

# BERGER 2020 - Questions Frequently Asked

## *Is the cave rigged with new ropes?*

All the vertical parts, yes. But not in the sector of Coufinades, -650 m deep. Here you'll find a lot of lifelines made by two or three very damaged ropes.

## *Should we use all the tensioned traverse lines in case of low water?*

Yes absolutely! They are used to move away from the waterfall, but also to avoid friction (ex: cascade Claudine). Use a pulley on a cow-tail in the descent AND on the way up.

## *Is there a boat to cross the lake Cadoux?*

No. Generally, the lake is dry. If it is filled, a life line is rigged on the left bank as you come down.

## *Wetsuit or not wetsuit?*

Decide for yourself! Wetsuits are only useful in Coufinades, if you prefer swimming rather than using lifelines. But beware: it's necessary to carry it, to take time to put it on at -640m, and especially to remove it before coming up.

## *Can we drink the water which flows underground?*

In the main river, it's risky! But below -600, you'll find clear inlets where it's possible to drink. In any case, it's necessary to carry some drinking water until -600m. 2 litres a person is a minimum.

## *We took five hours to reach -600m. How long to the bottom?*

Too long! You have to consider that at -600m, you have done more than half the depth, but hardly a third of the effort to arrive at -1100m. Be reasonable!

## *How to manage the likely traffic jams in the first part of the cave?*

First, by planning the schedules of descent between the different teams. Then, all the vertical lines over ten meters long are rigged with two ropes until -250m. Experience shows that waiting-times usually occur in the first meander.

## *We intend to leave at two o'clock in the morning to be in the cave before everybody.*

Wrong idea! Too short a sleeping time before the descent will bring you to an advanced state of fatigue in the evening. Being at the entrance between 6 and 7 AM allows you to get out before midnight, in theory.

***Is the bivouac at -500 comfortable?***

It is a simple shelter made from rescue blankets, with mattresses, for a maximum of ten people. There you'll find a pharmacy and a cordless phone connected to the entrance. Beware: there are no sleeping bags!

***I was forced to make a knot on a damaged rope. Hope somebody will change it.***

Yes ! But only if the information reaches us. Do not forget to report any defects in the material to base camp on your return.

***Phew! At last outside. No time to go to the base camp, let's go back home.***

Please, think of us! Thanks for not obliging us to make a round trip to the cave to check the register. If you really can't come back and say good bye, at least leave a message or an SMS to confirm your exit.

***But why don't you allow us to reach the bottom? The weather doesn't sound so bad.***

Sorry but it is not a choice to be discussed. The decision is taken by the Speleological Rescue Society, which knows perfectly well the risks in that cave. Five deaths due to a flood is enough. Your life has more value than having your hopes dashed.

***We plan to visit galerie de la Boue or réseau Mélusine. Is it possible ?***

Yes. But only if it is clearly written on the planning at base camp. For obvious safety reasons, a team must not deviate from the classic course without having clearly informed the organization.

***It's the first time I come here and I'm too tired... I prefer to get back out and let the others continue.***

It's good to know when to give up. But to go back alone when you don't know the cave: certainly not! Someone from your team must come with you.

***I have carried a trash bag up from the bottom, but I'm so tired.***

Leave it there! Someone else will take it. Make sure you go out in good health.

***I picked up a trash bag at -250, how far should I carry it down?***

Leave it where it is and come back to the camp. We have to talk.

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