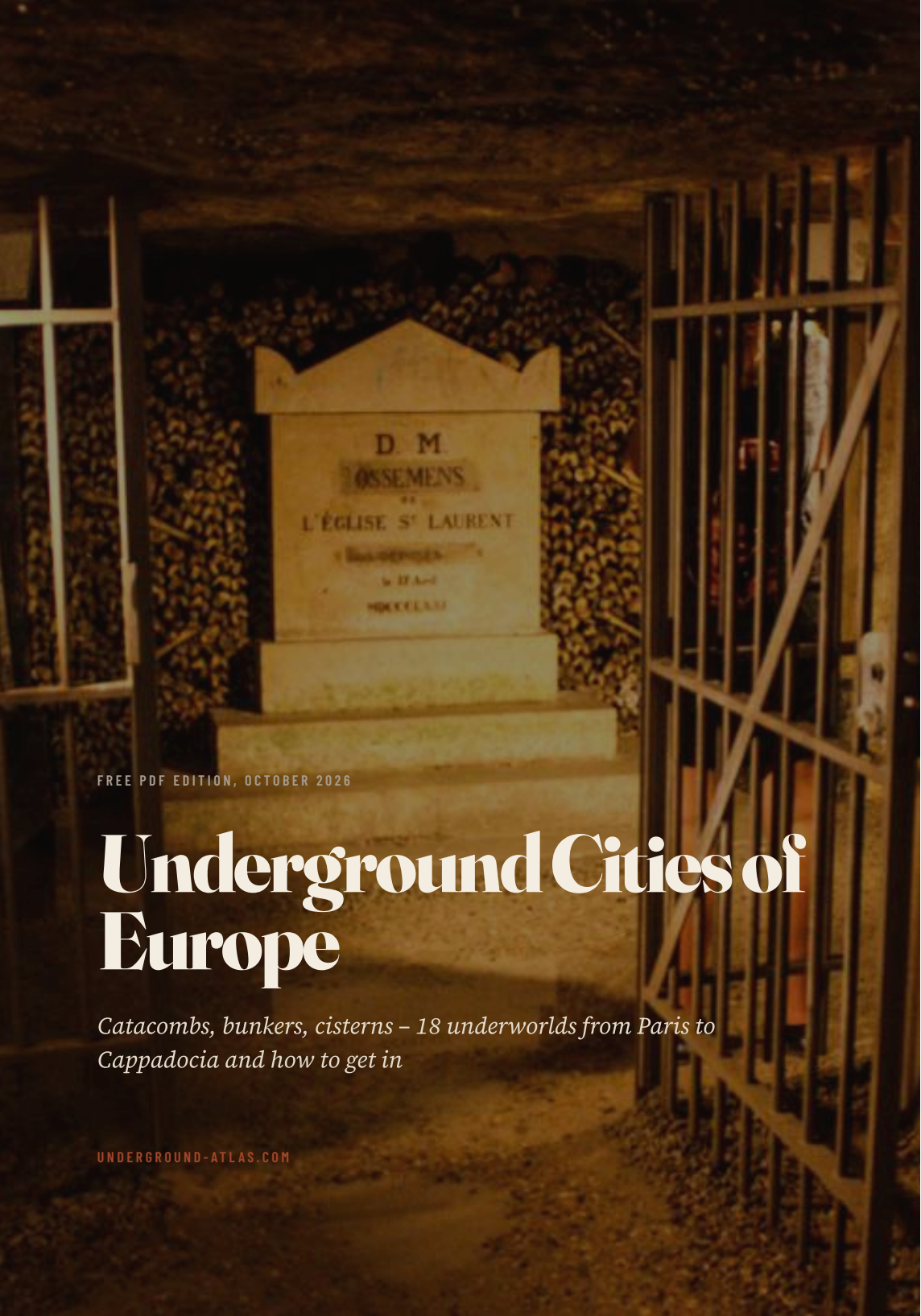




FREE PDF EDITION, OCTOBER 2026

Underground Cities of Europe

Catacombs, bunkers, cisterns – 18 underworlds from Paris to Cappadocia and how to get in

UNDERGROUND-ATLAS.COM

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All information has been checked against sources as of September 2026. Opening hours, prices and booking rules change; current details are on each place's page on underground-atlas.com, linked from every entry in this book.

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A printed edition is available as print on demand.

Cover photo: Shadowgate from Novara, ITALY, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

Contents

Ticket compass	4	10 Prague Underground	62
18 underworlds in Europe	6	11 Pilsen Underground	68
Why go beneath the city?	8	12 Budapest Underground	72
What others get wrong	9	13 Krakow Underground	78
Respect underground	10	Germany	83
France and Britain	11	14 Underground Berlin	84
1 Catacombs of Paris	12	15 Underground Hamburg	90
2 Underground London	16	16 Underground Nuremberg	96
3 Tunnels of Dover	22	Türkiye	101
4 Underground Edinburgh	26	17 Cisterns of Istanbul	102
Italy	31	18 Cappadocia Underground	106
5 Catacombs of Rome	32	Bones, crypts and Capuchins	111
6 Naples Underground	38	Bunkers and the Cold War	112
7 Matera Underground	44	Water beneath the city	113
8 Palermo Underground	50	Places by occasion	114
Central Europe	55	Index	115
9 Underground Vienna	56	About this book	117

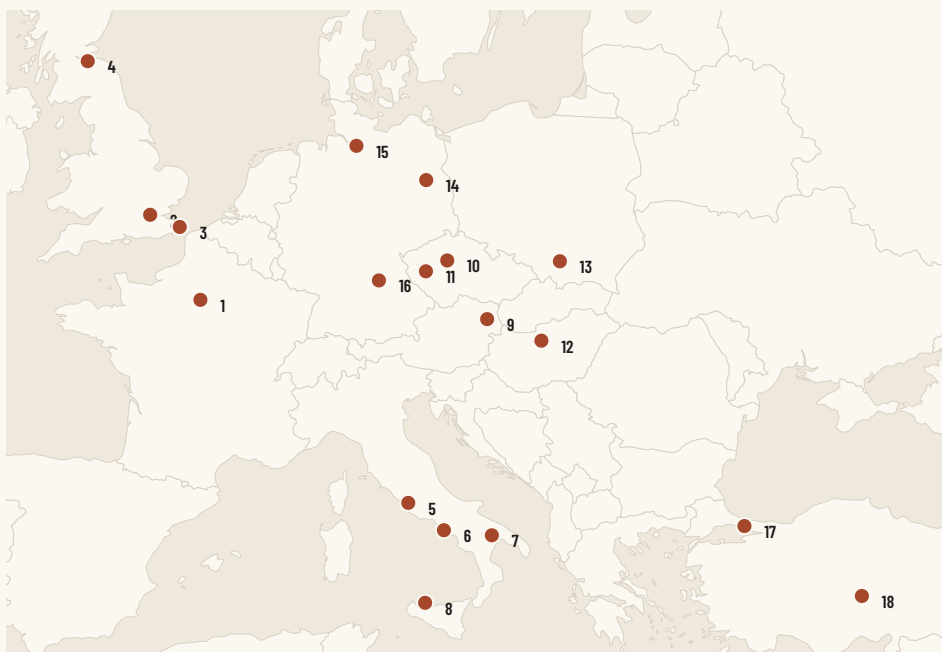
Ticket compass

All 18 places at a glance: what admission costs, whether you must book and where plans fail. Adult prices as of 09/2026. Click a place for current ticket information.

PLACE	ADMISSION	BOOKING	WATCH OUT FOR	CHILDREN	PHOTOS	WHEELCHAIR
1 Paris – Catacombs	€31	required, online	slots open 7 days ahead	accompanied under 14	yes, no tripod	no
2 London	War Rooms £34	timed entry	Hidden London sells out fast	Hidden London 10+	War Rooms yes	War Rooms yes
3 Dover – tunnels	£27 online	15% cheaper online	seasonal opening days	–	yes	no
4 Edinburgh	£28.50	recommended	August and evenings go early	5+	Mary King's: banned	no
5 Rome – Catacombs	€10	San Callisto required	staggered closing days, lunch break	–	mostly banned	no
6 Naples	€15–18	Borbonica required	Sotterranea: up to 90 min queue	Adventure 10+	partly	Borbonica partly
7 Matera	€3	not needed	lunch break 1–3 pm	–	yes	no
8 Palermo	€5	desk only	online resellers not authorised	–	banned	no
9 Vienna	St Stephen's €8	not needed	Michaelergruft: few tours	Third Man Tour 12+	partly	no

PLACE	ADMISSION	BOOKING	WATCH OUT FOR	CHILDREN	PHOTOS	WHEELCHAIR
10 Prague	Town Hall 350 Kč	sign up on site	small groups, 7– 30 places	–	yes	partly
11 Plzeň	250 Kč	recom- mended	max. 20 per tour	3+	yes	no
12 Budapest	Hospital in the Rock €30	Castle cave online only	groups of 25–35, desk 10 min before	hospital 6+	hospital: banned	Szemlő- hegyi only
13 Kraków	45 PLN	timed entry	often sold out a day ahead	–	yes, no flash	yes
14 Berlin	€18	online only	released 30 days ahead	7+	banned	hardly
15 Hamburg	bunker roof free, tours €20	tours online	bunker tours of- ten sold out	bunkers 12+	partly, pri- vate use	hardly
16 Nuremberg	Rock-cut cellars €13	buy in advance	groups of 12–20, fixed times	dun- geons 10+	with per- mission only	no
17 Istanbul – Cistern	1,950 TL (about \$40)	not needed	30–60 min queue from 10 am	–	yes	limited
18 Cappadocia	€13	not needed	tour buses 11 am–2 pm	–	tolerated	no

Rules change; always check the current page before you travel.



18 underworlds in Europe

- 1 Catacombs of Paris
- 2 Underground London
- 3 Tunnels of Dover
- 4 Underground Edinburgh
- 5 Catacombs of Rome
- 6 Naples Underground
- 7 Matera Underground
- 8 Palermo Underground
- 9 Underground Vienna
- 10 Prague Underground
- 11 Pilsen Underground
- 12 Budapest Underground
- 13 Krakow Underground
- 14 Underground Berlin
- 15 Underground Hamburg
- 16 Underground Nuremberg
- 17 Cisterns of Istanbul
- 18 Cappadocia Underground

Map: Natural Earth

Why go beneath the city?

Every old city has a basement. It holds what no longer fitted above ground: the dead, the water, the stores, the shelters for the worst case. Go down and you see a city as it was really built.

This book takes you into 18 of these underworlds, from the catacombs of Paris to the rock cities of Cappadocia. It tells you what is down there and, above all, how to get in. That is where most plans fail: time slots released only seven days ahead, closing days, ticket desks that take cash only.

Every fact has been checked against sources. Where other sites spread something wrong or out of date, you will find it in the box “What others get wrong”. And because prices and hours change, every place links by click or QR code to its current page.

What others get wrong

A selection of the errors we came across while researching this book.

CATACOMBS OF PARIS	"Book weeks in advance" – the official shop opens dates 7 days ahead; earlier only via resellers, at a mark-up.
UNDERGROUND LONDON	"The War Rooms are 15 metres deep" – it's a reinforced basement, 15 steps below the street.
TUNNELS OF DOVER	"The tunnels date from the Second World War" – the casemates were dug in 1797/98 against Napoleon.
UNDERGROUND EDINBURGH	"The close was walled up with plague victims inside" – it was open in 1645; the sick went to huts outside town.
CATACOMBS OF ROME	"Christians hid there from persecution" – they were official cemeteries, dug underground for lack of space.
NAPLES UNDERGROUND	"Napoli Sotterranea is one place" – at least two associations run tours under that name.
MATERA UNDERGROUND	"Up to 18 metres deep" – the operator states 16 metres and 50 metres in length.
PALERMO UNDERGROUND	"Buy tickets online in advance" – the operator sells at the desk only; online resellers are not authorised.
UNDERGROUND VIENNA	"Catacombs €7, children €2.50" – the cathedral charges €8, children aged 6 to 14 €3.

Respect underground

THE DEAD

Catacombs, crypts and ossuaries hold human remains. Keep your voice down, touch nothing, no selfies with bones. Where photography is banned, the ban protects the dead – which is why this book shows no pictures there.

MEMORIAL SITES

Bunkers and tunnels often tell of war, forced labour and persecution. They are places of learning, not film sets.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Rules differ from place to place: allowed, no flash, for a fee or banned outright. The ticket compass at the front lists them for every place.

WILDLIFE

Many caves and tunnels are winter roosts for bats. Winter closures are legal species protection.

SAFETY

Sturdy shoes, a jacket even in summer, and no exploring off the route: underground sites are dangerous without a guide and usually off limits.

01

France and Britain

Here, the way down starts with a booking. In Paris six million dead lie in old quarries, and tickets appear only seven days ahead. Beneath London, Churchill's war cabinet met 115 times in a basement; in Dover the rescue of 338,226 soldiers was run from inside the chalk; and in Edinburgh a whole street lies under the City Chambers. Four places where the booking decides the visit.



- 1 Catacombs of Paris
- 2 Underground London

- 3 Tunnels of Dover
- 4 Underground Edinburgh

Map: Natural Earth (public domain)

1

FRANCE · ÎLE-DE-FRANCE

Catacombs of Paris

Six million dead in old quarries – and tickets go on sale only seven days ahead.

6m

DEAD

20 m

BELOW THE STREET

243

STEPS

€31

ADMISSION

Photo: Shadowgate from Novara, ITALY, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

PLACE DENFERT-ROCHEREAU, 14TH ARRONDISSEMENT

Paris stands on its own quarries. When the city's cemeteries overflowed, the bones were carried into the tunnels by night from 1785, and in 1810/11 they were stacked into walls of skulls and long bones. Since April 2026 the site has been open again after five months of work, with new lighting and an audio guide.

THE HARD PART IS THE SLOT

No more than 200 people may be underground at once. The official shop releases time slots only seven days ahead, and weekends and school holidays go fast.

If you miss out, the listed resellers often still have places, at a higher price. Fake tickets do circulate, so buy only where catacombes.paris.fr sends you.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Book exactly seven days ahead, in the morning; earlier dates don't exist yet.
- Bags no bigger than 40 × 30 cm, and there is no cloakroom or locker.
- Toilets at the entrance and exit only, none along the way.
- Bring a jacket and sturdy shoes: it's 14 °C below and the floor is damp.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~"Book weeks in advance"~~ – the official shop opens dates 7 days ahead; earlier only via resellers, at a mark-up. ~~"Exit on Rue Remy Dumoneel, 83 steps"~~ – since 2017 it's 21 bis Avenue René-Coty, 112 steps up.

ADMISSION

€31 (about \$35.50), ages 18–26 €25, 8–17 €15, under 8 free (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

Metro 4 and 6, RER B to Denfert-Rochereau

OPENING HOURS

Tue–Sun 9:45 am–8:30 pm, last entry 7:30, closed Mon

GOOD TO KNOW

Audio guide in English included, no tour needed



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/paris-catacombs

NEARBY · Liberation Museum with Resistance bunker opposite · Sewer Museum at Pont de l'Alma

UNDERGROUND IN PARIS

Catacombs of Paris



Photo: Polymagou, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Tickets and time slots →

You pay for a fixed time slot in the official shop, billetterie-parismusees.paris.fr, where dates appear only seven days ahead. Once they're gone, authorised resellers such as GetYourGuide or Tigtets sometimes hold their own allocation, at a higher price.

ADMISSION €31 incl. audio guide **BOOKING OPENS** 7 days ahead



Photo: Rijin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Below: a 1.5 km one-way route →

After 131 steps down comes a 1.5 km route with no shortcut back up. About 20 audio pieces start by themselves, told from the point of view of Héricart de Thury. The official estimate is 45 minutes; with the audio guide it's more like an hour or longer.

DURATION 60–75 min **BELOW** 14 °C

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/paris-catacombs

The exit is somewhere else →

You don't come out where you went in: after 112 steps up you surface at 21 bis Avenue René-Coty, about 700 metres further south. If someone is waiting for you, meet there. Nearest metro: Mouton-Duvernet (line 4) or Denfert-Rochereau again.

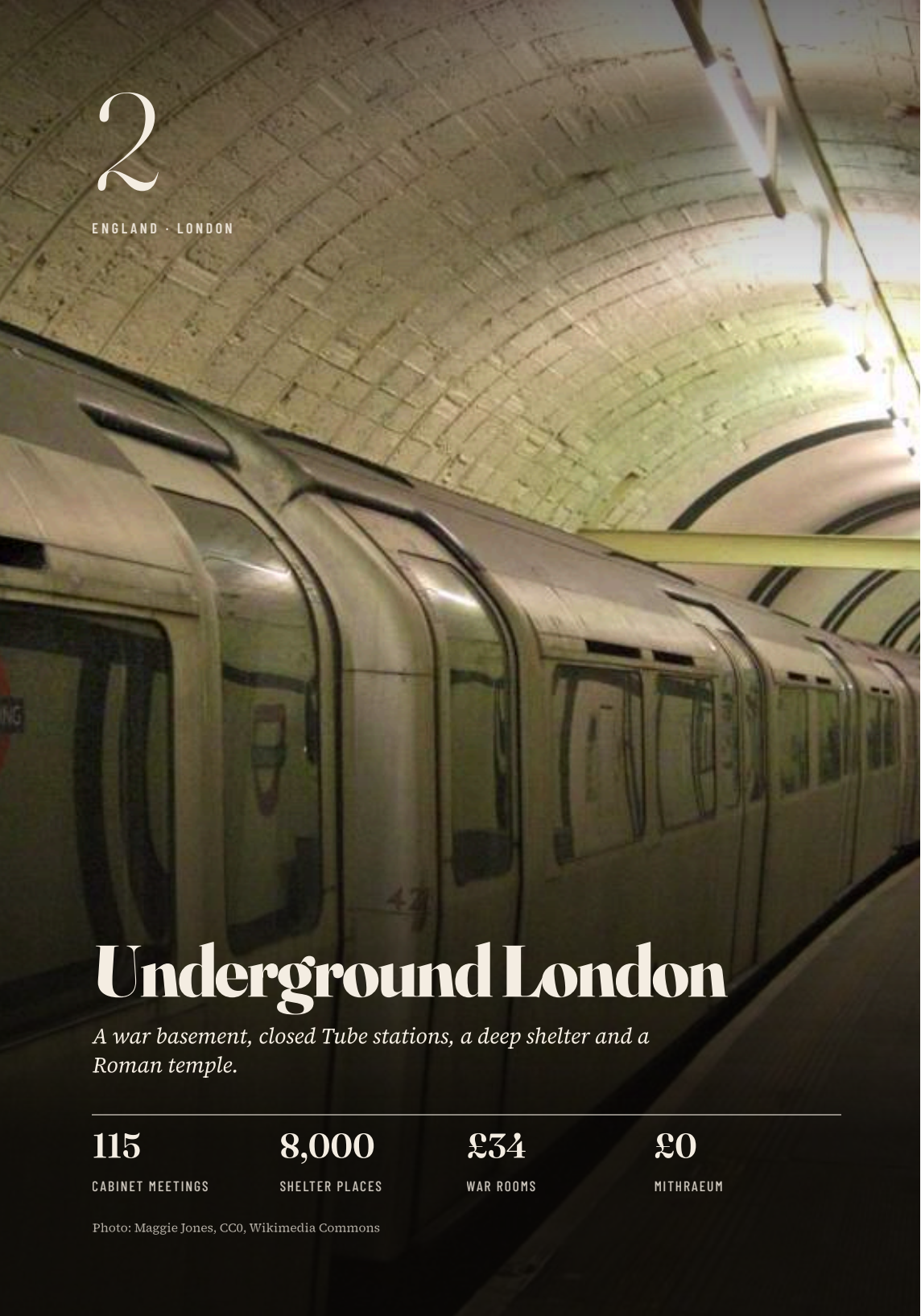
STEPS 112 up **DISTANCE** about 700 m

Free entry at the desk only →

Children under 8, disabled visitors with a companion and jobseekers get in free with proof, but only at the desk on site. Entry is then guaranteed even when the on-line shop is sold out. Whether paid tickets are sold on the day, the operator doesn't say.

FREE with proof, at the desk only

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/paris-catacombs

A photograph of a London Underground train in a tunnel. The train is silver and modern, with large windows reflecting the tunnel's interior. The ceiling is made of light-colored bricks in a semi-circular arch pattern. The lighting is warm and comes from overhead fixtures. The train is moving along the tracks, and the perspective is from a low angle, looking down the length of the train.

2

ENGLAND · LONDON

Underground London

A war basement, closed Tube stations, a deep shelter and a Roman temple.

115

CABINET MEETINGS

8,000

SHELTER PLACES

£34

WAR ROOMS

£0

MITHRAEUM

Photo: Maggie Jones, CC0, Wikimedia Commons

WESTMINSTER, STRAND, CLAPHAM, ROTHERHITHE, CITY

Underground London isn't one place. Beneath Whitehall is the basement where Churchill's war cabinet met 115 times; under the Tube lie closed stations and deep shelters; at Rotherhithe, the shaft of the first tunnel under a navigable river; under the City, a Roman temple. Almost all of it needs a fixed booking.

HIDDEN LONDON

Only the London Transport Museum opens the ghost stations, releasing dates six months at a time. Newsletter subscribers get 24 hours before everyone else – for Down Street, that's the only real chance.

You need to be at least 10, wear flat sturdy shoes and show genuine photo ID. A picture of your passport on your phone won't do.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Your War Rooms slot is an arrival time; entry is guaranteed for 30 min after it.
- No luggage: neither the War Rooms nor Hidden London has a cloakroom.
- The Mithraeum is free, but book a timed slot anyway.
- Keep your Hidden London ticket: it gets you half-price into the Transport Museum.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“The War Rooms are 15 metres deep”~~ – it's a reinforced basement, 15 steps below the street. ~~“Down Street only ran briefly”~~ – it opened in 1907 and didn't close until 1932.

ADMISSION

War Rooms £34 (about \$45.50), Hidden London £39–90 (\$52–121) (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

Tube to Westminster or St James's Park

OPENING HOURS

War Rooms daily 9:30 am–6 pm, tours on fixed dates

GOOD TO KNOW

Hidden London from age 10, never step-free

**Current hours, prices and tickets**

underground-atlas.com/underground-london

NEARBY · Mail Rail at the Postal Museum · Greenwich Foot Tunnel

UNDERGROUND IN LONDON

Underground London



Photo: WFan, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Churchill War Rooms →

The British government's war basement under what is now the Treasury on Horse Guards Road: Cabinet Room, Map Room, Churchill's bedroom and office, and the Transatlantic Telephone Room disguised as a lavatory, plus the attached Churchill Museum over 850 m².

ADMISSION £34, children £17 **DURATION** 2 hours or more



Photo: Chris Roberts, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Hidden London: Aldwych – the end of the line →

Opened as Strand in 1907 and closed in 1994, the terminus of the Piccadilly line spur from Holborn: ticket hall, two platforms, original 1907 lifts, advertising posters that have hung there for decades. A shelter and an art store for London's museums in wartime, and now one of the most filmed locations in the city.

ADMISSION £46.50 plus £1.50 fee **DURATION** 80 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-london

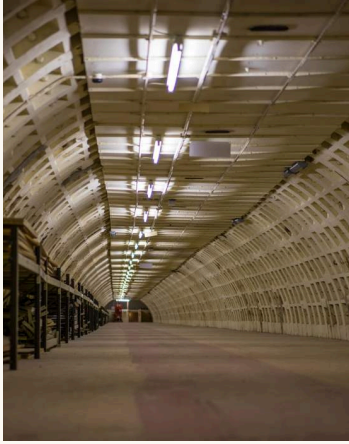


Photo: Paul Hudson from United Kingdom, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

Hidden London: Clapham South Deep-Level Shelter →

One of eight deep shelters dug under London Underground stations from 1940: two parallel tubes on two decks each, built for around 8,000 people, with a canteen, medical posts and bunks. In 1948 it housed 200 of the first Caribbean migrants off the Empire Windrush; in 1951 it traded as the Festival Hotel.

ADMISSION £39, reduced £36 **DURATION** 75 min

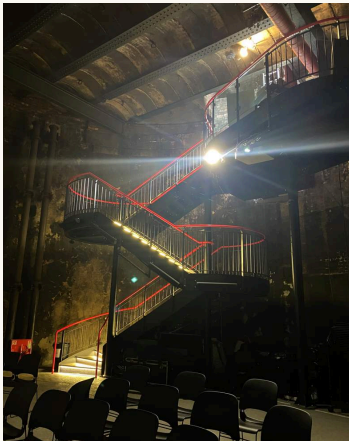


Photo: Z22, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Brunel Museum and the Thames Tunnel shaft, Rotherhithe →

The entrance shaft with which Marc Brunel began the first tunnel under a navigable river in 1825: a 15 m cylinder that was sunk into the ground under its own weight. The tunnel itself took 18 years and opened on 25 March 1843; it runs 400 m and sits 23 m below the water at high tide.

ADMISSION £10, under 16 free **DURATION** 45-60 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-london



Photo: Simon Burchell, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE →

The Roman temple of Mithras from the bank of the Walbrook, built around AD 240, found in 1954 during excavation for an office block, rebuilt inaccurately a hundred metres away at street level in 1962 – and in 2017 returned to its own site in the basement of Bloomberg's European headquarters, seven metres below today's pavement.

ADMISSION free, timed slot advised **DURATION** about 1 hour



Photo: Poliphilo, CC0, Wikimedia Commons

Crypts: St Paul's Cathedral and St Bride's →

The crypt of St Paul's is the largest in Western Europe and runs under the whole footprint of the cathedral, holding the tombs of Nelson, Wellington and Christopher Wren. It comes with the ordinary sightseeing ticket and cannot be booked on its own.

ADMISSION St Paul's £27, St Bride's free

DURATION 20 min to 3 hours

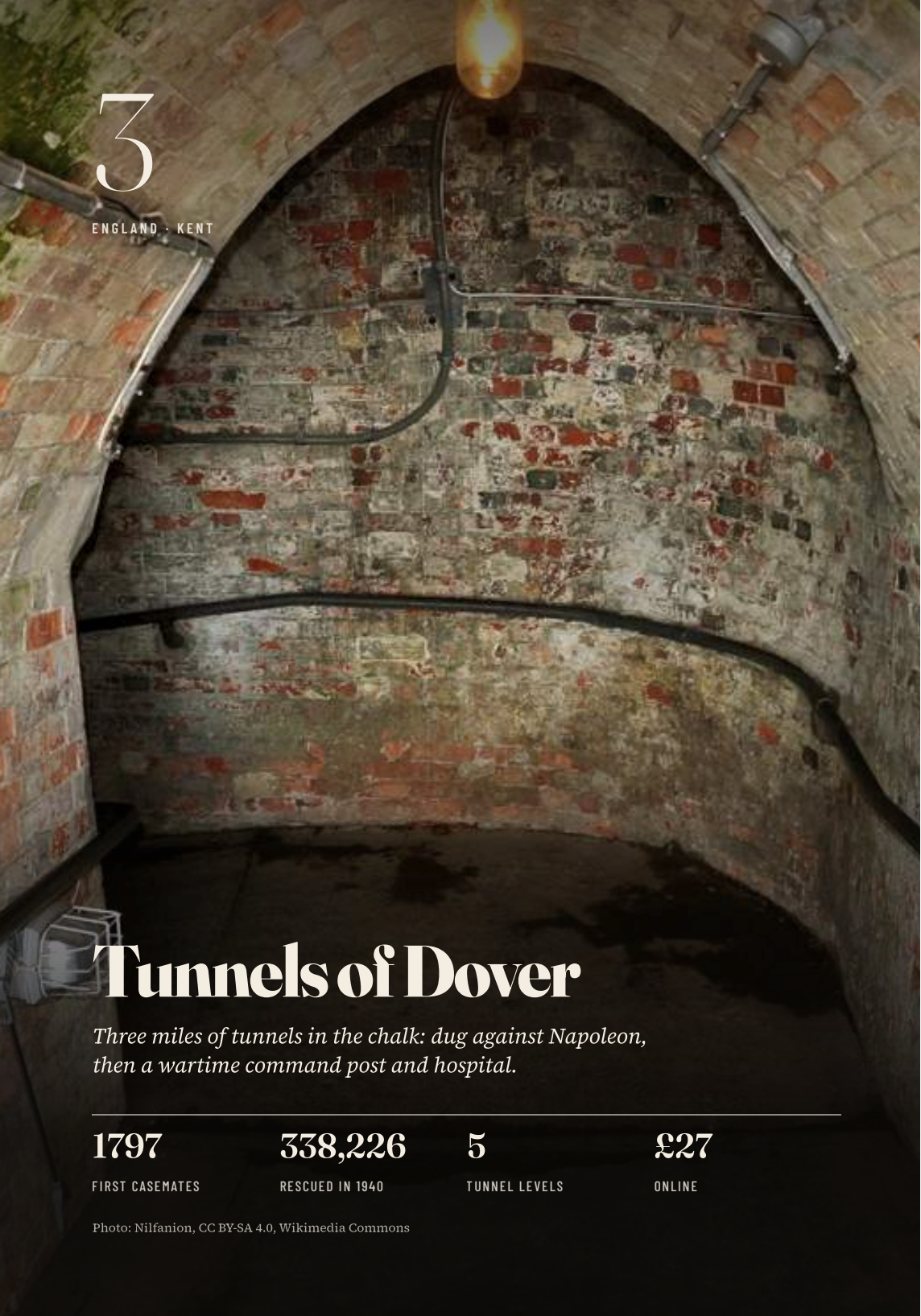
MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-london



UNDERGROUND IN KENT

Tunnels of Dover

Photo: EVERYMAN FILMS LTD, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons



3

ENGLAND · KENT

Tunnels of Dover

Three miles of tunnels in the chalk: dug against Napoleon, then a wartime command post and hospital.

1797

FIRST CASEMATES

338,226

RESCUED IN 1940

5

TUNNEL LEVELS

£27

ONLINE

Photo: Nilfanion, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

DOVER CASTLE, ON THE CHALK CLIFFS ABOVE THE PORT

In 1797/98 engineers drove seven casemates into the chalk beneath the castle as underground barracks against Napoleon. In May 1940 Vice-Admiral Ramsay ran Operation Dynamo from here, the rescue of 338,226 soldiers from Dunkirk. A hospital and a nuclear bunker were added later.

WHAT'S OPEN IN 2026

The Operation Dynamo tour is closed for maintenance, and English Heritage gives no reopening date. The underground hospital is open, guided only, and so are the medieval Spur tunnels.

Tunnel tours are allocated on the day. Online you only book entry to the castle – 15 per cent cheaper than at the desk.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Arrive at 10 and ask straight away when the best tunnel time is.
- Came by train or bus? Show your ticket at the desk for 20 per cent off.
- Allow three to four hours; the grounds are large and steep.
- From 2 November 2026 closed on weekdays, open Sat and Sun only.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“The tunnels date from the Second World War”~~ – the casemates were dug in 1797/98 against Napoleon. ~~“Book your tunnel tour online”~~ – online you only get castle entry; staff allocate tours on site.

ADMISSION

online £24.65–29.32 (about \$33–39), desk £29–34.50 (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

Train from London St Pancras to Dover Priory, just over 1 hr

OPENING HOURS

daily 10 am–5 pm until 18 Oct, often weekends only in winter

GOOD TO KNOW

Wartime tunnels guided only, not wheelchair accessible



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/dover-castle-tunnels

NEARBY · Fan Bay Deep Shelter · Grand Shaft, Western Heights

UNDERGROUND IN DOVER

Tunnels of Dover

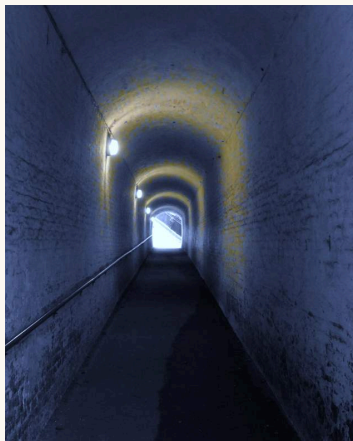


Photo: EVERYMAN FILMS LTD, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

Secret Wartime Tunnels – Operation Dynamo →

The level from which Vice-Admiral Bertram Ramsay directed the Dunkirk evacuation at the end of May 1940: seven casemates of 1797/98, partitioned in the Second World War into signals, planning and briefing rooms.

ADMISSION in castle ticket, closed in 2026

DURATION about 50 min



Photo: Nilfanion, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Underground Hospital →

The underground hospital, driven into the chalk in 1941/42 as a dressing station and quarters for the combined headquarters: three east-west galleries with two rows of eight tunnels between them, used as wards and dormitories. Today you walk through the operating theatre, the wards and the corridors, staged with sound and smell.

ADMISSION in castle ticket **DURATION** about 20 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/dover-castle-tunnels

Medieval tunnels – the Spur tunnels under the northern outworks →

The oldest passages on the site. After the sieges of 1216 and 1217, when the breached north gate was blocked up, Henry III's masons drove a tunnel under the outer wall to the new St John's Tower and on beneath the outwork, where it split three ways.

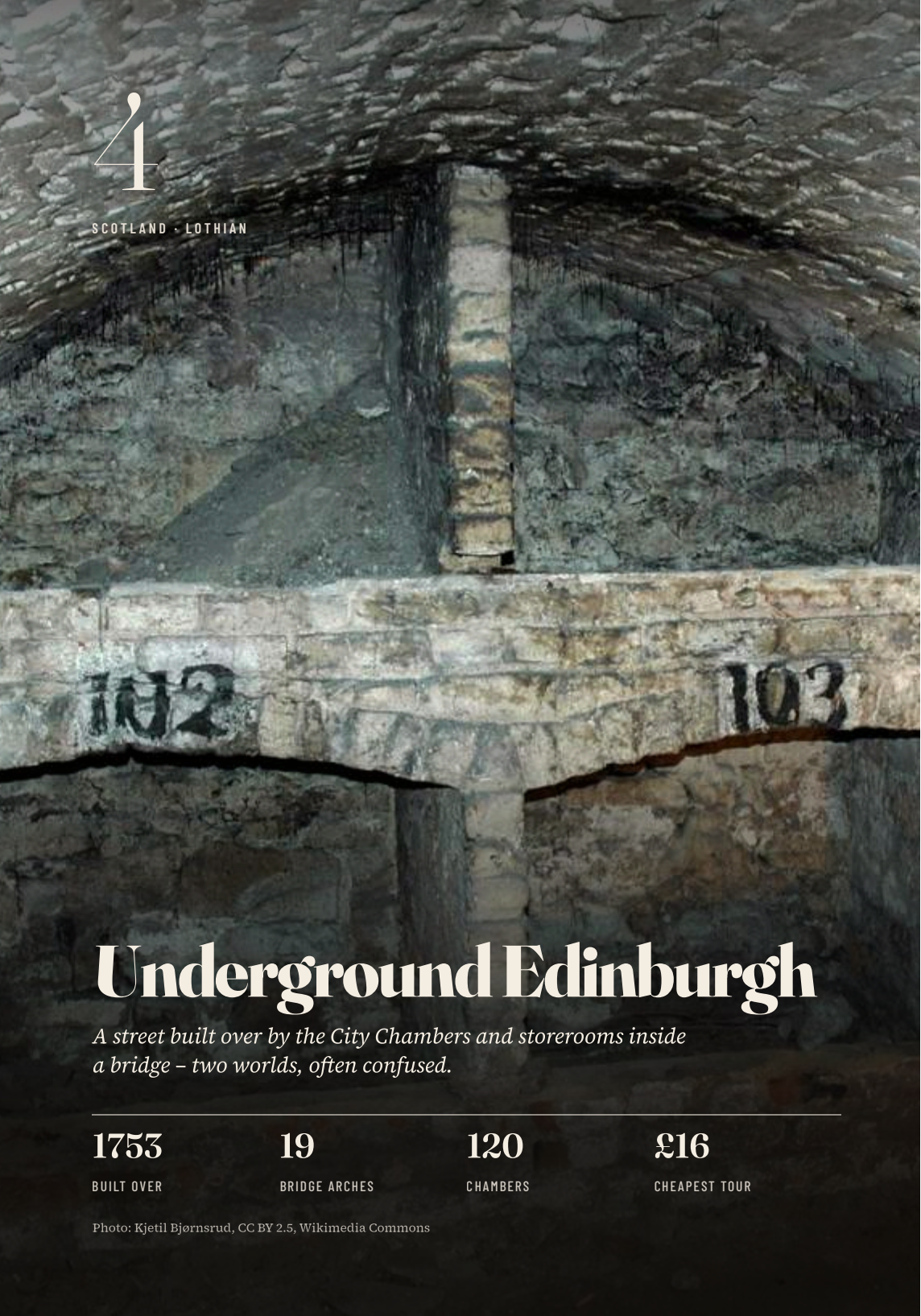
ADMISSION in castle ticket **DURATION** 30–45 min

Dumpy – the Cold War government bunker →

Deep Underground Military Position Yellow, cut about 50 metres below the surface in 1942/43 as the combined headquarters of army, navy and air force, with its own operations rooms and a large telephone exchange; part of the preparation for the Normandy landings and for the deception Operation Fortitude South ran from here.

ADMISSION last £10 extra, not currently offered **DURATION** about 60 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/dover-castle-tunnels



4

SCOTLAND · Lothian

Underground Edinburgh

A street built over by the City Chambers and storerooms inside a bridge – two worlds, often confused.

1753

BUILT OVER

19

BRIDGE ARCHES

120

CHAMBERS

£16

CHEAPEST TOUR

Photo: Kjetil Bjørnsrud, CC BY 2.5, Wikimedia Commons

ROYAL MILE, SOUTH BRIDGE, OLD TOWN

Mary King's Close was a residential lane until the Royal Exchange was built on top of it in 1753. The South Bridge vaults of 1788 were something else: stores and workshops inside the arches, some 120 chambers, abandoned again after about 30 years. You see both only on a guided tour.

CLOSE OR VAULTS?

Mary King's Close tells the town's story from the plague year of 1645 to the last resident, who moved out in 1902. Photography is banned outright, phones included.

Three operators run tours into the vaults under the South Bridge – history by day, ghost stories after dark. With Mercat in Blair Street you may take photos without flash.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Close in the morning, vaults in the evening – that fits both into one day.
- From Waverley it's 100 steps up; with luggage, walk up Cockburn Street.
- In August and around Halloween the evening tours sell out days ahead.
- Auld Reekie no longer sells at the meeting point, so book online.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“The close was walled up with plague victims inside”~~ – it was open in 1645; the sick went to huts outside town. ~~“The vaults closed to the public in 2015”~~ – in 2026 three operators take visitors down daily.

ADMISSION

Mary King's Close £28.50 (about \$38), vaults from £16 (\$21.50) (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

10 min on foot from Waverley station

OPENING HOURS

daily, first tour usually 9 am

GOOD TO KNOW

Mary King's Close from age 5, no photos at all



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/edinburgh-vaults

NEARBY · Prisons of War, Edinburgh Castle · Greyfriars Kirkyard

UNDERGROUND IN EDINBURGH

Underground Edinburgh

The Real Mary King's Close →

A residential and trading lane of the 16th and 17th centuries, partly demolished and built over in 1753 for the Royal Exchange – today it lies under the City Chambers on the Royal Mile.

ADMISSION £28.50, children £21 **DURATION** 60 min

Blair Street Vaults →

The largest and, the operator says, deepest accessible part of the vaults under the South Bridge, run exclusively by Mercat Tours. The tour starts at the Mercat Cross on the Royal Mile, walks through the Old Town and then drops through three flights of steps into the chambers; the Vaults Museum is open at the end.

ADMISSION £27, varies by season **DURATION** 75 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/edinburgh-vaults

Vaults Museum, Blair Street →

A step-free exhibition room above the Blair Street Vaults with finds from the chambers, a touch table and the film *The Vaults Revealed*. Mercat Tours opened it in 2025 precisely because the vaults themselves can only be reached down two flights of stairs.

ADMISSION in any Mercat ticket **DURATION** after the tour

Niddry Street Vaults →

The operator with the largest section of the South Bridge vaults of its own, plus a display of medieval torture instruments with pieces from Nuremberg and Bamberg. Every tour starts at 300 Lawnmarket; the office is at 45 Niddry Street.

ADMISSION £24-26 **DURATION** 60-90 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/edinburgh-vaults

Damnation Alley, Niddry Street South →

A separate stretch of the South Bridge vaults, run by City of the Dead. This is also the only operator that goes into the Covenanters' Prison in Greyfriars Kirkyard and up to the Black Mausoleum after dark – though that part is above ground.

ADMISSION £16, with graveyard £19 **DURATION** 60–75 min

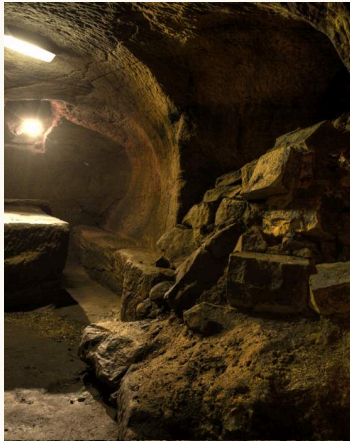


Photo: John Dale from Aberdeen, CC BY-SA 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

Gilmerton Cove (closed in 2026) →

Passages and chambers hacked by hand out of the sandstone under a row of houses in the south of Edinburgh, first mentioned in parish records in 1721, when the blacksmith George Paterson was accused of serving drink in his caves on a Sunday. What the place was actually for has never been settled.

ADMISSION currently closed

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/edinburgh-vaults

02

Italy

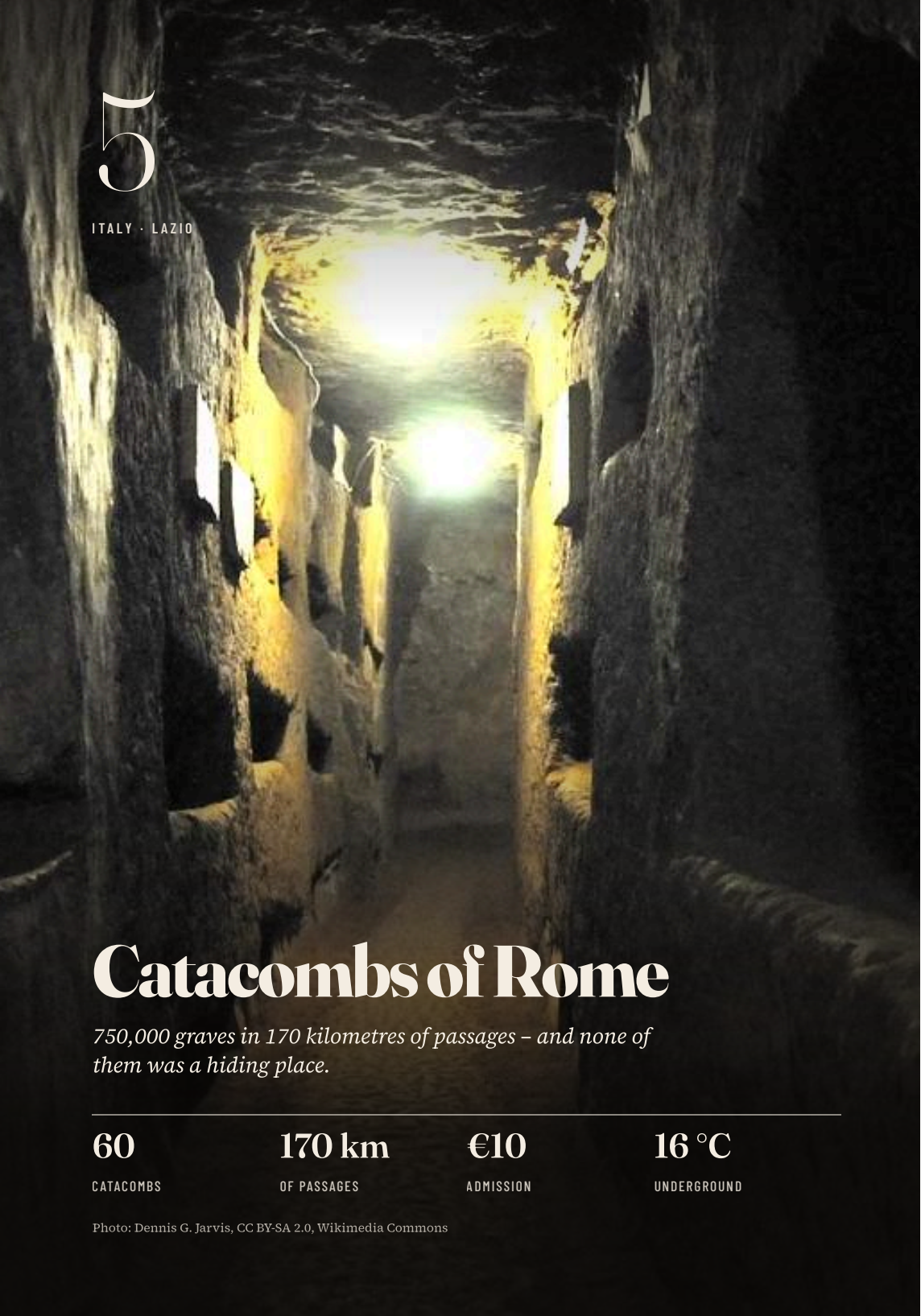
Nowhere are so many centuries stacked on top of each other. Beneath Rome, 750,000 dead rest in catacombs; beneath Naples, a Greek aqueduct supplied the city for 23 centuries; Matera caught every drop of rain in cisterns; and in Palermo the dead stand clothed in the corridors. Four cities, four ways of going underground.



- 5 Catacombs of Rome
- 6 Naples Underground

- 7 Matera Underground
- 8 Palermo Underground

Map: Natural Earth (public domain)



5

ITALY · LAZIO

Catacombs of Rome

750,000 graves in 170 kilometres of passages – and none of them was a hiding place.

60

CATACOMBS

170 km

OF PASSAGES

€10

ADMISSION

16 °C

UNDERGROUND

Photo: Dennis G. Jarvis, CC BY-SA 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

VIA APPIA, VIA SALARIA, VIA NOMENTANA

Roman law banned burials inside the city. So from the 2nd century onwards, communities dug their cemeteries into the soft tuff outside the gates: kilometres of passages on several levels, niche after niche. You can only go down with the catacomb's own guide, and every site has its own rules.

WHICH CATACOMB?

San Callisto is the most famous, with the Crypt of the Popes. Domitilla is quieter, San Sebastiano runs tours without a lunch break, and Priscilla in the north has the finest frescoes.

If you want to see bones, go to the Capuchin Crypt on Via Veneto. It is not a catacomb but a baroque bone oratory in the city centre.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the weekday first: Mon San Sebastiano and Priscilla closed, Tue Domitilla, Wed San Callisto.
- San Callisto and Domitilla close for lunch from 12 to 2 pm.
- San Callisto requires online booking and allows no large bags.
- Tours in English start almost every time; other languages are rarer.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“Christians hid there from persecution”~~ – they were official cemeteries, dug underground for lack of space. ~~“Admission €8”~~ – in 2026 every catacomb charges €10, reduced €7.

ADMISSION

€10 (about \$11.50), reduced €7, under 6 free (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

Bus 118 from the Colosseum to the Via Appia

OPENING HOURS

each catacomb has its own closing day, mostly 9–12 and 2–5 pm

GOOD TO KNOW

Guided tours only; outside guides may not enter



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/rome-catacombs

NEARBY · Capuchin Crypt, Via Veneto · Mausoleum of Santa Costanza

UNDERGROUND IN ROME

Catacombs of Rome



Photo: Dnalar 01, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Catacombs of San Callisto →

The largest and best known: the official cemetery of the church of Rome in the 3rd century, about 20 km of galleries on up to five levels. The obvious choice if you are only going to do one.

ADMISSION €10, reduced €7 **DURATION** 30–40 min



Photo: Dnalar 01, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Catacombs of Domitilla →

By its own account the oldest and most extensive of them, begun around AD 120, roughly 17 km of galleries. Quieter than San Callisto, with well-preserved frescoes.

ADMISSION €10, reduced €7 **DURATION** 30–40 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/rome-catacombs



Photo: Palickap, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Catacombs of San Sebastiano →

The place that gave all catacombs their name: in antiquity the ground here was called *ad catacumbas*, "by the hollows". The tour ends upstairs in the basilica of San Sebastiano fuori le mura.

ADMISSION €10 on site, €12 online **DURATION** 40-45 min



Photo: Unknown authorUnknown author, Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

Catacombs of Priscilla →

Off the tourist route in the north of the city on Via Salaria, about 13 km of galleries. Small groups – 25 people maximum – and the finest painting of the five.

ADMISSION €10 on site, €12 online **DURATION** 45 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/rome-catacombs

Catacombs of Sant'Agnese →

A small, little-visited catacomb under the basilica of Sant'Agnese fuori le mura on Via Nomentana, shown by the house's own archaeologist-guides in groups of up to 20.

ADMISSION €10, reduced €6.50 **DURATION** 45-60 min with museum



Photo: Granet, François Marius, CC0, Wikimedia Commons

Capuchin Crypt – not a catacomb →

A corridor of about 30 metres with six chapels under the church of Santa Maria della Concezione on Via Veneto, decorated throughout with the bones of some 3,700 dead, most of them Capuchin friars. It is a post-medieval ossuary, not an ancient burial gallery, and it is not run by the Pontifical Commission.

ADMISSION €10, single tickets cash only **DURATION** 30 min

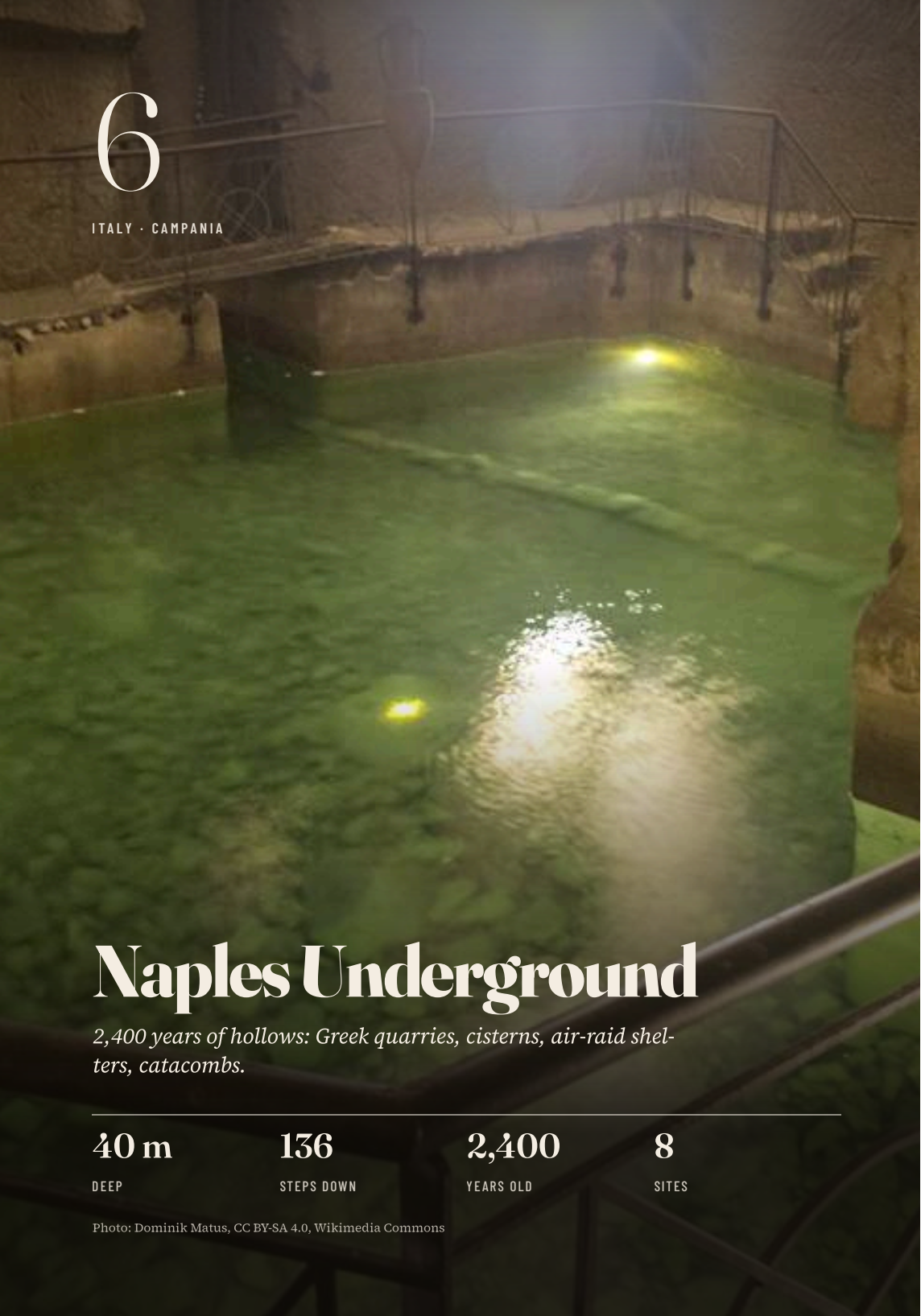
MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/rome-catacombs



UNDERGROUND IN CAMPANIA

Naples Underground

Photo: Armando Mancini from Napoli, Italia, CC BY-SA 2.0, Wikimedia Commons



6

ITALY · CAMPANIA

Naples Underground

2,400 years of hollows: Greek quarries, cisterns, air-raid shelters, catacombs.

40 m

DEEP

136

STEPS DOWN

2,400

YEARS OLD

8

SITES

Photo: Dominik Matus, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

CENTRO STORICO, MONTE ECHIA, RIONE SANITÀ

The Greeks quarried tuff beneath Neapolis for their walls. The holes became cisterns of an aqueduct that supplied the city for 23 centuries, then air-raid shelters in the war. Add an unfinished royal tunnel and catacombs with halls larger than anything in Rome.

SAME NAME, DIFFERENT PLACE

Two independent associations both call themselves “Napoli Sotterranea”, with different meeting points. Wait at Piazza San Gaetano and you miss the tour from Caffè Gambrinus.

The Galleria Borbonica, begun in 1853 as an escape tunnel for the Bourbon kings, became a car pound after the war. The dusty vintage cars are still there.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the meeting point before booking, the names are easily confused.
- Galleria Borbonica runs Fri–Sun only and must be booked.
- Catacombs and Fontanelle close on Wednesdays.
- The catacomb ticket stays valid for 12 months for San Gaudioso.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“Napoli Sotterranea is one place”~~ – at least two associations run tours under that name. ~~“Fontanelle is closed”~~ – open again since 18 April 2026, online booking only.

ADMISSION

€9–20 per site (about \$10–23) (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

Metro line 1 to Dante or Toledo

OPENING HOURS

Napoli Sotterranea daily, Galleria Borbonica Fri–Sun

GOOD TO KNOW

Tours in Italian and English



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/naples-underground

NEARBY · San Lorenzo Maggiore opposite · catacombs in Rione Sanità

UNDERGROUND IN NAPLES

Naples Underground

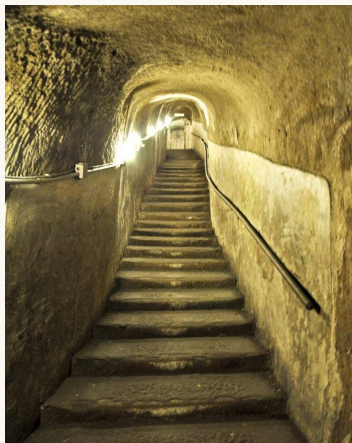


Photo: Armando Mancini from Napoli, Italia, CC BY-SA 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

Napoli Sotterranea, Piazza San Gaetano →

The one most people mean: 136 low steps down to about 40 m and the Greek-cut cisterns of the ancient aqueduct, used as air-raid shelters in the Second World War and still holding the beds, toys and graffiti of the people who sheltered there.

ADMISSION skip-the-line €18 online **DURATION** about 80 min

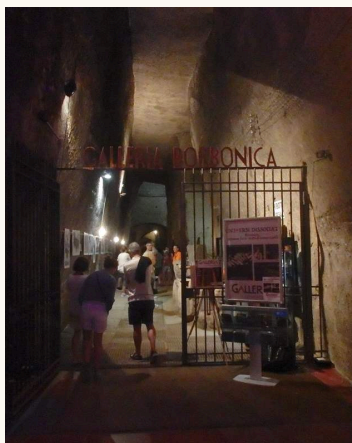


Photo: Nemo bis, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Galleria Borbonica, the Bourbon Tunnel →

Commissioned in 1853 by Ferdinand II as a military road and escape route between the royal palace and the barracks, never finished, used as an air-raid shelter in the war and afterwards as a municipal impound – which is why dusty 1950s cars and scooters still stand in it. Four different tours from three different entrances.

ADMISSION €15, Adventure €20 **DURATION** 60-90 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/naples-underground



Photo: Dominik Matus, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Catacombs of San Gennaro →

The most important catacomb in southern Italy, cut into the tuff of the Capodimonte hill from the 2nd century AD: two levels that do not sit directly above one another, broad halls rather than corridors, an underground basilica for Saint Agrippinus with a bishop's throne carved out of the rock, and frescoes and mosaics spanning six centuries.

ADMISSION €13, also valid for San Gaudioso **DURATION** 60 min

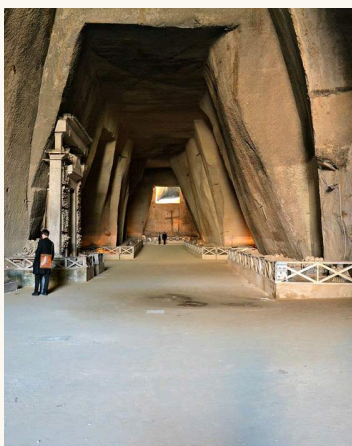


Photo: Mentnafunangann, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Cimitero delle Fontanelle →

An enormous ossuary in a tuff quarry in the Rione Sanità, holding the bones of tens of thousands of unnamed dead and the Neapolitan cult of the anime pezzentelle, in which people adopted a skull, cleaned it and prayed to it in exchange for favours. Closed for years, and open again since 18 April 2026.

ADMISSION from €6, online only **DURATION** 40 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/naples-underground

LAPIS Museum, Basilica della Pietrasanta →

A museum of water under the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore alla Pietrasanta: cisterns of the ancient aqueduct and a wartime shelter 35 m down, staged with projections and installations rather than left raw.

ADMISSION €12 **DURATION** about 75 min

San Lorenzo Maggiore – La Neapolis Sotterrata →

Not a tunnel but an excavated slice of the ancient city: under the Gothic monastery lies a Roman market street with shops, a bakery oven, a laundry and the treasury, sitting at the level Naples had before the ground rose around it. You walk it at your own pace.

ADMISSION €9 **DURATION** 45-60 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/naples-underground



UNDERGROUND IN BASILICATA

Matera Underground

Photo: Superchilum, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons



7

ITALY · BASILICATA

Matera Underground

Beneath the city of stone lies a second one – and a lake for five million litres of rain.

16 m

DEEP CISTERN

5 m

LITRES OF WATER

€3

ADMISSION

1991

REDISCOVERED

Photo: Holger Uwe Schmitt, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

SASSI DI MATERA · UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

Matera is carved into soft calcarenite, and because it hardly rains, every roof became a catchment. Under Piazza Vittorio Veneto lies the Palombaro Lungo, a cistern 16 metres deep, reopened during building work only in 1991. You walk on gangways above the water.

THE CITY THAT WAS EVACUATED

In 1952 the Sassi were called a national disgrace; a law moved some 15,000 people out. Today the cave districts are a World Heritage Site and were European Capital of Culture in 2019.

Underground, hypogea, a furnished cave house and rock churches show what life in the stone was like.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Visit the Palombaro Lungo before the lunch break (1–3 pm).
- Ask for the leaflet at the entrance; there is no guided tour.
- Book the Cripta del Peccato Originale first and plan the day around it.
- Wear shoes with grip: steps and gangways are slippery.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“Up to 18 metres deep”~~ – the operator states 16 metres and 50 metres in length. ~~“Guided tours only”~~ – you walk through on your own in about 15 minutes.

ADMISSION

Palombaro Lungo €3 (about \$3.50), under 18 free (as of 09/2026)

OPENING HOURS

daily, lunch break 1–3 pm

GETTING THERE

Train from Bari, then on foot; old town is a ZTL

GOOD TO KNOW

No advance sales, ticket desk on the piazza



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/matera-underground

NEARBY · Ipogeo MateraSum · Casa Grotta di Vico Solitario

UNDERGROUND IN MATERA

Matera Underground

Ipogeo MateraSum →

A connected network of chambers, lanes, cisterns, stores and workrooms under the historic centre, 1,200 square metres in extent and up to 12 metres deep. The visit opens with a short film and then works down through the levels.

ADMISSION €8 with audio guide **DURATION** 50 min



Photo: Superchilum, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Storica Casa Grotta di Vico Solitario →

A furnished cave dwelling in the Sasso Caveoso, left as the Sassi looked until the evacuation: one room for the family, the donkey and the hens, a bed on trestles, the chamber pot behind the bedstead. Admission also covers a neviera (snow store), a natural cave and the rock church of Sant'Agostino al Casalnuovo.

ADMISSION €8, under 11 free **DURATION** 30 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/matera-underground

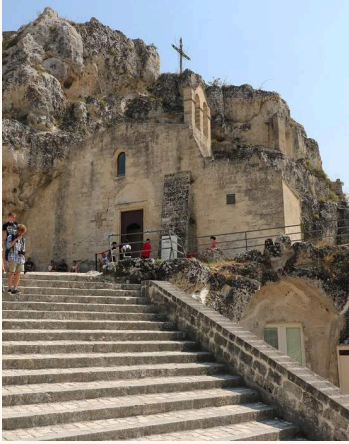


Photo: Diego Baglieri, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Santa Maria de Idris and San Giovanni in Monterrone →

Two linked rock churches inside the Monterrone, the rock spur standing in the middle of the Sasso Caveoso. Santa Maria de Idris dates from the 14th or 15th century and its name probably goes back to the Greek Odigitria.

ADMISSION €4.50, three churches €10 **DURATION** 20-30 min



Photo: Davide Mauro, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

San Pietro Barisano →

The largest rock church in the city, three-aisled, with a façade of 1755. Beneath today's floor lies the first church of the 12th or 13th century.

ADMISSION included in the church ticket **DURATION** 20-30 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/matera-underground

Cripta del Peccato Originale →

A natural cave 14 kilometres south of the city, painted in the 8th and 9th centuries by an unknown hand that scholarship calls the Pittore dei Fiori di Matera, after the red rock-rose flowers growing between the scenes.

ADMISSION €8, booking required **DURATION** 30 min

La Raccolta delle Acque with the palombaro of the Sasso Caveoso →

The small museum of the water system on Via Purgatorio Vecchio: collecting channels, a bell-shaped cistern, the overflow channel and a palombaro of its own more than 15 metres deep and over 120 square metres in area, which held up to 1.5 million litres.

ADMISSION €2.50, currently closed **DURATION** 30 min

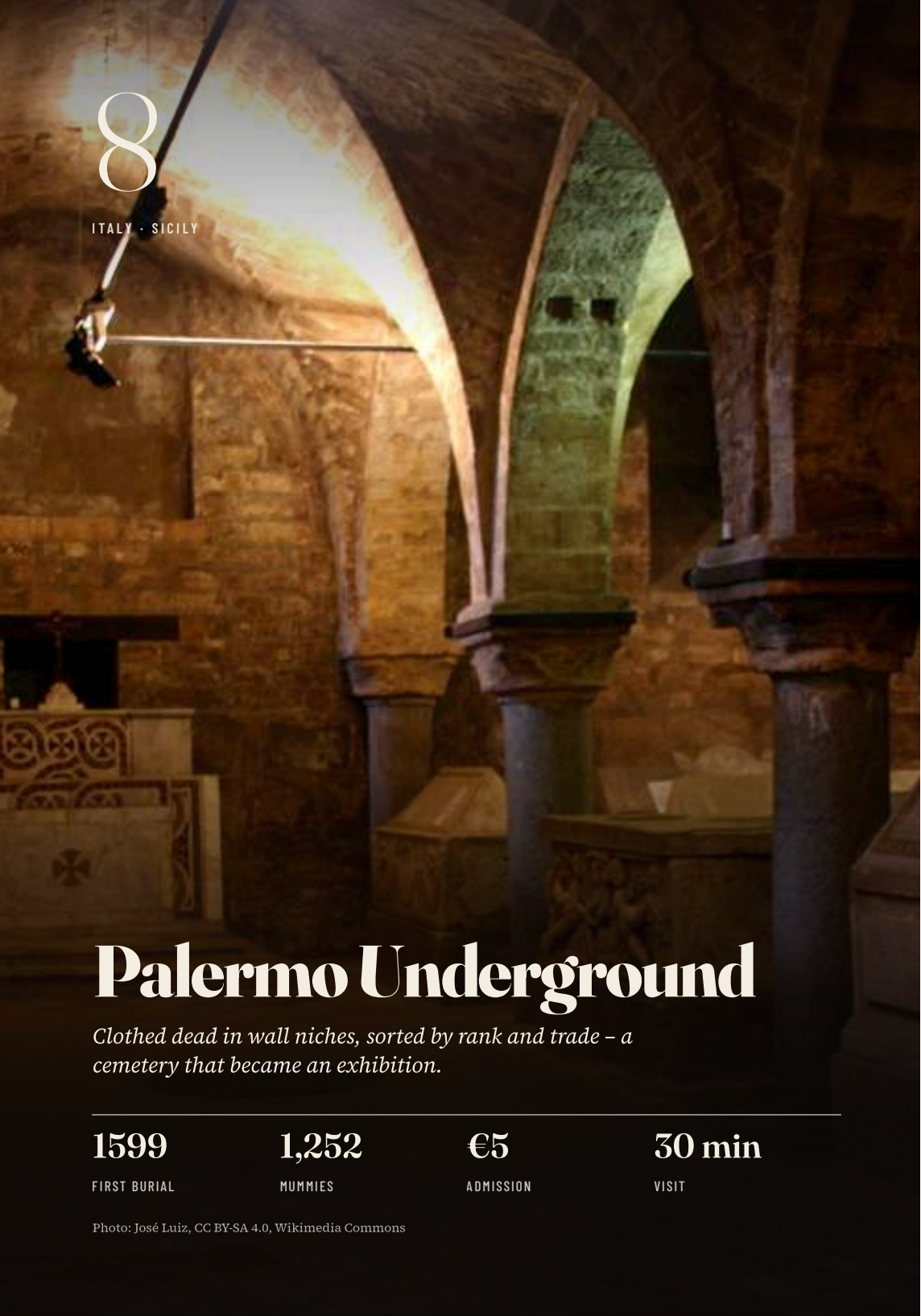
MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/matera-underground



UNDERGROUND IN SICILY

Palermo Underground

Photo: Davide Mauro, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons



8

ITALY · SICILY

Palermo Underground

Clothed dead in wall niches, sorted by rank and trade – a cemetery that became an exhibition.

1599

FIRST BURIAL

1,252

MUMMIES

€5

ADMISSION

30 min

VISIT

Photo: José Luiz, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

CAPUCHIN CATACOMBS, CATHEDRAL, PORTA D'OSSUNA

Beneath the Capuchin monastery, monks, priests, women, children, doctors and artists from three centuries stand along the corridors, clothed and sorted by rank. The friars dried their dead on draining racks; from 1783 anyone who could pay was admitted. The photo deliberately shows the cathedral crypt, not the catacombs.

ROSALIA LOMBARDO

The best-known of the dead is two-year-old Rosalia, who died in 1920. Her father had her embalmed; since 2009 she has lain in a nitrogen-filled case because her face had begun to discolour.

The claim that she “opens her eyes” is an illusion: her lids were never fully closed, and the light shifts during the day.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Bring cash: tickets are sold at the desk only.
- No photography: the rule protects the dead and is enforced.
- Tell children beforehand what they will see.
- About 15 minutes on foot from the Norman Palace.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“Buy tickets online in advance”~~ – the operator sells at the desk only; online resellers are not authorised. ~~“8,000 mummies”~~ – about 8,000 dead, 1,252 of them mummified (2011 count).

ADMISSION

€5 (about \$5.70), reduced €3, desk only (as of 09/2026)

OPENING HOURS

daily, in summer 9 am–5:30 pm

GETTING THERE

15 min on foot from the Norman Palace

GOOD TO KNOW

No photos, no tour, no dogs



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/palermo-catacombs

NEARBY · Porta d'Ossuna catacomb · Cathedral crypt

UNDERGROUND IN PALERMO

Palermo Underground

Capuchin Catacombs →

The crypt beneath the Capuchin friary of Santa Maria della Pace: corridors cut into the tuff where the dead of three centuries stand clothed in wall niches, arranged in separate galleries for friars, priests, men, women, virgins, children, families and professions.

ADMISSION €5, desk only **DURATION** 20–30 min

Catacomb of Porta d'Ossuna →

An early Christian cemetery of the 4th and 5th centuries on the edge of the old town: galleries, side passages and grave niches running several hundred metres. Conventional catacombs, in the Roman sense – no mummies.

ADMISSION €8, guided **DURATION** 30 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/palermo-catacombs



Photo: Davide Mauro, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Qanat Gesuitico Alto →

A medieval water tunnel under the Altarello district, still carrying water, entered only on announced dates with boots, helmet and harness.

ADMISSION €16 incl. gear **DURATION** 90 min



Photo: José Luiz, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Crypt of Palermo Cathedral →

Beneath the cathedral lie the tombs of the archbishops of Palermo, among them Walter Ophamil, who built the present church. Reached through the paid monumental area.

ADMISSION €4-7

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/palermo-catacombs



Photo: sailko, CC BY 2.5, Wikimedia Commons

Catacomb of San Giovanni, Syracuse →

One of the largest underground complexes in Sicily: an early Christian catacomb with the crypt of Saint Marcian, visited only on a guided tour in Italian or English, with a VR station.

ADMISSION €12, 250 km from Palermo

Capuchin crypt at Savoca →

The small relative of the Palermo crypt, in the hill village of Savoca near Taormina: 37 mummies of clergy and gentry of the 18th and 19th centuries.

ADMISSION not reliably documented **DURATION** short

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/palermo-catacombs

03

Central Europe

Central Europe's underworlds are as different as the cities above them. Beneath Vienna lie 10,893 dead of the 18th century and the coffins of the Habsburgs; beneath Prague, whole ground floors buried in the Middle Ages. Pilsen dug 13 kilometres of cellars into sandstone, Budapest stands on more than 200 caves carved by thermal water, and four metres below its Main Market, Krakow shows its 11th-century streets.



- 9 Underground Vienna
- 10 Prague Underground
- 11 Pilsen Underground

- 12 Budapest Underground
- 13 Krakow Underground

Map: Natural Earth (public domain)

9

AUSTRIA · VIENNA

Underground Vienna

*Imperial coffins, mummies, the sewer from *The Third Man* –
and a lake in a mine, 60 metres down.*

10,893

BURIALS 1745–1783

150

IN THE IMPERIAL CRYPT

€8

CATACOMBS

9 °C

IN THE SEEGRÖTTE

Photo: Burkhard Mücke, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

STEPHANSPLATZ, NEUER MARKT, MICHAELERPLATZ, HINTERBRÜHL

When the cemetery around St Stephen's closed in 1732, the dead moved downstairs: in new crypts beneath the choir and the square, exactly 10,893 people were buried until 1783. A few minutes' walk away, the Habsburgs lie in the Capuchin Crypt and the mummies in the Michaelergruft.

THREE CRYPTS, THREE SETS OF RULES

The catacombs are shown only by a cathedral guide, no booking needed, for €8. The Capuchin Crypt is the only site you can walk through alone. The Michaelergruft runs tours on Fridays and Saturdays only.

There is an underground without the dead, too: the sewer from The Third Man, May to October only, or a boat across the flooded gypsum mine of the Seegrotte Hinterbrühl.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Catacombs: no booking, just be at the stairs in the cathedral for the next tour.
- On Sundays and holidays the first catacomb tour starts at 1:30 pm.
- Reserve the Third Man Tour and pay on the spot; minimum age 12.
- The Seegrotte is 9 °C all year: bring a jacket even in summer.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“Catacombs €7, children €2.50”~~ – the cathedral charges €8, children aged 6 to 14 €3. ~~“Plague victims lie there”~~ – the mass crypts date from 1745–1783, decades after the last plague of 1713.

ADMISSION

Catacombs €8 (about \$9.20), children €3; Imperial Crypt €15 (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

U1/U3 Stephansplatz; Seegrotte: train to Mödling, bus 364

OPENING HOURS

Catacombs Mon–Sat 10 am–4:30 pm, Sun from 1:30 pm

GOOD TO KNOW

No combined ticket; every site has its own desk



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/underground-vienna

NEARBY · Virgil Chapel, currently closed · cellars and bunkers of the Unter Wien association

UNDERGROUND IN VIENNA

Underground Vienna

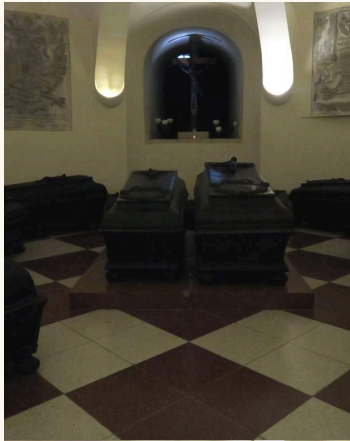


Photo: Burkhard Mücke, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Catacombs of St Stephen's Cathedral →

The burial levels under the choir, the transept and Stephansplatz itself: the Ducal Crypt of the early Habsburgs, the bishops' crypt, and the baroque vaults in which exactly 10,893 people were buried between 1745 and 1783.

ADMISSION €8, children 6–14 €3 **DURATION** 30 min



Photo: Welleschik, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Capuchin Crypt →

The Habsburg burial vault under the Capuchin church on Neuer Markt: 150 people in ten chambers, among them Maria Theresa, Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth.

ADMISSION €15, guided €21

DURATION self-guided, tour about 1 hr

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-vienna

Michaelergruft →

The baroque communal crypt under the Michaelerkirche, at the gate of the Hofburg: wooden coffins with vanitas paintings, several of them open, and close to two dozen bodies that the dry air mummified naturally, still in their clothes.

ADMISSION €10, children €5, Fri/Sat only **DURATION** 45 min



Photo: Alfred Diem, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

Third Man Tour – the Vienna sewers →

The City of Vienna's tour of the sewer from Carol Reed's 1949 film: down the original spiral staircase used in the chase, 7 m below Karlsplatz, into the cholera sewers of the 1830s and on to the vault where the River Wien disappears under the Naschmarkt.

ADMISSION €18, age 12+, May–Oct **DURATION** 45 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-vienna



Photo: Wolfgang Sauber, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Seegrotte Hinterbrühl →

A former gypsum mine in the Vienna Woods, flooded in 1912 when a blast opened a spring: a walk through the galleries and a boat trip on a lake of 6,200 m², 60 m below the surface.

ADMISSION €18, children 5-14 €12 **DURATION** 50 min



Photo: C.Stadler/Bwag, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Roman Museum and Michaelerplatz →

What is left of the legionary fortress of Vindobona: excavations below street level inside the Roman Museum, and Roman house remains lying open in the middle of Michaelerplatz in a setting designed by Hans Hollein in 1992.

ADMISSION €8, under 19 free

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-vienna



UNDERGROUND IN PRAGUE

Prague Underground

Photo: Ondřej Kořínek, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

10

CZECHIA · PRAGUE

Prague Underground

Not tunnels but buried ground floors – plus fortress passages, bunkers and a sewage works.

2–8 m

BELOW THE STREET

12th c.

OLDEST ROOMS

1,017 m

OF CASEMATES

100 CZK

UNDERGROUND SURCHARGE

Photo: MONUDET, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

OLD TOWN SQUARE, VYŠEHRAĐ, WENCESLAS SQUARE, BUBENEČ

The Vltava flooded the Old Town so often that from the 13th century the ground was raised by two to four metres. The Romanesque houses were left standing and their ground floors became cellars. Beneath the Old Town Hall you can see them today, two to eight metres below the pavement.

NO CONNECTED LABYRINTH

Prague's underground is a set of separate sites, each with its own operator and ticket desk. To see the Town Hall, Vyšehrad and a bunker in one day, you buy three tickets.

At Vyšehrad a fortress passage ends in the Gorlice hall, 12 metres high. Six original statue groups from Charles Bridge stand inside; those on the bridge are copies.

BEFORE YOU GO

- The underground costs extra: Circuit B adds 100 CZK to the basic ticket.
- In the first hour after opening, the Town Hall basic ticket is half price.
- Book Vyšehrad online: 295 instead of 330 CZK, max. 30 people per tour.
- The Hotel Jalta bunker needs a booking at least five hours ahead.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“Medieval tunnels run under the Old Town”~~ – they are the buried ground floors of Romanesque houses. ~~“The underground is in the Town Hall ticket”~~ – it costs 100 or 150 CZK extra and is guided only.

ADMISSION

Town Hall 350 CZK (about \$16.50) plus 100 CZK underground (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

Metro A Staroměstská; Vyšehrad: metro C Vyšehrad

OPENING HOURS

Town Hall Apr–Dec 9 am–8 pm, Jan–Mar 10 am–7 pm

GOOD TO KNOW

Tours in Czech and English

**Current hours, prices and tickets**

underground-atlas.com/prague-underground

NEARBY · Bezovka bunker under Parukářka · Sedlec Ossuary near Kutná Hora

UNDERGROUND IN PRAGUE

Prague Underground



Photo: Ondřej Kořínek, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Old Town Hall Underground →

The largest connected set of medieval halls, passages and cellars in Prague, and the one place where you can see what the Old Town actually did in the 13th century.

ADMISSION 350 CZK plus 100 CZK underground

DURATION about 1 hr



Photo: Piotrus, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Vyšehrad casemates and the Gorlice hall →

From the Brick Gate the route runs into a passage of the Baroque fortress that Emperor Ferdinand III ordered built from 1654, and ends in Gorlice: about 290 m² under a 12-metre barrel vault, built between 1656 and 1678 as a mustering space and store.

ADMISSION 330 CZK, online 295 CZK **DURATION** 45-60 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/prague-underground

Podolí casemates →

The fortress's second underground route runs through early-modern casemates that were converted into air-raid shelters in the Second World War. What you see is the wartime fit-out, period sanitary installations and the wall inscriptions left by the so-called Vyšehrad Riders in the 1950s.

ADMISSION 270 CZK, online 245 CZK **DURATION** 45-60 min



Photo: Ondřej Žvábek, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Crypt of the Church of Sts Cyril and Methodius →

Seven Czechoslovak parachutists hid in the crypt of this Orthodox church on Resslova for 21 nights after the attack on Reinhard Heydrich, and fought their last fight here on 18 June 1942. A bust and a life story now stand for each of the seven, and an exhibition in the antechamber runs from the Munich Agreement to the reprisals.

ADMISSION free, closed Mondays **DURATION** 45-60 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/prague-underground



Photo: Štěpán, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

The bunker under the Hotel Jalta



Beneath the Hotel Jalta on Wenceslas Square lies a shelter built with the hotel and intended for the military general staff. Until 1989 state security officers sat here every day listening in on Western hotel guests.

ADMISSION 250 CZK, booking required **DURATION** about 60 min



Photo: Lukáš Kalista, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Old sewage works, Bubeneč →

The treatment plant that went into service in 1906 to plans by the engineer William Heerlein Lindley still has its steam engines, boiler house and underground settling chambers.

ADMISSION 280 CZK, weekends only **DURATION** about 70 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/prague-underground



UNDERGROUND IN WEST BOHEMIA

Pilsen Underground

Photo: Jan Polák, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

11

CZECHIA · WEST BOHEMIA

Pilsen Underground

Two systems, often confused: medieval townhouse cellars and nine kilometres of lagering cellars.

13 km

CELLAR SYSTEM

800 m

OPEN TO VISITORS

10 °C

UNDER THE OLD TOWN

250 CZK

ADMISSION

Photo: P.H. Louw, CC BY 2.5 nl, Wikimedia Commons

OLD TOWN, VELESLAVÍNOVA, PILSNER URQUELL BREWERY

From the late 13th to the 18th century, the people of Pilsen cut their cellars into soft sandstone, in places three levels deep. The result is a labyrinth of about 13 kilometres. You can walk 800 metres of it, in a helmet and with a guide, past some 20 wells and soakaways.

CELLARS WITHOUT THE DEAD

Nobody was ever buried here: the passages served as storerooms, ice cellars, fermenting rooms for home breweries and well chambers. The route ends at a rebuilt water wheel some seven metres high.

A good kilometre east lie the nine kilometres of Pilsner Urquell's lagering cellars, cut into the rock from 1842. You only see them on the brewery tour, at 5 °C.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Book date and language online: max. 20 people per tour.
- The historical underground closes in January for maintenance.
- Children under three are not allowed in the underground or the brewery cellars.
- Underground in the morning, brewery in the afternoon: a kilometre apart.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“There are catacombs under Pilsen”~~ – these are storage, ice and well cellars, never burial sites. ~~“20 kilometres of tunnels”~~ – the operator gives about 13 km; 800 m are open.

ADMISSION

250 CZK (about \$11.80), brewery tour 430 CZK (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

Direct trains from Prague and Munich, then 20 min on foot

OPENING HOURS

high season daily 10 am–6 pm, closed in January

GOOD TO KNOW

Tours in Czech, German and English



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/pilsen-underground

NEARBY · Klatovy catacombs, 40 km south · Prokop adit in Stříbro

UNDERGROUND IN PLZEŇ

Pilsen Underground

Historical Underground →

The underground museum proper: about 800 metres of circuit through a medieval cellar labyrinth beneath the single block bounded by Perlová, Veleslavínova, Rooseveltova and Pražská.

ADMISSION 250 CZK, reduced 200 CZK **DURATION** 60 min



Photo: Jan Polák, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

The Pilsner Urquell brewery cellars →

Nine kilometres of fermenting and lagering cellars hand-cut into the sandstone under the brewery from 1842 onwards, for bottom-fermented brewing.

ADMISSION 430 CZK incl. tasting **DURATION** 100 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/pilsen-underground



Photo: Palickap, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Water tower and Masné krámy →

The prismatic water tower on Pražská, also called the Black Tower, is the best-preserved structure of its kind in Bohemia; Pilsen's water-works is first recorded in writing in 1532, and the tower fed the wells on the market square until the late 19th century.

ADMISSION included in the underground ticket

DURATION part of the tour



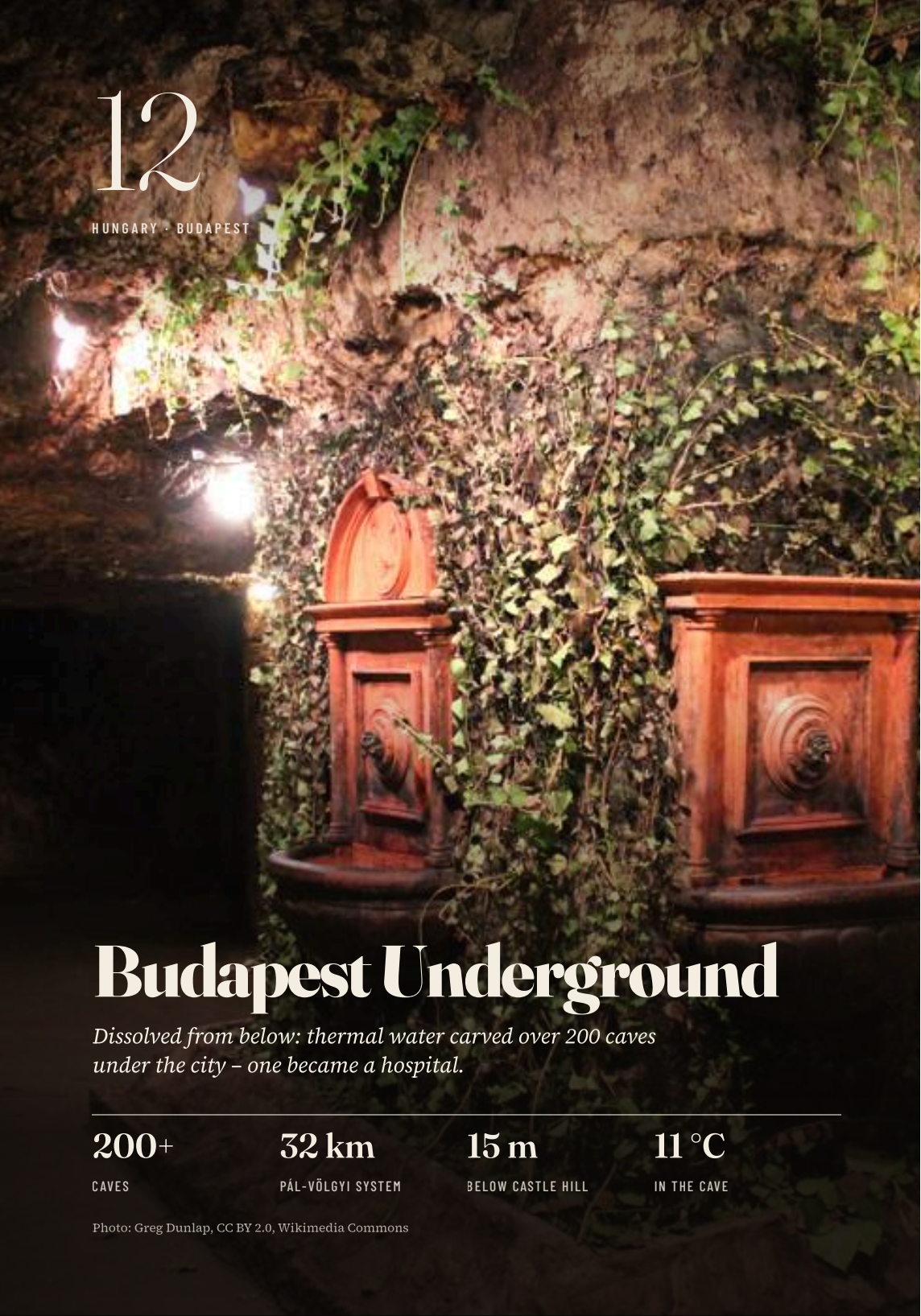
Photo: Jik jik, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Brewery Museum →

The museum occupies a 15th-century brewing-rights house at Veleslavínova 58/6 and doubles as the ticket desk and entrance for the historical underground; the two parts of the building are connected below ground.

ADMISSION 150 CZK, reduced 120 CZK **DURATION** about 60 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/pilsen-underground

A photograph of a cave interior. Two ornate wooden fountains are visible, set against a wall covered in dense green ivy. The scene is dimly lit, with warm light emanating from the fountains and the surrounding rock walls. The number '12' is printed in a large, white, serif font in the upper left corner.

12

HUNGARY • BUDAPEST

Budapest Underground

Dissolved from below: thermal water carved over 200 caves under the city – one became a hospital.

200+

CAVES

32 km

PÁL-VÖLGYI SYSTEM

15 m

BELOW CASTLE HILL

11 °C

IN THE CAVE

Photo: Greg Dunlap, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

CASTLE HILL, RÓZSADOMB, GELLÉRT HILL

Buda's caves were not made by rain but by warm water rising from the depths and dissolving the limestone from below. More than 200 are known, and the national park shows four on guided tours. From 1939 an emergency hospital was built into Castle Hill, later a nuclear bunker, secret until 2002.

THE HOSPITAL IN THE ROCK

Opened in February 1944 and planned for 60 beds, it held 650 to 700 wounded during the siege of 1944/45. Between 1958 and 1962 it was turned into a nuclear bunker.

Today it is a museum with wax figures and a strict ban on photography. Tours run in Hungarian or English; the Hungarian one is cheaper, and the English audio guide is free.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Closing days: Pál-völgyi shuts on Mondays, Szemlő-hegyi on Tuesdays.
- The combined ticket for both caves costs 5,900 HUF and lasts a year.
- Download the national park's audio guide app first; there is no signal below.
- Pál-völgyi: age 5 and 115 cm minimum, for 400-plus steps and a ladder.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~"Dracula was held in the Labyrinth"~~ – no source supports it; the cell is staged. ~~"Pál-völgyi is 7 km long"~~ – the national park gives about 32 km, Hungary's longest cave.

ADMISSION

Hospital 9,500 HUF (about \$30), caves 3,900 HUF (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

Castle Hill: bus 16 from Deák Ferenc tér or the funicular

OPENING HOURS

Hospital daily 10 am–7 pm, last tour 6 pm

GOOD TO KNOW

The hospital is cashless and bans photos



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/budapest-underground

NEARBY · Underground Railway Museum, Deák Ferenc tér · Molnár János Cave, divers only

UNDERGROUND IN BUDAPEST

Budapest Underground



Photo: Hospital in the Rock Marketing, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Hospital in the Rock Nuclear Bunker Museum →

A museum inside a 2,370 m² corridor system 10 to 15 m under Castle Hill: built into existing cellars and cavities from 1939, opened in February 1944 as an emergency surgical hospital, over-run during the siege of Budapest with 650 to 700 wounded in rooms meant for 60 beds, later extended into a nuclear shelter and kept secret until 2002.

ADMISSION 9,500 HUF, English tour €30 **DURATION** 60 min



Photo: Szent Tamás, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Castle Cave (Vár-barlang) →

A cave and cellar system more than 3 km long under the old town, shown by the Duna-Ipoly National Park: dozens of natural chambers and passages, some of them closed to visitors until recently. The theme is how thermal water caves became a maze of cellars – wine store, prison, air raid shelter, at one point even a nightclub.

ADMISSION from 3,900 HUF, online only

DURATION 35 min to 3 hrs

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/budapest-underground



Photo: Globetrotter19, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Labirintus (Úri utca 9) →

A privately run circuit through medieval cellars and natural cavities under the old town, with plaster casts of Hungarian kings, Gothic and Ottoman stonework and a photo exhibition about caves around the world. The high point is a completely dark passage you cross by holding on to a cord.

ADMISSION 2,500 HUF **DURATION** 30 min



Photo: Christo, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Pál-völgyi Cave →

Together with the Mátyás-hegyi section and the Hideg-lyuk-Harcsaszájú cave it runs to about 32 km – the longest cave in Hungary, longer than Baradla at Aggtelek. Some 500 m are built for visitors: tall fissure passages, globular thermal-water hollows, dripstone, calcite crystals and fossil shell imprints.

ADMISSION 3,900 HUF, combo 5,900 HUF **DURATION** about 1 hr

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/budapest-underground



Photo: Christo, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Szemlő-hegyi Cave →

A 2,230 m thermal-water cave whose walls are coated in pea-sized calcite nodules and gypsum crusts – hence its Hungarian nickname, the flower garden under the ground. Some 250 m are built out with concrete, steps and electric light, and a shaft nearly 50 m deep opens up beside the path.

ADMISSION 3,900 HUF, combo 5,900 HUF

DURATION about 40 min

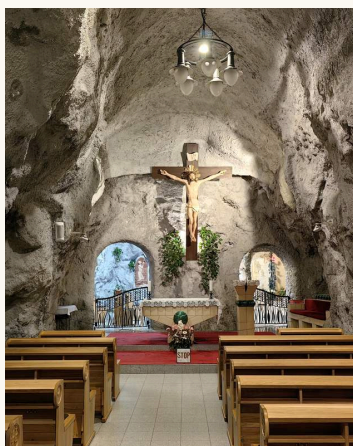


Photo: Random photos 1989, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Cave Church on Gellért Hill →

A Pauline church and monastery in a natural cave above the Danube, consecrated in 1926 and shaped after Lourdes. Banned in 1951, walled up behind two metres of concrete in the 1960s and reopened only in 1989/90.

ADMISSION 1,400 HUF, closed Sundays

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/budapest-underground



UNDERGROUND IN LESSER POLAND

Krakov Underground

Photo: Adrian Gryczuk, CC BY-SA 3.0 pl, Wikimedia Commons

13

POLAND · LESSER POLAND

Krakow Underground

Four metres below the Main Market lies medieval Krakow – paving, stalls, layers of ash.

4 m

BELOW THE RYNEK

700

FINDS ON SHOW

45 PLN

ADMISSION

4.3M

VISITORS SINCE 2010

Photo: Adrian Gryczuk, CC BY-SA 3.0 pl, Wikimedia Commons

MAIN MARKET SQUARE, WAWEL, SKAŁKA, BOCHNIA

From 2005, archaeologists dug beneath the eastern Main Market and found 11th-century road surfaces, walls of the old market halls and the burn layers of the Mongol raid of 1241. Since 2010 a museum has led through them, with some 700 finds, among them a lead bar weighing 693 kilograms.

SALT INSTEAD OF BONES

Forty kilometres east lies Bochnia, Poland's oldest rock-salt mine, begun in 1248 and so older than Wieliczka. At 230 metres underground you cross a flooded gallery by boat.

In the city, Poland's kings rest in the Wawel crypts, and its artists and scholars in the crypt at Skałka – the most recent, in 2004, Czesław Miłosz.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Book the Rynek Underground on-line with a time slot, or you may not get in.
- Free Tuesday ends at 3 pm; tickets at the desk only, often gone early.
- The museum is closed on the second Monday of every month.
- In Bochnia, collect the audio guide at the desk before going down.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“Part of the salt mine”~~ – the Rynek Underground is an archaeological dig beneath the square. ~~“Admission 21 to 26 zloty”~~ – since 2 January 2026 a ticket costs 45 PLN, reduced 35.

ADMISSION

45 PLN (about \$11.80), reduced 35, free on Tuesdays (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

10 min on foot from Kraków Główny station

OPENING HOURS

Mon, Wed, Thu 10 am–7 pm, Tue 10–3, Fri–Sun 10–8

GOOD TO KNOW

Closed on the second Monday of the month

**Current hours, prices and tickets**

underground-atlas.com/krakow-underground

NEARBY · Wieliczka Salt Mine, 14 km · Dragon's Den under Wawel Hill

UNDERGROUND IN KRAKÓW

Krakow Underground



Photo: Adrian Grycuik, CC BY-SA 3.0 pl, Wikimedia Commons

Rynek Underground →

The main site: an archaeological reserve four metres under the paving of the Main Market Square. The walkway threads between the walls of medieval trading halls, over 11th-century road surfaces and past some 700 finds.

ADMISSION 45 PLN, free on Tuesdays **DURATION** 60-90 min

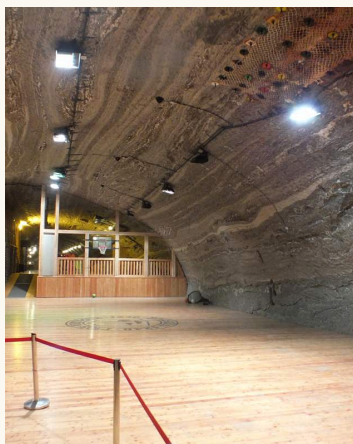


Photo: Aw58, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Bochnia Salt Mine →

Poland's oldest rock-salt mine, worked from 1248 and therefore older than Wieliczka, and part of the same UNESCO World Heritage site since 2013. You go down in the cage, ride a mine train, walk through a multimedia staging of Genoese merchants and Polish kings, and end up in the Wążyn chamber 250 metres below the surface.

ADMISSION online from about 82 PLN **DURATION** 3-4 hrs

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/krakow-underground



Photo: Unknown, public domain, Wikimedia Commons

Royal crypts in Wawel Cathedral



Poland's national necropolis lies under the cathedral. In the crypt of St Leonard from 1118, the oldest chamber, lie John III Sobieski and Tadeusz Kościuszko among others; Marshal Józef Piłsudski has rested under the Silver Bells Tower since 1937.

ADMISSION 26 PLN incl. cathedral **DURATION** about 10 min



Photo: Madzik stu, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Krypta Zasłużonych at Skalka →

The crypt under the Pauline basilica by the Vistula was fitted out between 1876 and 1880 by Teofil Żebrawski and has taken in Poland's artists and scholars ever since. The first burial, in 1880, was the chronicler Jan Długosz; the last, in 2004, the Nobel laureate Czesław Miłosz.

ADMISSION 30 PLN, cash only **DURATION** 1.5-2 hrs

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/krakow-underground



Photo: Zygmunt Put Zetpe0202, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Undercroft of St Adalbert's church



The smallest basement on the square: in the foundations of St Adalbert's, one of Kraków's oldest stone churches, the Archaeological Museum shows reconstructions of the wooden predecessors, the Romanesque church and the growth of the square since 1257.

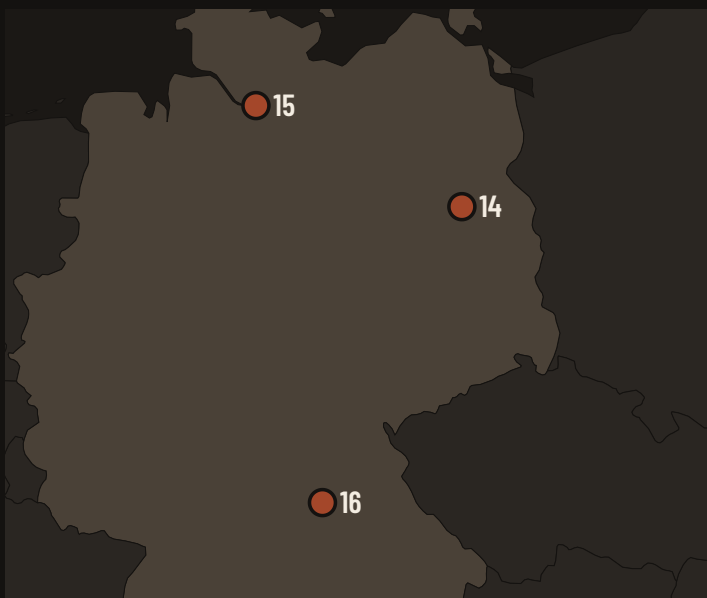
ADMISSION 7 PLN, free on Tuesdays **DURATION** 20-30 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/krakow-underground

04

Germany

Germany's underground mostly tells the story of the 20th century. Beneath Berlin lie air-raid shelters, the ruin of a flak tower and the traces of more than 75 escape tunnels from the years of the Wall. Hamburg has a tunnel under the Elbe from 1911 and a shelter for 2,702 people at its main station. Only Nuremberg is older: from 1380 on, brewers cut some 25,000 square metres of cellars into the sandstone.



— 14 Underground Berlin

— 16 Underground Nuremberg

— 15 Underground Hamburg

Map: Natural Earth (public domain)

14

GERMANY · BERLIN

Underground Berlin

No catacombs, no Middle Ages: Berlin's underground is bunkers, tunnels and the Cold War.

€18

PER TOUR

30 days

ADVANCE SALE

75+

ESCAPE TUNNELS

8–14 °C

UNDERGROUND

Photo: Fred Romero, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

GESUNDBRUNNEN, HUMBOLDTHAIN, ANHALTER BAHNHOF, TEMPELHOF

Sandy soil and a high water table left no room for old catacombs. What lies beneath Berlin is young: air-raid shelters in a U-Bahn station, the ruin of a flak tower, escape tunnels under the Wall, Cold War nuclear shelters. Almost all of it is guided only, with a ticket bought in advance.

TICKETS ONLINE ONLY

Berliner Unterwelten sells its tours only through its own online shop, released 30 days ahead. Nothing is sold on site, not even at the bookshop at Gesundbrunnen.

If everything is gone, try the Berlin Story Bunker at Anhalter Bahnhof: daily 10 am–7 pm, no booking, no guide. Or book Hidden Places at Tempelhof.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Buy exactly 30 days ahead; tickets cannot be exchanged or refunded.
- Wear sturdy closed shoes: sandals are turned away without a refund.
- Use the toilet first; there is none on any Unterwelten tour.
- Bring a jacket: it is 8–14 °C underground all year.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“Buy tickets at the booth at Gesundbrunnen”~~ – they are sold online only, up to 30 days ahead. ~~“A Führerbunker tour takes you inside”~~ – nothing survives to enter; the site is one information board.

ADMISSION

Unterwelten €18 (about \$20.60), reduced €13 (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

U8 or S-Bahn to Gesundbrunnen

OPENING HOURS

fixed tour slots; flak tower May–October only

GOOD TO KNOW

No photos or filming on any Unterwelten tour



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/underground-berlin

NEARBY · Berlin Wall Memorial · “Myth of Germania” exhibition

UNDERGROUND IN BERLIN

Underground Berlin



Photo: Video2005, public domain, Wikimedia Commons

Berliner Unterwelten: Dark Worlds →

The classic: genuine air-raid shelter rooms on several levels inside Gesundbrunnen station, behind a green door. They survived 1945 because blowing them up would have endangered the U-Bahn tunnel; the association rediscovered them in 1998.

ADMISSION €18, reduced €13, online only **DURATION** 90 min



Photo: Lukas Beck, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Humboldthain Flak Tower →

Three of the seven storeys of the flak tower ruin in Volkspark Humboldthain, crossed on walkways over open drops. Over-18s only, May to October, helmets provided; around 10 °C even in high summer.

ADMISSION €18, reduced €13, May-Oct **DURATION** 90 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-berlin



Photo: Dietmar Rabich, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Berlin Wall escape tunnels →

More than 75 escape tunnels are known, 19 of them successful. A 30-metre visitor tunnel leads to the only surviving original, dug in 1970/71 nine metres below ground.

ADMISSION €18, reduced €13, online only **DURATION** 90 min



Photo: Lukas Beck, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

The AEG Tunnel →

Germany's first underground railway tunnel, 295 metres long, linking two AEG factories in Wedding from 1897. Restored since 2016 after years under water, and a location for Babylon Berlin. Ages 14 and up.

ADMISSION €18, no reduced rate **DURATION** 90 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-berlin



Photo: Enno Lenze, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

Berlin Story Bunker →

A private museum in the 1942 Reichsbahn air-raid bunker at Anhalter Bahnhof: 3,000 square metres on three floors asking how Hitler could happen. Daily, no booking, no guide; one ticket covers all three exhibitions.

ADMISSION €18, reduced €12, card only **DURATION** 2-3 hrs



Photo: Denis Apel, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Tempelhof Airport: Hidden Places →

About two hours through the cellars, air-raid rooms and tunnels of the airport building, down to the film bunker that burned out at the end of the war. Private photos are allowed; children from 6 pay the reduced rate.

ADMISSION €17.50, reduced €12 **DURATION** about 2 hrs

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-berlin



UNDERGROUND IN HAMBURG

Underground Hamburg

Photo: Skgbl, CC0, Wikimedia Commons

15

GERMANY · HAMBURG

Underground Hamburg

A flak tower with a garden on its roof – and under the Elbe, a tunnel from 1911.

426.5 m

OLD ELBE TUNNEL

1911

OPENED

2,702

SHELTER PLACES

12 °C

UNDERGROUND

Photo: Thomas Wolf, www.foto-tw.de, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

ST. PAULI, LANDUNGSBRÜCKEN, MAIN STATION, ALTONA

Say “bunker Hamburg” and most people mean the Green Bunker, a 1942 flak tower where a free mountain path has climbed 58 metres to a roof garden since July 2024. To get underground you go elsewhere: the Old Elbe Tunnel, the deep shelter at the main station and the dis-used Schellfisch tunnel.

BUILT BY FORCED LABOUR

Flak Tower IV went up between April 1942 and summer 1943, built by up to 2,400 forced labourers. During air raids they themselves were not allowed inside.

It was designed for 18,000 people; in the summer of 1943 up to 25,000 crowded in. In 1952 the first Tagesschau news bulletin went out from the bunker.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Book Hamburger Unterwelten tours early; there are no waiting lists.
- Bring a proper torch for the Schellfisch tunnel; a phone light is not enough.
- The Hamm Bunker Museum opens on Thursdays only, no booking, €3.
- Walk the Elbe tunnel in the evening; by day it belongs to cyclists.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“Built in just 300 days in 1942”~~ – the building records date it from April 1942 to summer 1943. ~~“The roof garden needs a ticket”~~ – path and garden are free; a turnstile only counts visitors.

ADMISSION

Elbe tunnel and roof garden free, tours €10–12 (about \$11.50–13.75) (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

U3 to Feldstraße, S1/S3 or U3 to Landungsbrücken

OPENING HOURS

Elbe tunnel 24 hours; path May–Sept 9 am–9 pm

GOOD TO KNOW

Unterwelten tours from age 12, booking only



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/underground-hamburg

NEARBY · Bunker tour under the Reeperbahn · Behringstraße bunker

UNDERGROUND IN HAMBURG

Underground Hamburg



Photo: Skgbl, CC0, Wikimedia Commons

Green Bunker, St. Pauli →

A 1942 flak tower, built higher by 2024: outside, a 560-metre mountain path climbs 335 steps and ramps to a roof garden 58 metres up. Only the Hildegarden association leads tours into the historic interior.

ADMISSION free, no ticket **DURATION** 60-90 min



Photo: Puusterke, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Old Elbe Tunnel →

A 426.5-metre tiled tube under the Norderelbe, opened in 1911 for the dock workers. After some 15 years of restoration both tubes have been open since 4 May 2026; reliefs of sea creatures line the walls.

ADMISSION free, open 24 hours **DURATION** 10-15 min each way

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-hamburg



Photo: Uwe Rohwedder, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Steintorwall deep shelter →

A three-storey shelter beside the main station, built in 1941–43 and refitted by 1969 as a civil-defence bunker for 2,702 people. The pressure doors, filters and generators date from the Cold War. Ages 12 and up.

ADMISSION €12, reduced €10 **DURATION** about 100 min



Photo: Uchresti, CC BY-SA 2.0 de, Wikimedia Commons

Schellfisch tunnel, Altona →

A railway tunnel of 1876 between Altona station and the Elbe quays, the route by which fresh fish reached the city. Disused since 1993. About two kilometres over track and ballast, with your own torch.

ADMISSION €10, reduced €8 **DURATION** 90–120 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-hamburg



Photo: Uwe Rohwedder, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Hamm Bunker Museum →

A four-tube underground shelter of 1940/41 in the grounds of the Wichern church, about five metres down. Each tube held 50 people. Open on Thursdays only, no booking needed.

ADMISSION €3, children up to 12 €1.50 **DURATION** 45-60 min



Photo: Pauli-Pirat, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Wilhelmsburg Energy Bunker →

Hamburg's second flak tower, blown up inside after the war and now a renewable-energy plant. Viewing platform about 30 metres up, step-free, dogs welcome; open Friday to Sunday.

ADMISSION platform and tour free **DURATION** 45-60 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-hamburg



UNDERGROUND IN BAVARIA

Underground Nuremberg

Photo: Janericloebe, public domain, Wikimedia Commons

16

GERMANY · BAVARIA

Underground Nuremberg

A whole storey of the city cut into sandstone: beer cellars, water tunnels, dungeons, an art bunker.

25,000 m² **4**

OF CELLARS

LEVELS DEEP

1380

FIRST RECORD

8–10 °C

UNDERGROUND

Photo: Z thomas, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

CASTLE HILL, OLD TOWN, MAIN STATION

Anyone who wanted to brew beer in Nuremberg needed a cellar of their own – the council decreed it in 1380. Up to 42 breweries cut their cellars as much as four levels deep into the castle sandstone. Add water tunnels, casemates, the dungeons under the town hall and two nuclear bunkers. All guided only.

THE NIGHT OF 2 JANUARY 1945

From 1940 the cellars were linked into an air-raid shelter for 15,000 to 20,000 people. On the night the bombing destroyed 90 per cent of the Old Town, an estimated 35,000 to 40,000 sheltered there.

In the art bunker below the castle, Dürer's works, the imperial regalia and Veit Stoss's Annunciation survived the war.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Two operators, two ticket desks: book the cellars and the art bunker separately.
- The Nürnberg Card halves the price of the Unterwelten tours.
- Book the dungeons online; the town hall sells no tickets.
- Bring a jacket: 8–10 °C and over 90 per cent humidity.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“The catacombs of Nuremberg”~~ – they are beer cellars, water tunnels and bunkers, not burial sites. ~~“Tour €5, reduced €4”~~ – in 2026 the rock cellars cost €13, reduced €10.

ADMISSION

Rock cellars €13 (about \$14.90), reduced €10 (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

On foot from the main station, 1.5 km to the castle

OPENING HOURS

Mon–Fri 11 am–5 pm, on the hour

GOOD TO KNOW

English tour Sat and Sun 11:10 am, €14



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/underground-nuremberg

NEARBY · Laufertor tower bunkers, special tours only

UNDERGROUND IN NUREMBERG

Underground Nuremberg



Photo: Janericloebe, public domain, Wikimedia Commons

Historic Rock-Cut Cellars →

The largest connected rock-cellar labyrinth in southern Germany, cut from 1380 onwards on four levels up to 20 metres deep into the castle sandstone. The tour ends at the Altstadtthof brewery.

ADMISSION €13, reduced €10 **DURATION** 60 min

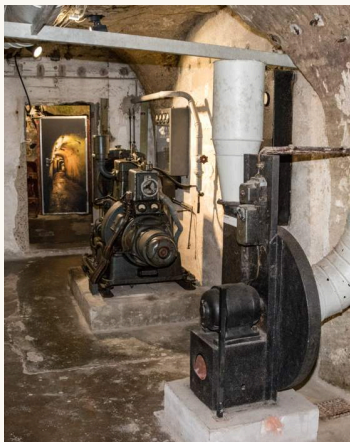


Photo: Derzno, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Historic Art Bunker →

A rock cellar converted from 1940, up to 24 metres below the Imperial Castle, with heating, ventilation and emergency power. Dürer's works, the imperial regalia and Veit Stoss's Kraków altar survived the bombing here.

ADMISSION €12, reduced €10 **DURATION** 60 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-nuremberg

Nuclear bunker at the main station →

A shelter against nuclear, biological and chemical attack below the station's central hall, for some 2,400 people, mostly travellers. Original bunks to try; warm and bright. Tours in German only, daily at 2:30 pm.

ADMISSION €13, reduced €11 **DURATION** 75 min

Castle casemates →

Bombproof passages inside the castle bastions, built by Antonio Fazuni between 1538 and 1545. Through the gun ports you look out into the castle moat. Meeting point at the Art Bunker, Obere Schmiedgasse 52.

ADMISSION €12, reduced €10 **DURATION** 60 min

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-nuremberg



Photo: Janericloebe, public domain, Wikimedia Commons

Dungeons under the Town Hall →

The “Nuremberg Hole” beneath the Old Town Hall held prisoners awaiting trial and the condemned from 1340 to 1813. Twelve cells, a torture chamber, the prison kitchen. Ages 10 and up.

ADMISSION €10, reduced €8, advance only **DURATION** 45 min

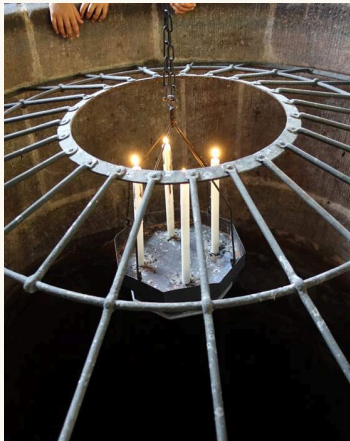


Photo: Joseolgon, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Deep Well, Imperial Castle →

A shaft more than 50 metres deep, driven straight down into the rock inside the well house of the outer bailey. A camera run shows its depth on every tour. Run by the Bavarian Palace Administration.

ADMISSION €4 with Sinwell Tower, under 18 free

DURATION short tour

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/underground-nuremberg

05

Türkiye

Two underworlds that could hardly be more different. In Istanbul, a hall of 336 columns has held water for the imperial palace since the 6th century; today you stand on walkways among light and reflections. In Cappadocia, an official estimate puts 150 to 200 refuges in the tuff, up to 85 metres deep and sealed with rolling stones. A city that stored water, and a landscape that hid people.



— 17 Cisterns of Istanbul

— 18 Cappadocia Underground

Map: Natural Earth (public domain)

17

TÜRKİYE · ISTANBUL

Cisterns of Istanbul

336 columns, 80,000 cubic metres of water – and two Medusa heads whose origin nobody knows.

336

COLUMNS

138 m

LONG

1,950 TL

ADMISSION

52

STEPS DOWN

Photo: Bhasker Thodla, CC BY 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

SULTANAHMET, FATİH · HISTORIC PENINSULA

In the 6th century Emperor Justinian had a reservoir built next to Hagia Sophia to supply the Great Palace: a hall 138 by 65 metres whose vaults rest on 336 columns. The water came 19 kilometres from the Belgrade Forest. Since 2022 you walk on new gangways set just above the surface.

THREE CISTERNs, THREE PRICES

The Basilica Cistern belongs to the city, not the culture ministry. So the Museum Pass is not valid, you pay by card or Istanbulkart only, and from 7:30 pm there is a separate, dearer evening ticket.

A few minutes west lies the older Şerefiye Cistern, with 32 columns and a light show, for about a third of the price. Binbirdirek is dry and is now mostly hired out for events.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Come at 9 am or after 5 pm; from 10 am the queue runs 30–60 minutes.
- Bring a card or Istanbulkart: the ticket desk takes no cash.
- Don't queue after 6 pm: the hall is cleared at 6:30 for the night shift.
- Walk to the far back left for the Medusas; many turn round too early.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“Included in the Museum Pass”~~ – the cistern is municipal; neither the Museum Pass nor the Müzekart applies. ~~“Since April 2026 it costs 1 lira”~~ – only for Turkish citizens; foreign visitors pay 1,950 TL.

ADMISSION

1,950 TL (about \$40), evenings 3,000 TL, under 7 free (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

Tram T1 to Sultanahmet, opposite Hagia Sophia

OPENING HOURS

daily 9 am–6:30 pm and 7:30–10 pm

GOOD TO KNOW

Card payment only; day tickets are not valid at night



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/basilica-cistern

NEARBY · Şerefiye and Binbirdirek cisterns · Valens Aqueduct

UNDERGROUND IN ISTANBUL

Cisterns of Istanbul

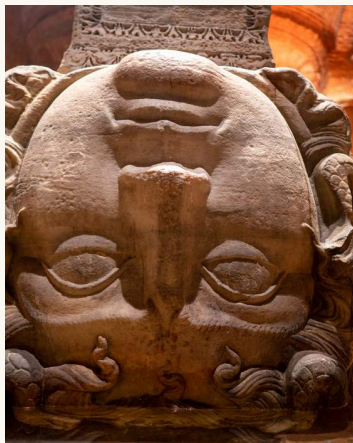


Photo: Nan Palmero, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

Basilica Cistern →

The great Justinianic cistern next to Hagia Sophia: 336 columns, about 9,800 m² of floor, 80,000 m³ of capacity. The draws are the two Medusa heads used as column bases in the north-west corner, the Weeping Column with its teardrop or peacock-eye pattern, and the changing art and light installations put in since 2022.

ADMISSION 1,950 TL, evenings 3,000 TL **DURATION** 30–45 min

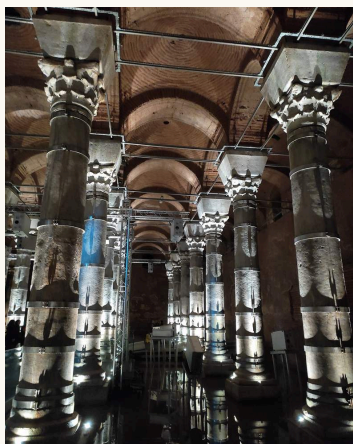


Photo: Interfase, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Şerefiye Cistern →

About 1,600 years old and therefore older than Yerebatan; with no building inscription it is attributed on architectural grounds to Emperor Theodosius II (408–450). Roughly 24 by 40 metres, 11 metres high, 32 columns with original Corinthian capitals in Marmara marble and 45 sail vaults.

ADMISSION about 700 TL, not officially confirmed

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/basilica-cistern

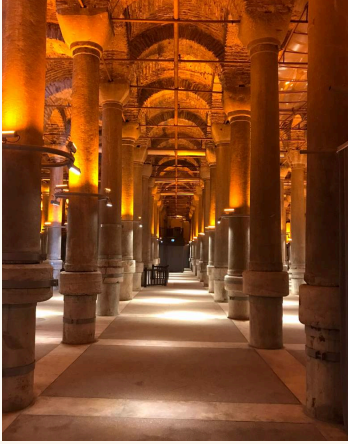


Photo: Goktugatesag, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Binbirdirek Cistern →

The "cistern of 1,001 columns" – in reality there were 224 columns in 16 rows, of which 212 survive. 64 by 56 metres, more than 3,000 m², around 40,000 m³. What makes it unusual is the double-stacked columns with a marble ring between the two shafts.

ADMISSION about 200 TL, not officially confirmed

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/basilica-cistern

18

TÜRKİYE · CAPPADOCIA

Cappadocia Underground

Refuges cut into soft tuff, up to 85 metres deep, sealed from inside with rolling stones.

85 m

DEEP

150–200

SITES

€13

ADMISSION

1963

REDISCOVERED

Photo: Nevit Dilmen, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

NEVŞEHİR PROVINCE · DERINKUYU, KAYMAKLI, ÖZKONAK

Into the tuff of the plateau, people dug refuges with stables, store-rooms, wine presses and churches. Most of the work came during the Arab-Byzantine wars, when whole villages went underground with their livestock for days at a time. The culture ministry estimates 150 to 200 sites; five state-run ones are open.

DERINKUYU OR KAYMAKLI?

Derinkuyu goes deeper, about 85 metres, with a long, low stairway down. If tight spaces bother you, this is the toughest passage in Cappadocia.

Kaymaklı is shallower but more of a maze, with four open floors and more rooms. Both cost €13, lie 10 km apart and fit into one morning.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Arrive at 8 am or after 2 pm; in between, tour groups jam the passages.
- On a Green Tour, check which city is included before you book.
- There is no direct bus from Göreme; change in Nevşehir.
- Unsure about tight spaces? Try Özkonak or Mazi first.

WHAT OTHERS GET WRONG

~~“20,000 people lived in Derinkuyu”~~ – an unsupported estimate; these were refuges for days or weeks. ~~“18 levels, 8 of them open”~~ – only a depth of about 85 m and roughly 10% open are documented.

ADMISSION

Derinkuyu and Kaymaklı €13 each (about \$15), Özkonak €6, Mazi €3 (as of 09/2026)

GETTING THERE

Minibus from Nevşehir towards Niğde

OPENING HOURS

daily 8 am–7 pm, winter 8 am–5 pm

GOOD TO KNOW

Foreigners pay in euro; under 8 free



Current hours, prices and tickets

underground-atlas.com/cappadocia-underground-cities

NEARBY · Ihlara Valley · Selime Monastery · Göreme Open-Air Museum

UNDERGROUND IN CAPPADOCIA

Cappadocia Underground

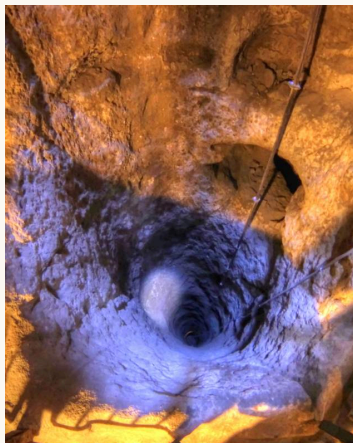


Photo: Nevit Dilmen, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Derinkuyu →

The deepest site open to visitors: around 85 metres by the culture ministry's figure, with stables, storerooms, a refectory, a wine press, a barrel-vaulted room on the second level known as the missionary school, and a cruciform church at the bottom. A 55-metre shaft served as both ventilation and well.

ADMISSION €13, under 8 free **DURATION** about 60 min



Photo: Nevit Dilmen, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Kaymaklı →

The largest of the excavated sites by area, known in antiquity as Eneğüp. Four floors have been cleared and lit, with the rooms grouped around the ventilation shafts.

ADMISSION €13, under 8 free

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/cappadocia-underground-cities

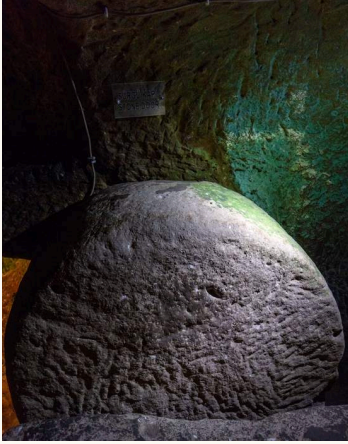


Photo: Diego Delso, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Özkonak →

A small two-storey site on the northern slope of İdiş Dağı, 14 km from Avanos, found by a farmer in 1972 and opened the same year. Tunnels, rolling stone doors, a stable and a wine press packed into a compact space.

ADMISSION €6, in the Museum Pass

Mazi →

Ancient Mataza, 18 km south of Ürgüp and 10 km east of Kaymaklı. Probably four storeys, of which two can be walked.

ADMISSION €3

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/cappadocia-underground-cities

Tatlarin →

Found in 1975 and partly open since 1991, on a hill the villagers call the Kale, the castle. Two cleared storeys can be walked; you enter through a 15-metre tunnel into a large hall with a rolling stone door.

ADMISSION free



Photo: Dosseman, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Kayaşehir beneath Nevşehir Castle →

A rock-cut settlement of tunnels, chambers and living quarters uncovered in 2014 during demolition for an urban renewal scheme on the castle hill in Nevşehir. It is run by the municipality, not by the culture ministry.

ADMISSION about 50 TL, not officially confirmed

MORE ON · underground-atlas.com/cappadocia-underground-cities

Bones, crypts and Capuchins

How Europe dealt with its dead: from ossuary to mummy crypt to royal tomb. Keep your voice down, touch nothing and respect the photo rules.

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|---|--|----|
| 1 | Catacombs of Paris
Paris · The ossuary beneath Montparnasse: the bones of some six million people. | 12 |
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| 2 | Catacombs of Sant'Agnese
Rome · The Capuchin Crypt on Via Veneto, decorated with the bones of some 3,700 dead. | 36 |
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| 3 | Cimitero delle Fontanelle
Naples · The Cimitero delle Fontanelle, open again since April 2026, online booking only. | 41 |
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| 4 | Capuchin Catacombs
Palermo · Clothed dead in wall niches, sorted by rank and trade. No photos. | 52 |
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| 5 | Michaelergruft
Vienna · The Michaelergruft in Vienna, only a few tours a week. | 59 |
|---|--|----|
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|---|---|----|
| 6 | Royal crypts in Wawel Cathedral
Kraków · The royal tombs beneath Wawel Cathedral in Kraków. | 81 |
|---|---|----|
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- THEME ROUTE
- 111

Bunkers and the Cold War

From Churchill's basement rooms to the nuclear bunker beneath a hotel: shelters from the war and the Cold War, many by guided tour only and in small groups.

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|----------|---|----|
| 1 | Churchill War Rooms
London · The Churchill War Rooms, timed tickets, wheelchair accessible. | 18 |
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| 2 | Hidden London: Clapham South Deep-Level Shelter
London · Clapham South, one of the deep-level shelters under the London Underground. | 19 |
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| 3 | Secret Wartime Tunnels – Operation Dynamo
Dover · The tunnels under Dover Castle; the Operation Dynamo tour was recently closed for maintenance. | 24 |
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| 4 | The bunker under the Hotel Jalta
Prague · The bunker beneath Prague's Hotel Jalta, only seven adults per tour. | 66 |
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| 5 | Hospital in the Rock Nuclear Bunker Museum
Budapest · The Hospital in the Rock and nuclear bunker inside Budapest's Castle Hill. | 74 |
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| 6 | Humboldthain Flak Tower
Berlin · The Humboldthain flak tower, inside with Berliner Unterwelten. | 86 |
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| 7 | Berlin Wall escape tunnels
Berlin · The escape tunnel at Bernauer Straße. | 87 |
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| 8 | Steintorwall deep shelter
Hamburg · The Steintorwall deep shelter at Hamburg's main station. | 93 |
|----------|--|----|
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- | | | |
|----------|---|----|
| 9 | Historic Art Bunker
Nuremberg · The art bunker in which Nuremberg kept its treasures through the war. | 98 |
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Water beneath the city

Cisterns, aqueducts, sewers and a tunnel under the river: how cities collected, hid and crossed their water.

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|---|---|-----|
| 1 | Basilica Cistern
Istanbul · The Basilica Cistern with its 336 columns and the Medusa heads. | 104 |
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|---|---|----|
| 2 | Matera Underground
Matera · The Palombaro Lungo beneath Matera's piazza, five million litres. | 44 |
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| 3 | Napoli Sotterranea, Piazza San Gaetano
Naples · Napoli Sotterranea: the cisterns of the Greek aqueduct. | 40 |
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| 4 | Qanat Gesuitico Alto
Palermo · The Qanat Gesuitico Alto in Palermo, in boots and helmet. | 53 |
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| 5 | Third Man Tour – the Vienna sewers
Vienna · The Third Man Tour through Vienna's sewers, age 12 and up. | 59 |
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| 6 | Brunel Museum and the Thames Tunnel shaft, Rotherhithe
London · The shaft of Brunel's Thames Tunnel. | 19 |
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| 7 | Old Elbe Tunnel
Hamburg · Hamburg's Old Elbe Tunnel, free for pedestrians. | 92 |
|---|--|----|
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Places by occasion

JUST TURN UP, NO BOOKING

Matera 44 · Palermo 50 · Vienna 56 · Istanbul 102 · Cappadocia 106 · Naples 38 · Hamburg 90

Buying at the desk is enough. In Istanbul and Cappadocia arrive early and the queue is short.

BOOK EARLY

Paris 12 · Berlin 84 · Kraków 78 · Edinburgh 26 · London 16 · Rome 32

Paris releases slots 7 days ahead, Berlin 30 days. Kraków often sells out the day before, Edinburgh in August.

FREE OR NEARLY FREE

Hamburg 90 · Matera 44 · Palermo 50

Hamburg's bunker roof and Old Elbe Tunnel cost nothing, the Palombaro Lungo €3, Palermo €5.

WITH CHILDREN

Paris 12 · Rome 32 · Matera 44 · Kraków 78 · Istanbul 102 · Cappadocia 106

No age limit. Elsewhere there are limits: Berlin 7+, Hidden London 10+, Hamburg bunkers 12+.

STEP-FREE ACCESS

Kraków 78 · London 16 · Budapest 72

Kraków's Rynek Underground, the Churchill War Rooms and Budapest's Szemlő-hegyi cave. Elsewhere, expect stairs.

PHOTOGRAPHY ALLOWED

Paris 12 · Matera 44 · Kraków 78 · Istanbul 102 · Prague 62 · Plzeň 68

It is banned in Palermo, mostly in Rome, at Mary King's Close, with Berliner Unterwelten and in the Hospital in the Rock.

Index

Basilica Cistern	104	Cimitero delle Fontanelle	41
Below: a 1.5 km one-way route	14	Cisterns of Istanbul	102
Berlin Story Bunker	88	Cripta del Peccato Originale	48
Berlin Wall escape tunnels	87	Crypt of Palermo Cathedral	53
Berliner Unterwelten: Dark Worlds	86	Crypt of the Church of Sts Cyril and Methodius	65
Binbirdirek Cistern	105	Crypts: St Paul's Cathedral and St Bride's	20
Blair Street Vaults	28	Damnation Alley, Niddry Street South	30
Bochnia Salt Mine	80	Deep Well, Imperial Castle	100
Brewery Museum	71	Derinkuyu	108
Brunel Museum and the Thames Tunnel shaft, Rotherhithe	19	Dumpy – the Cold War government bunker	25
Budapest Underground	72	Dungeons under the Town Hall	100
Cappadocia Underground	106	Free entry at the desk only	15
Capuchin Catacombs	52	Galleria Borbonica, the Bourbon Tunnel	40
Capuchin Crypt	58	Gilmerton Cove (closed in 2026)	30
Capuchin crypt at Savoca	54	Green Bunker, St. Pauli	92
Capuchin Crypt – not a catacomb	36	Hamm Bunker Museum	94
Castle casemates	99	Hidden London: Aldwych – the end of the line	18
Castle Cave (Vár-barlang)	74	Hidden London: Clapham South Deep-Level Shelter	19
Catacomb of Porta d'Ossuna	52	Historic Art Bunker	98
Catacomb of San Giovanni, Syracuse	54	Historic Rock-Cut Cellars	98
Catacombs of Domitilla	34	Historical Underground	70
Catacombs of Paris	12	Hospital in the Rock Nuclear Bunker Museum	74
Catacombs of Priscilla	35	Humboldthain Flak Tower	86
Catacombs of Rome	32	Ipogeo MateraSum	46
Catacombs of San Callisto	34	Kayaşehir beneath Nevşehir Castle	110
Catacombs of San Gennaro	41	Kaymaklı	108
Catacombs of San Sebastiano	35	Krakow Underground	78
Catacombs of Sant'Agnese	36		
Catacombs of St Stephen's Cathedral	58		
Cave Church on Gellért Hill	76		
Churchill War Rooms	18		

Krypta Zasłużonych at Skalka	81	Santa Maria de Idris and San Giovanni in Monterrone	47
La Raccolta delle Acque with the palombaro of the Sasso Caveoso	48	Schellfischstunnel, Altona	93
Labirintus (Úri utca 9)	75	Secret Wartime Tunnels – Operation Dynamo	24
LAPIS Museum, Basilica della Pietrasanta	42	Seegrotte Hinterbrühl	60
London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE	20	Steintorwall deep shelter	93
Matera Underground	44	Storica Casa Grotta di Vico Solitario	46
Mazi	109	Szemlő-hegyi Cave	76
Medieval tunnels – the Spur tunnels under the northern outworks	25	Tatlarin	110
Michaelergruft	59	Tempelhof Airport: Hidden Places	88
Naples Underground	38	The AEG Tunnel	87
Napoli Sotterranea, Piazza San Gaetano	40	The bunker under the Hotel Jalta	66
Niddry Street Vaults	29	The exit is somewhere else	15
Nuclear bunker at the main station	99	The Pilsner Urquell brewery cellars	70
Old Elbe Tunnel	92	The Real Mary King's Close	28
Old sewage works, Bubeneč	66	Third Man Tour – the Vienna sewers	59
Old Town Hall Underground	64	Tickets and time slots	14
Özkonak	109	Tunnels of Dover	22
Palermo Underground	50	Undercroft of St Adalbert's church	82
Pilsen Underground	68	Underground Berlin	84
Podolí casemates	65	Underground Edinburgh	26
Prague Underground	62	Underground Hamburg	90
Pál-völgyi Cave	75	Underground Hospital	24
Qanat Gesuitico Alto	53	Underground London	16
Roman Museum and Michaelerplatz	60	Underground Nuremberg	96
Royal crypts in Wawel Cathedral	81	Underground Vienna	56
Rynek Underground	80	Vaults Museum, Blair Street	29
San Lorenzo Maggiore – La Neapolis Sotterrata	42	Vyšehrad casemates and the Gorlice hall	64
San Pietro Barisano	47	Water tower and Masné krámy	71
		Wilhelmsburg Energy Bunker	94
		Şerefiye Cistern	104

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