

Derinkuyu: Turkey's Magnificent Underground City

Total Area of Albania is 28.748 sq km , an the populations 3,500,000 , Languages are Albanian (official)



In 1963, an inhabitant of chance the underground city of Derinkuyu, in the region of Derinkuyu was discovered. Capadocia, central Anatolia in Turkey, was demolishing a wall of his house. He discovered that behind the wall was a mysterious room that had never been seen. This room took him to another and another – by

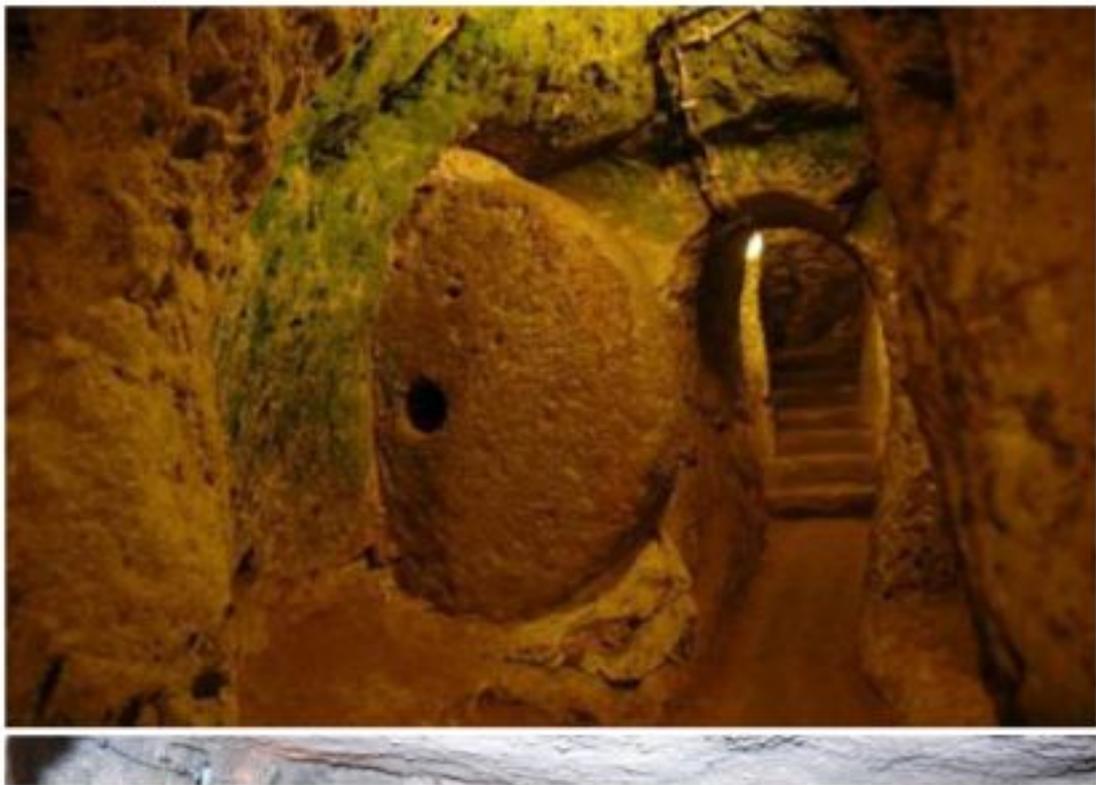
First built in the soft volcanic rock of the Capadocia region by the Phrygians in the 7th - 8th centuries BC according to the Turkish Department of culture, Derinjuyu was enlarged in the Byzantine era.

Archaeologists soon began studying this fascinating underground city. They reached a depth of 40 meters but believe that the bottom is as far down as 85 meters.

At present 20 underground levels have been discovered but only eight can be visited. The others are partially obstructed or reserved for archaeologists and anthropologists who are studying Derinkuyu.

The city was used as a shelter by thousands of people who lived in the caves to protect themselves from the frequent invasions that Capadocia underwent. It was also a refuge for the first Christians.

The enemies, conscious of the dangers that lay hidden inside the city, tried to force the people to come to the surface by poisoning their wells.





The interior is amazing: the underground passages, in which there is space for at least 10,000 people could be blocked by three strategically important points by moving circular stone doors. These heavy rocks that closed the corridor stopped the enemies from entering. They were up to 1 to 1.5 meters in height, about 50cm wide and weighed up to 500 kilos.

In addition, Derinkuyu has a tunnel of almost eight kilometers that leads to another underground city of Kaymakli.

The oldest written source about underground cities is the Anabasis named book of Xenophon, written around the 4th century BC. . In the book it s mentioned that the people living in Anatolia have caved their

houses underground and that the houses are connected to each other with holes: "The houses were built underground; the entrances were like wells but they broadened out lower down. There were tunnels dug in the ground for the animals while the men went down by ladder. Inside the houses there were goats, sheep, cows and poultry with their young..."

In the reclaimed levels stables have been located along with dining rooms a church of 20 x 9 meters, kitchens still blackened by the soot of bonfires, presses

for oil, warehouses, a school and numerous other rooms.

The city benefited from an underground river: it had water wells and a magnificent exhaust fan – in fact 52 ventilation wells were discovered.

In addition to the underground cities the Goreme Open Air Museum is one of the most visited sites in Caopadocia. It is a complex comprising more than 30 rock carved churches and chapels containing superb frescoes dating from the 9th to 11th centuries.

