

Natural Monument Designated by Gosen City

Osawa Cave

Location Kariwa, Gosen City

Date of Designation November 19, 1993

There are many limestone caves located in Japan. Limestone is a hard rock consisting of various shell fragments and fossilized debris that were formed millions of years ago during the Paleozoic Era. Although a limestone cave, Osawa Cave was formed at a later date in the Cenozoic Eocene Pliocene Era, in a sandstone formation formed by the accumulation of sand. It is rare to find limestone caves in such a new formation, and it is said that there are only a few of them in Japan.

The sandstone in this area is called Osawa-ishi, which is made up of hardened sand that has been broken up from limestone. Since limestone is easily soluble in water containing carbon dioxide, elements such as rainwater seeped into the cracks, and dissolved the limestone, resulting in forming the Osawa cave.

Osawa cave stretches in two directions: northeast to southwest and north-northeast to south-southwest. Since these two directions are the directions of the cracks in the rock layers, they provide clues as to the forces that caused the formation of this cave.

It is said that there were many stalactites and stalagmites in the cave, but now only a few can be seen on the ceiling, floor, and walls. Generally speaking, stalactites and stalagmites grow at a slow rate of a few centimeters per hundred years. Therefore, it is important to take care of the few that remain and avoid damaging them.

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[Attention]

- There is no lighting in the cave. Be sure to carry a flashlight or headlamp. Please carry a flashlight or headlamp to prevent danger.
- The pathways are narrow and slippery, so we recommend that you wear clothes and boots that you do not mind getting dirty.
- Please do not walk along pathways other than those provided for the protection of the stalactites and for safety reasons.
- Stalactites take thousands or tens of thousands of years to grow. Please do not strike, kick, or damage them.
- Bats inhabit the caves, so please be careful.
- Do not take any natural objects from the caves, including living creatures.