

DOBŠINSKÁ ICE CAVE

1 UNDER THE GREAT CURTAIN (Pod veľkou oponou)

(Pod veľkou oponou)

Welcome to the world-known Dobšinská Ice Cave. The cave is situated in the Stratená National Nature Reserve within the territory of the Slovak Paradise National Park. Since 2000, it has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as part of the Caves of Aggtelek Karst and Slovak Karst site. The cave was discovered on 15 June 1870, when a 24-year-old mining engineer from Dobšiná, 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 Stratená cave system by a great collapse in the distant past. Afterwards, it became very stable and very good conditions for glaciation arose. Ice is formed and preserved by the natural undercooling of the cave spaces during the winter season. Heavy cold air flows into the cave through the entrance located at the top. The lower-level openings are now mostly blocked, and the cold air can remain in the cave all year round. The huge ice fill is created by the gradual freezing of water running into the cave in spring from melting snow and rainfall. We are now 48 m below the entrance.

We must inform you that touching or damaging the karst formations, smoking, littering, and tampering with electrical equipment are strictly forbidden.

2 RUFFINY'S CORRIDOR (Ruffinyho koridor)

It is named after the discoverer E. Ruffiny. Originally it was completely filled with ice. The glacier has retreated from one side as a result of warm 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 at more than one thousand years, and the limestone is 220 million years old. The amount of 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 a 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 the gradual freezing of water running down through a 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 flows 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 °C in winter to +0.5 °C in summer. The cave is part of the Stratená cave system, which reaches 25 km in length. The length of the Dobšinská Ice Cave is more than 1,400 meters. The average air temperature is -2 °C. The entrance to the cave is at a relatively low altitude of 971 m. Twelve bat species were found here. The rarest are 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 Central Europe.

Thank you for your attention and visit. We recommend that you visit other Slovak show caves. The closest to the Dobšinská Ice Cave is the Ochtinská Aragonite Cave, 50 km to the south of here. We wish you all the best on your journey discovering the beauties of Slovak nature. We hope to see you again sometime.

Goodbye.

