

# Underground Wonderland

by Guy Bellaranti

Carlsbad Caverns National Park is in the state of New Mexico. There are over 100 caves here. One of the better explored caves is Carlsbad Cavern. It features one of the largest underground chambers in the world.

## CARLSBAD CAVERNS



Tours leave from \_\_\_\_\_ and go to different parts of the park. Wearing a jacket is a good idea because the temperature is 56 degrees Fahrenheit.

Two tours are self-guided tours require a guide.

Some of the guides go through tight spots and have age restrictions. One of the largest chambers. The guide turns off the lights for a minute and for many people it's actually fun!

The two self-guided routes are very popular. You can rent audio listening guides for these tours. They are fun to listen to and provide a lot of information. On a self-guided tour, you walk at your own pace. One self-guided route begins at the cavern's huge Natural Entrance and the other starts deep in the cavern at the Big Room. Both tours feature many beautiful and interesting sights.

## NATURAL PARK

Carlsbad Caverns National Park guides. The

Some of the guides involve crawling and some are easier and have no age restrictions. Many beautiful chambers. At the top, the guide turns off the lights and the sound is a bit scary, but

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The Natural Entrance route is 1¼ miles long and follows a steep paved trail where you descend 750 feet. That is like going down 75 stories! You pass many places including Bat Cave, Devil's Spring, Witch's Finger and the Boneyard. At the bottom is an underground rest area with a place to buy lunch food and sit at tables. Restrooms are also located here.

The Big Room route begins near the underground lunchroom and is also 1¼ miles in length. Some people walk it after walking down the Natural Entrance route.

People touring  
easy walking. The Big  
enough to hold over  
formations are in this  
Dome and Temple of  
interesting stops in th

After your tour,  
visitor center has a m  
Rangers are on hand

Outside the vis  
some lizards and rabl  
live here. You may or

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ost of the Big Room is  
uge, having room  
e you. Many beautiful  
s, like Crystal Spring  
one of many

e visitor center. The  
movie about the cave.

tactus and probably  
nd other animals also

A favorite ranger talk is the bat flight program. This program runs on evenings from late May into October and occurs in an area outside the natural entrance. The ranger talks for a while. Then, as the sun sets, bats fly from the cave. At first, there are only a few, but then the numbers grow into the hundreds and then thousands. The bats eat millions of insects every night and return near dawn. The flight is an amazing sight to see.

- Originally published by EdGate Total Reader in 2005

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

# Underground Wonderland

1) The following words are taken from the article. Match the words with their correct definitions.

Restriction • • An object easily broken or damaged

Explore • • A large cave or chamber in a cave

Ranger • • to go to a place in order to learn

Cavern • • a large opening or hole in the earth leading to a lower one

Guided tour • • a visit to a place, especially a museum, forest or a park

Descend • • to go down or to move downwards  
explains facts about

Crawl • • to move forward on the hands and knees or by dragging the body close to the ground  
• • Something that limits or controls someone's actions or movement

Fragile • • To move forward on the hands and knees or by dragging the body close to the ground

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Name : \_\_\_\_\_

# Underground Wonderland

2) Why does the author say that "The Big Room gets its name for a good reason"?

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3) Which of the following is not true of the favorite ranger talk mentioned in the last paragraph?

- a) The program begins at the Natural Entrance.
- b) Bats fly from the Big Room to the Natural Entrance.
- c) The flight is a good example of a migration.
- d) The program is held in the Big Room.

4) Describe in your own words what the Big Room begins at the Natural Entrance.

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5) If you were to visit the Carlsbad Caverns National Park, which of the two routes (Natural Entrance and the Big Room) would you prefer to take the tour from? Give sufficient reasons to support your choice.

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# Underground Wonderland

1) The following words are taken from the article. Match the words with their correct definitions.

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Fragile

To move forward on the hands and knees or by dragging the body close to the ground

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2) Why does the author say that "The Big Room gets its name for a good reason"?

**The author says so because it is huge enough to hold over six football fields.**

**Its ceiling is 255 feet high. It has beautiful formations like Crystal Spring**

**Dome and Temple of the Sun that are giant sized.**

3) Which of the following is not true of the favorite ranger talk mentioned in the last paragraph?

a) The program

b) Bats fly from

c) The flight is

d) The program

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ober.

4) Describe in your own words the Natural Entrance.

**The Natural Entrance**

**that descends**

**Devil's Spring,**

**underground**

begins at the Natural

**a steep paved trail**

**including Bat Cave,**

**bottom is an**

**ms.**

5) If you were to visit the Carlsbad Caverns National Park, which of the two routes (Natural Entrance and the Big Room) would you prefer to take the tour from? Give sufficient reasons to support your choice.

**Answers may vary.**