the route map, Bloomington's maze of passages may be impossible to understand. However, matching the colored routes shown on the map to the colored and numbered flags inside the cave should allow you to navigate the cave's maze.

White Route

Main Route to bottom of Big Room via the Fanny Flume

The white flagged route leads to the bottom of the Big Room. This route is the most commonly used path through the cave.

The route starts at the South Entrance and goes straight to the Boardwalk where the cave register is found. After leaving the room just below the Boardwalk, the top of the Big Room (White #6) is entered. The high-angle slope drops about 70 ft to 100 ft to the bottom of the cave. After crossing the top of the Big Room, the route is marked going down the safer, but tighter, Fanny Flume (White #8-10), rather than the obvious and heavily used route leading straight down the well-exposed Big Room. To go directly down the Big Room a 100-ft handline or rappel is recommended. If going down the Fanny Flume, a short 50-ft handline and good teamwork is recommended. The White Route ends as it reaches the bottom of the Big Room (White #11).

Green Route

Boy Scout Route - Boardwalk to Lunch Room Junction to North Entrance

This route is the easiest entrance to entrance route. One should have climbing experience and no fear of tight spots.

This green flagged route starts by traversing the Boardwalk continuing straight past the White #3, until the start of the green flagging (Green #20) is reached. Quickly, the most difficult point along this route is reached. The "Slot" (White #19-18) is a tight 10-inch vertical crack that drops about 10 ft to a crawl below. The Slot is easier to navigate going down than up.

The Slot can be easily bypassed by taking the long flat wide crawl (Left of Green #19) then heading down a hidden climb to pop out at the Lunch Room Junction (Green #13).

Continuing along the normal route, another downclimb (Green #17-16) is reached. This climb is a bit exposed and slippery. The climb is easily negotiated by traversing along the ledge in the middle and then down. **Climbing straight down leads to a long reach to a slippery point.** This climb can be bypassed by continuing along the crawl at the top of the climb (Green #19) into the Lunch Room (Green #13).

After the climbdown (Green #16), the Lunch Room can be reached following the flagging by crawling through a small crack (Green #15-14). The flagging in the middle of the room (Green #13) is the junction with the Pink Route (Pink #23) and the Slot's Bypass. There are a few flags to show the way through the vertical crack passage.

The route continues across the room working its way up through the cracks. Follow the flagging carefully for there are lots of tight cracks leading nowhere to be sucked into. After going through a tight 12-inch crack the route leads into a room. From this room the route continues up through a spiraling stoop way (Green #9-6). Crawling along the flat bedrock floor, you should start feeling the cold entrance air coming in. One can continue along this crawl (Green #6-5) all the way to the North Entrance (Green #0); however, the flagged route winds its way following the easiest path.

Pink Route

Boundary Route - Big Room to Outer Limits

This route is the longer entrance to entrance route. The route has lots of crawling and a bit of interesting climbing. This route uses both the White and the Green routes to make the loop so one should be familiar with these two routes before trying this route. This route is the most committing with the highest chance of getting seriously lost.

The pink flagging starts by traversing the flat bottom of the Big Room (White #11) to the north. This passage will quickly turn into a crawl and the pink flagging (Pink #1) will begin. The route will follow a long series of small traverses and climbs. Use caution, since the flagging can be a bit hard to follow through this highly-mazy section of the cave. When successfully followed, you will pop out into the long low Raceway passage (Pink #18-20).

The end of this passage continues up and up. A crack in the floor allows visitors in the Lunch Room to be heard below. From Pink #23 a short-tight 10-inch pitch leads into Lunch Room Junction (Green #13) and the Green Route.

Continuing up following the flagging on the normal route, the Hub (Green #6) is reached and the green route can be followed south to the North Entrance (Green #0).

Orange Route

The Miseries - Lunch Room to Big Room

This route connects the Lunch Room to the bottom of the Big Room. The route has slippery traverses on high-angled slopes with respectable exposure. The odds of slipping are higher than the Big Room, but the results would be a fast out-of-control slide, rather than Big Room's straight-out fall. The route starting near the Lunch Room is very mazy; use caution not to lose the flagged route.

The route starts from Green #16 where the orange flagging leads down the easiest route down into the lower room. The route then zigzags through the room's boulder field and then starts a

steep descent into the cave. The first climb has a handline that other explorers left behind; however, the flagging shows an easier way to chimney down by using the ceiling and the floor to avoid the spacious short drop.

The route continues down with some interesting high pitching passages to follow. Good shoes will show their benefits through here. This type of traversing and climbing continues to keep you in the easier wider passages until a real bottom is reached. At the end of the route, you easily walk into the bottom of the Big Room (White #11.) Follow the white route to the South Entrance (White #0).

Yellow Route

Northern Exposure - Lunch Room to Crystal King Hall

This route goes into the northern section of the cave. It is fairly easy with only a few sections of steep easily-navigated slopes. The route can be reached from the Orange or Green Routes.

Enter the Yellow Route by descending the crack near Green #12 . Once through the crack the passage widens. Follow the flagging down the slope to Yellow #4. This point is where the Yellow Route completes its loop. Follow the flagging down into the Game Room (Yellow #5). This is a nice flat-floored room with nice size passages going off in all directions.

Follow the flagging or take the direct climb down to next room (Yellow #7). After leaving this room, traverse the large sloping passage to a stoopway. Scramble up through the breakdown to the base of a long slope. At the top of the slope (Yellow #14), a horizontal passageway is reached. Staying on this level, the passage is quickly traversed back to Yellow #4.

Once back at Yellow #4, the route can be followed to the intersection of the Orange Route. Follow the easy horizontal route. After an easy squeeze between two boulders, the route runs into the orange flagging (Orange #3 and 4).