

Superman's Cave

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Buried a thousand feet (300 meters) below Naica mountain in the Chihuahuan Desert, this astonishing cave was discovered by two miners only in the year 2000.

A sort of south-of-the-border Fortress of Solitude, Mexico's Cueva de los Cristales (Cave of Crystals) contains some of the world's largest known natural crystals - translucent beams of gypsum as long as 36 feet (11 meters).

New studies report that for millennia the crystals thrived in the cave's extremely rare and stable natural environment. Temperatures hovered consistently around a steamy 136 degrees Fahrenheit (58 degrees Celsius), and the cave was filled with mineral-rich water that drove the crystals' growth.

Modern-day mining operations exposed the natural wonder by pumping water out of the cave, which eventually was found near the town of Delicias.

The Cave of Crystals is a horseshoe-shaped cavity in limestone rock about 30 feet (10 meters) wide and 90 feet (30 meters) long.

The volcanic activity that began about 26 million years ago created Naica mountain and filled it with high-temperature anhydrite.

When magma underneath the mountain cooled and the temperature dropped, the anhydrite began to dissolve. The anhydrite slowly enriched the waters with sulfate and calcium molecules, which for millions of years have been deposited in the caves in the form of huge selenite gypsum crystals.

The 400-foot-deep (120-meter-deep) Cave of Swords is closer to the surface than the Cave of Crystals. While there are more crystals in the Cave of Swords, they are far smaller, typically about a yard (a meter) long. Their relative compactness is likely due to a rapid temperature decline, as opposed to the far more gradual change that is believed to have encouraged the megacrystals in the deeper cave.

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There is a debate today about what to do with the caves – to close the mine and make the cave available so

future generations may admire the crystals, or to stop pumping the water and let the scenario to the natural origin
– allowing the crystals to regrow...

This is not a standard type destination I’m used to write about, but the photos and the astonishing resemblance to the superman’s cave tempted me to share this location with you.

{mosmap ||lat=27.855089,-105.49304||lon=0.026143,0.056992}}

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