

Archaeologists in Mexico claim world's longest flooded cave

18 January 2018

Archaeologists and divers on Mexico's Yucatan peninsula announced Wednesday that they found a passage connecting two underwater caves, creating what they say is the world's longest continuous flooded cave.

Divers from the Great Maya Aquifer Project said the discovery has revealed a combined [cave](#) about 216 miles (347 kilometers) long.

Mammoth Cave in Kentucky remains the world's longest cave of any kind, with more than 400 miles (650 kilometers) of passages explored.

The Sac Actun and Dos Ojos caves were both previously known and are near the Caribbean coast town of Tulum. The combined cave will be known as the Sac Actun system, taking on the name of the longer section.

Divers have long known that Yucatan's underground caves and rivers are frequently connected, but finding this connection was a task that involved years of searching through labyrinthian passageways.

Many caves in the Yucatan were at one time above sea level and were dry or partly dry. Evidence of early human inhabitants and extinct fauna have been found inside some [cave systems](#). Relics of Mayan culture, whose descendants still populate the peninsula, have also been found in the caves.

"This immense cave represents the most important submerged archaeological site in the world, as it has more than a hundred archaeological contexts," Guillermo de Anda, a subaquatic archaeologist, said of the find. "Along this system, we had documented evidence of the first settlers of America, as well as extinct fauna and, of course, the Mayan culture."

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