# SPECTACULAR ARAGONITE FORMATIONS IN OCHTINSKÁ CAVE, SLOVAKIA

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**Photo: Albert Russ**

Ochtinská aragonite cave is perhaps the most unusual cave in Slovak republic and one of the most unique caves in the World. It is possibly one of just three accessible caves in the World with association of large aragonite type flos ferri. Although a small cave, it lets us see flos ferri formations which rival the best specimens found in prominent private collections and museums – in its natural form. In size and quality, flos ferri formations of Ochtinská aragonite cave are comparable to the historical specimens from the World famous locality of Erzberg in Styria, Austria. The unique decoration and creation of the cave has been recognized by the world organization UNESCO and has included the cave among the regions of world cultural and natural heritage (1995).

The cave is located on the southwestern slope of Hrádok hill (809 m) between Jelšava and Štítnik in Revúca hills (GPS: 48°39'52'' N, 28°8'32'' E). Ochtinská aragonite cave length is 300 m.

Martin Cangár a Jiří Prošek discovered the cave by pure accident while digging exploration gallery Kapusta (translated cabbage) as part of ore exploration in eastern Slovakia. The discovery took place on January 7, 1954. Regional geologist Rudolf Ševčík and mineralogist Ján Kantor conducted the first speleological cave exploration after its discovery. This exploration included measurement of the underground spaces and evaluated the cave from the geological and mineralogical point of view.

1. Two isolated **aragonite** var. *flos ferri* aggregates on contrasting marble. Each cluster is about 15 cm in diameter. Ochtinská aragonite cave, Slovakia.

2. A well-developed aggregate of needle-like **aragonite** crystals in smooth marble cavity. The cluster is about 15 cm from top to bottom. Ochtinská aragonite cave, Slovakia.

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4. An isolated snow-white **aragonite** var. *flos ferri* aggregate on multicolor marble. The cluster is about 10 cm in diameter. Ochtinská aragonite cave, Slovakia.

5. An isolated stalactite covered with secondary **aragonite** needles and *flos ferri* formations, about 35 cm long. Ochtinská aragonite cave, Slovakia.

6. An isolated **aragonite** aggregate, about 20 cm in diameter. Ochtinská aragonite cave, Slovakia.

7. An isolated **aragonite** var. *flos ferri* aggregate contrasting on marble.
Each cluster is about 15 cm in diameter.
Ochtinská aragonite cave, Slovakia.

8. A cavity on the cave ceiling, completely filled with snow-white **aragonite** var. *flos ferri*.
The cavity diameter is about 25 cm.
Ochtinská aragonite cave, Slovakia.