

Dobšinská Ice Cave

1/ Under the Great Curtain (Pod veľkou oponou):

Welcome to the world known Dobsinska Ice Cave. The cave is set in the national natural reserve Stratena in the territory of the Slovak Paradise National Park. From 2000 it is inscribed on the world natural heritage list of UNESCO within the site of the Caves of Slovak and Aggtelek Karst. Cave discovery is dated to the 15th June 1870, when a 24 year old mining engineer from Dobsina Eugen Ruffiny and his friends dared to enter the underground for the very first time. In 1871 the cave was opened to the public and in 1882 electricity was installed. It was one of the first electric installations in the world. The cave was disconnected from the large Stratena cave system by a great collapse in a distant past. Afterwards it became very static and very good conditions for glaciation arose. Ice is formed and kept by a natural undercooling of cave spaces in the winter season. Heavy cold air is flowing into the cave through the entrance located on the top. The lower level openings are now mostly blocked and the cold air can stay in the cave all year round. The huge ice fill is created by gradual freezing of the water running into cave in the spring, from melting snow and rainfall. We are now 48 m below the entrance.

We must inform you that touching and damaging the karst and ice decorations, smoking, littering and touching electrical equipment is strictly forbidden. An extra fee is charged for taking pictures and video recording.

2/ Ruffiny's Corridor (Ruffíniho koridor):

It is named after the discoverer E. Ruffiny. Originally it was fully filled with ice. The glacier has retreated from one side as a result of a warmer air flowing from the lower parts of the cave. At the moment the openings are partially blocked but the warmer air is flowing in and on the opposite wall it has created a feature called the Elephant's Ear. The ice started to form more than 5,000 years ago, its age is estimated to more than one thousand years, and the age of the limestone has 220 million years. The amount of the ice in the cave is more than 110 thousand cubic meters which is more than 100 thousand tons of ice.

3/ Great Hall (Veľká sieň):

It is 72 m long, 42 m wide and 11 m high. The ice that we are standing on reaches the thickness of as much as 27 meters. To your left you can see perhaps the most beautiful feature called the Well. It is formed and retained by gradual freezing of the water running down through the hole in the ceiling throughout the year. It is hollow and so the inflowing water creates a small lake inside, from which a small stream called the Fountain of Eternal life is flowing out. This space was well known for about 100 years, when it was used as a place for ice skating.

4/ Small Hall (Malá sieň):

As the Small Hall is the closest to the entrance the temperature here varies the most: from $-6\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ in winter to $+0.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ in summer. The cave is a part of the Stratenska cave system reaching 25 km in length. The length of the Dobsinska Ice Cave is more than 1,400 meters. The average air temperature is $-2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$. The entrance to the cave is in relatively low altitude of 971m. Twelve bat species were found here. The rarest is the Whiskered Bat and the Brandt's Bat. This cave is one of the most important wintering areas for bats not only in Slovakia, but in the central Europe.

Thank you for your attention and visit, we recommend you to go and visit other Slovakian show caves. The closest to the Dobsinska Ice Cave is the Ochtinska Aragonite Cave, 50 km to the south from here. We wish you all the best on your journey discovering the beauties of the Slovakian nature. We hope to see you again sometime.

CAVE MAP

