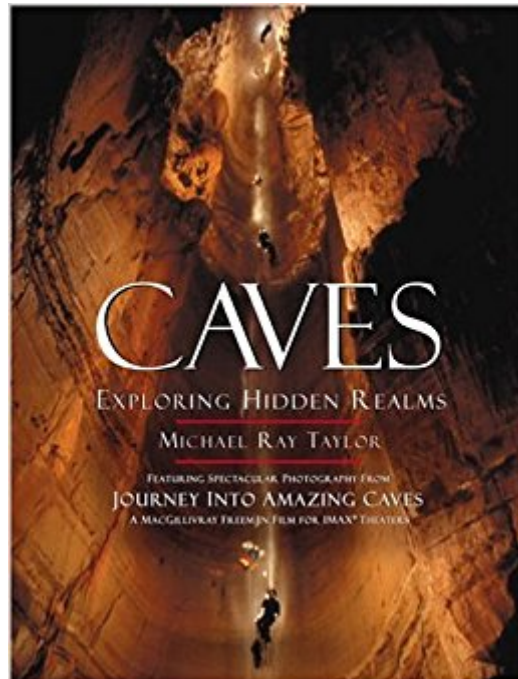




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Caves: Exploring Hidden Realms



Synopsis

For today's explorer, Earth offers precious few uncharted regions. Even the deepest trenches in the Pacific have been mapped by sonar, and if you venture to the most remote village on the , you're more than likely to find natives wearing Nikes. The only truly unexplored places that remain -- those that neither humans nor technology has penetrated -- are caves. Until now. In the course of this breathtaking book, Michael Ray Taylor guides an astounding journey into the wonders and hazards of caving. Along the way, he introduces a pair of expert cavers as they tackle the sweeping, awe-inspiring beauty of Greenland's ice caves; the dramatic underwater realm beneath the jungles of the Yucatan; and the vertigo-inducing pits in the wild caves of the American Southwest. Aided by trailblazing IMAX RM? camera technology from the award-winning MacGillivray Freeman Films (Everest, Dolphins, The Living Sea), Caves delivers hundreds of vivid, full-color images of places no large-format camera has ever been before and conveys the excitement, terror, and exhilaration of the world's vast and least accessible spaces. Featuring compelling and informative sidebars from leading cave scientists, Caves also includes a Foteword from Ronald C. Kerbo, chief cave specialist of the U.S. National Park Service.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you were to travel to the , say, or the source of the Nile, you would likely find the people there wearing corporate logo-branded T-shirts and listening to the latest pop hits on the radio. Using a GPS device or satellite photos, you can track your location just about anywhere on the face of the planet. Given globalism and the ease of travel to once-remote places, where is a would-be

flag-planting adventurer to go these days? The answer, writes Michael Ray Taylor in this intriguing book, is inward: inside the earth by way of the millions of caves that pierce its surface. Following an international team of fellow cavers--men and women in peak physical form and apparently without fear--his narrative takes us deep within the ice caves of Greenland; a vast underground labyrinth of rivers and chambers in Mexico's Yucatan; a cave on a cliff wall overlooking the Colorado River near the Grand Canyon, one that no human had ever before entered; and other great caverns of North America. High-quality (and sometimes astounding) full-color images accompany the text, offering views that usher us into a world of blind snakes, bats, strange geological formations, and uncanny sights that few surface-dwellers have been privileged to see. Caving is not merely adventure for its own sake, Taylor notes. "Over the past decade," he observes, "scientists have been surprised to learn that in the deepest recesses of the Earth are repositories of exotic microbes ... far more varied in types of species and their individual strategies for survival than all the plants of an equatorial rain forest." Some of these microbes, he suggests, may deliver chemicals for fighting disease; they also deliver important evidence about the history of life on the planet. But, all that said, caving offers plenty of thrills, and Taylor's book does a superb job of capturing both the science and the adventure of a journey to the center of the earth. --Gregory McNamee

This visually rich work was produced in conjunction with a National Geographic IMAX project filming spelunkers exploring caves throughout the world. The film follows two female cavers in subterranean sites in Greenland, the Yucatan, and the south-central U.S. The photographs and the story of the explorations would be sufficient to recommend this work, but it also includes fascinating background material on the history of the caves, their biological diversity, the tools used by spelunkers in their explorations, and the geologic forces that have made caves into natural works of art. The sites for this work were obviously, and successfully, chosen because of their visual impact and variety: a giant glacial ice cavern, vast networks of underground rivers, and cramped passageways of dripping delicate crystals. Perhaps the most astounding feature that the book highlights is not the geology but the amazing range of life-forms that prosper in impossibly harsh conditions. Eric Robbins

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For what you get, this IS a good book. However, there are a few things about it that I think detract just enough to only give the book 4/5.1. The caves are all North American - no mention of the rest of the world. That said, the caves featured are about the best in North America.2. The other articles on cave geology and biology are good, but there are better ones. If you really want to know

more, *Cave Geology* by Arthur Palmer and *The Biology of Caves and Other Subterranean Habitats (Biology of Habitats)* by David Culver are the ones to get. So yes, this is a great "coffee table" book with some good generalist info. Though I think that the old Time Life book *Underground Worlds (Planet Earth)* is better all round, even if the photos aren't as good as this new one. Well worth having if you get a good deal on the price, but it's not the absolute best general book on caves around.

Great Photos

I used this book, and the related IMAX video, as part of a cave biology experience for undergraduate biology majors this year. Both the book and the video are fantastic; I challenge anyone to consider biology boring after reading/viewing them. To prepare for a spring break "wild cave tour," our students read Taylor's book, watched the video, then had a presentation on caving by Taylor. He also accompanied us on the caving trip. (It doesn't hurt that both of us teach at the same university....) The students loved it all. They asked for, and received, permission to sample for microbes in the cave, and have grown up their bugs. We don't expect to find anything earthshaking, as human contamination even in lightly used caves is apparently ubiquitous, but this really got students excited. I enthusiastically recommend the book and the video combined, and following it up even with a trip to a developed cave would be a great experience for students.

I purchased this book sight unseen and for one reason - it was written by Michael Ray Taylor (I'd read bathroom cleaner cans if he wrote the text for them). When I opened the box, I was stunned to find a coffee-table type book filled with incredibly beautiful photographs and great text. *Caves: Exploring Hidden Realms* is a (stand alone, IMO) companion to the IMAX film of the same name; Kerbo's pictures are mind-blowing and the text is classic Taylor - accessible, entertaining, educational and just downright fun. As an added treat, the microbiology angle of *Dark Life* finds its way into *Caves: Exploring Hidden Realms* as well. A bit of the text was taken from *Cave Passages* but a very small bit and this didn't diminish my enjoyment. I can't say enough positive things about this book. Buy it!

beautiful

My husband and I sent this to a friend who really loved the book. A great gift success.

I am always left breathless at the majestic beauty of every cave I am blessed to enter. This book gives wonderful descriptions of caves and the pictures in this coffeeesque style book are the icing on the cake.

This book is very well written with lovingly detailed chapters devoted to the many splendid cave networks dotted around the world. There's a great section on the flora and fauna of the underworld, as well. I went potholing in Kak Canyon once, and saw a couple of chutney ferrets, all thanks to this book. Incredible creatures - and I wouldn't have known they were there until I read this.

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