

MONTEZUMA'S CASTLE

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When American explorers came upon this extraordinary cliff dwelling in 1860s Arizona, they dubbed it “Montezuma’s Castle” on a whim. The Aztec ruler had nothing to do with it, of course. The Anasazi people built a number of these marvelous structures in the Southwest, high up on cliffs above a river that seasonally flooded.

For hundreds of years the Anasazi flourished, skilled agriculturalists and brilliant at constructing vast irrigation systems. Yet it all came to naught with a devastating megadrought with no rain for many decades, culminating in the collapse of the Anasazi culture and abandonment of their cliff dwellings by the early 1500s.

Another lesson that it is nature that control’s the Earth’s climate, not us. You’ll find Montezuma’s Castle above Beaver Creek south of Sedona. It’s a marvel not to be missed. (*Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World #194* photo ©Jack Wheeler)

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