

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 the visitor center and go to different parts of the park. Wearing a jacket is a good idea because the temperature is 56 degrees year-round.

Two tours are self-guided. The self-guided tours require a flashlight.

Some of the guided tours go through tight spots and have age restrictions. One guided tour goes to the Big Room. The guide turns off the lights for a minute, and for many people it's actually fun!

NATURAL PARK

Carlsbad Caverns National Park guides. The guides are very knowledgeable.

Some tours involve crawling. The easier ones have no crawling. Many beautiful formations. At the end of the tour, the guide turns off the lights. It might sound scary, but

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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.

Name : _____

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 the Big Room find it easy walking. The Big Room is large enough to hold over 100 people. Formations are in this room. The Big Dome and Temple of the Sun are interesting stops in the Big Room.

After your tour, you can visit the visitor center. The visitor center has a museum. Rangers are on hand to answer your questions.

Outside the visitor center, you can see some lizards and rabbits. Rabbits live here. You may or may not see a bat.

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Most of the Big Room is underground. It is huge, having room for 100 people. Many beautiful formations are in this room, like Crystal Spring and the Temple of the Sun. One of many formations is the Big Dome.

The visitor center. The visitor center has a movie about the cave.

Outside the visitor center, you can see some cacti and probably some lizards and rabbits. Rabbits and other animals also live here.

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.

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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 • • a person who works in a park or forest in order to learn

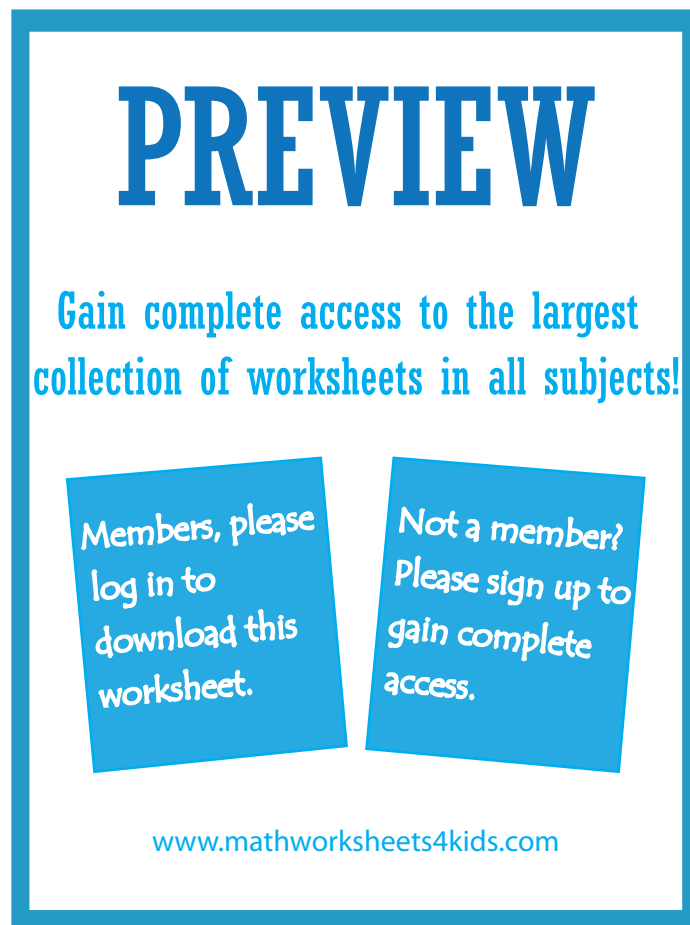
Cavern • • a large cave or chamber in a cave

Guided tour • • a tour of a place in order to learn

Descend • • to move from a higher level to a lower one

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

Fragile • • something that is easily broken or damaged



Name : _____

Underground Wonderland

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

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

- a) The program begins in October.
b) Bats fly from the cave.
c) The flight is about 10 minutes.
d) The program begins at the Natural Entrance.

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

- 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.

Restriction

An object easily broken or damaged

Explore

A large cave or chamber in a cave

Ranger

Lead in order to learn

Cavern

Lead to a lower one

Guided tour

Forest or a park

Descend

Explains facts about

Crawl

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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- 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

ober.

☒ b) Bats fly from

c) The flight is

d) The program

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log in to
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- 4) Describe in your own words the Natural Entrance.

begins at the Natural

The Natural Entrance

that descends

Devil's Spring,

underground

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.