

under world

reflect upon guilin's psychedelic cave formations

INNER SANCTUM

Resembling the setting of a Technicolor fantasy film, these craggy rock towers and dripping stalactites are bathed in fluorescent blue – their mirror image in a subterranean pool. Welcome to Guilin's Reed Flute Cave.

Among the most famous sights in this Guangxi province hotspot, Reed Flute is one of a number of show caves open to visitors and is just 5km from the town centre. The intricate formations, spiralling passageways and caverns were formed over millions of years by erosion from water gushing through fissures in the limestone karst mountains. This millennium they've been turned into popular attractions lit in neon hues that tread a careful line between garish and beautiful; in this case, they lean toward the latter.

Also in the vicinity is Crown Cave (about 30km south of Guilin alongside the Li River) and Yangshuo's Silver, Water and Buddha Caves, where you can get down and dirty bathing in a mud pool.

Text and photography by Peter Ellegard

