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INTRODUCTION

The world is full of beautiful and strange places for us to visit and wonder at. Some have been around for thousands of years, while others are more recent, but they all deserve a place on your bucket list.

This book ranks the strangest places on the planet to tell you all about...

- ☆ The power of nature or the skills of the people that made them
- ☆ How our world is constantly changing
- ☆ The most mysterious locations in the world

Turn the page to start your journey around planet Earth's most strange and wonderful places, including...

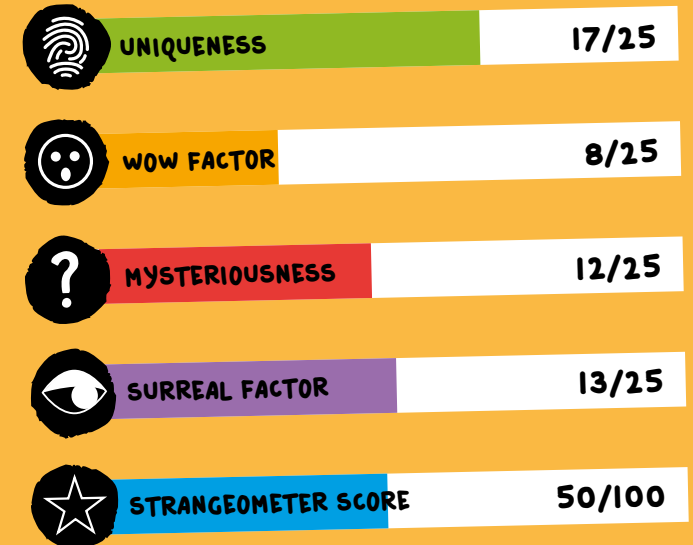
- ☆ The location so secret that we can hardly tell you about it
 - ☆ The city where everything is underground
 - ☆ A post office that you'll need your swimming costume to visit
 - ☆ An underground cavern filled with giant crystals
 - ☆ A desert with mysterious messages that may be designed for aliens
- ... and many more!

STRANGEOMETER

The places in this book are all unique in their own ways, so we've used a special strangeometer to rank them against each other. This is made up of four categories with a mark out of 25 for each.

These categories are...

STRANGEOMETER



UNIQUENESS



Is there anything else like it in the world?

WOW FACTOR



Will it leave you and your friends open-mouthed in wonder?

MYSTERIOUSNESS



Do we really understand this place?

SURREAL FACTOR



Is it beyond belief, like something from a fantastic dream?

STRANGEOMETER SCORE



These are added up to get a strangeometer score out of 100!

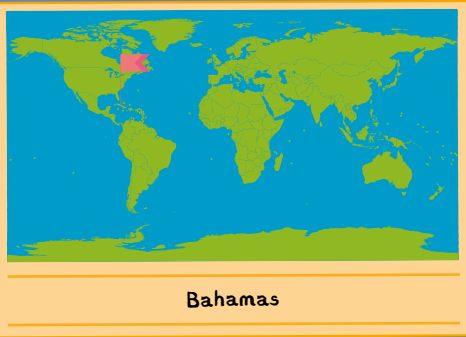
#40

The question is, how did a group of pigs get to an uninhabited island? Nobody really knows. Some people think a group of sailors left them there, with plans to come back and eat them later on. Or maybe they swam to the island from a nearby shipwreck.

PIG BEACH

Around 15 adorable swimming pigs and piglets hang out on an uninhabited island in the Bahamas known as Pig Beach.

PIG BEACH'S REAL NAME IS BIG MAJOR CAY.



STRANGEOMETER



UNIQUENESS

14/25



WOW FACTOR

8/25



MYSTERIOUSNESS

9/25



SURREAL FACTOR

17/25



STRANGEOMETER SCORE

48/100

In 2017, local people were sad to see that several of the pigs had died. It's thought that they died from eating too much sand, after tourists threw tidbits on the beach for them. The local government wants to put stricter rules in place to stop people from feeding the pigs.

#22



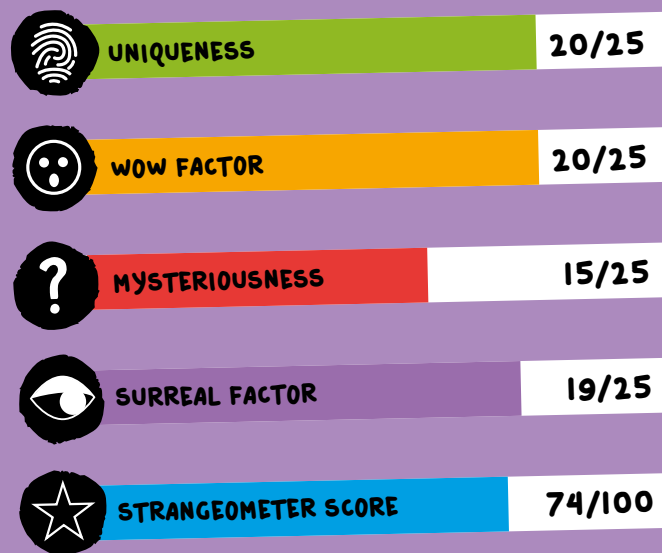
Kamchatka, Russia

Part of the valley wall is known as Stained Glass, because it is tinted with reds, yellows, greens and blues by a mix of soils and plants.

VALLEY OF THE GEYSERS

The Valley of the Geysers boasts more than 40 geysers spouting hot water into the air, as well as many boiling springs, hot lakes and mud volcanoes.

STRANGEOMETER



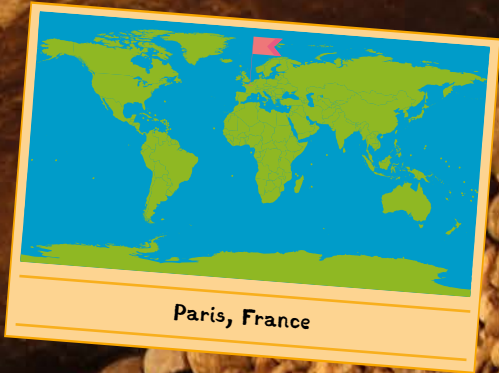
Further upriver from the Valley of the Geysers lies Death Valley. It is filled with poisonous gases that kill off birds, plants and animals.

In 2007, a huge landslide buried much of the valley and destroyed many of the geysers. The landslide also created some new geysers, as well as a new turquoise lake.



The catacombs were created more than 230 years ago, when Paris ran out of space to bury the dead. Bones were moved into the ancient and sprawling stone mines underneath the city.

The tunnels were used by members of the French Resistance during World War II to hide from the Germans. The Germans also used the tunnels as a bunker, to shelter from attack.



OSSEMENTS DE L'EGLISE
ET DU CLOITRE DES
CAPUCINS HONORE
LE 29 MARS 1804

CATACOMBS

The creepy catacombs 20m (66ft) below the streets of Paris are filled with the bones of around six million people tightly packed on top of one another.

The bones of Charles Perrault, who wrote *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*, are thought to be somewhere in the catacombs.



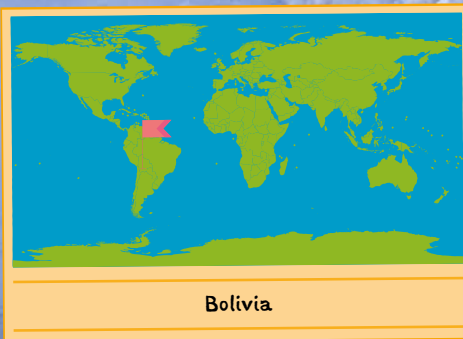
#19

The salt covering the ground was left behind when a prehistoric lake evaporated thousands of years ago. There are 10 billion tonnes (11 billion sh tons) of salt at Salar de Uyuni, forming amazing patterns on the ground.

SALAR DE UYUNI

The dazzling salt flats of Uyuni stretch for 10,582 sq km (4,000 sq mi). They are very high up – 3,565m (11,700ft) above sea level.

When it rains, a thin layer of water covers the salt flats and they are turned into a giant mirror.



STRANGEOMETER



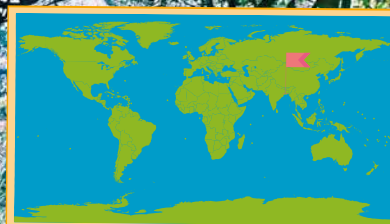
At Salar de Uyuni you can stay in a hotel made entirely of salt. The walls are made of salt, the tables are made of salt, and even the beds are made of salt!

#18

LIVING ROOT BRIDGES

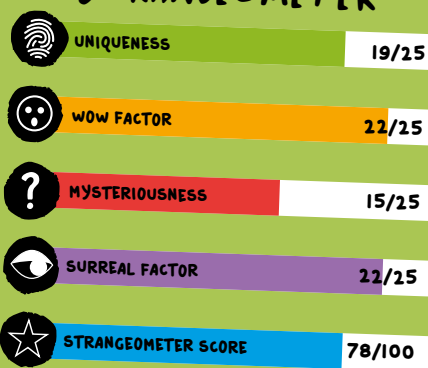
Villagers in India came up with a clever way to cross fast-flowing rivers and streams in the rainy season – living root bridges.

One of the most famous root bridges is the Umshiang Double-Decker, which is actually two bridges on top of each other. It is 180 years old.



Meghalaya, India

STRANGEOMETER

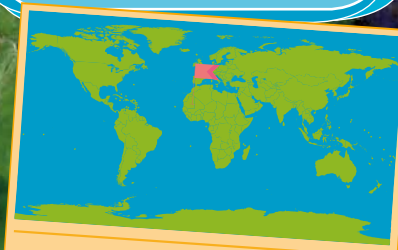


Villagers encourage rubber tree roots on opposite sides of streams to join and form a bridge. You have to be patient when you are making a root bridge – they take 15 to 20 years to grow.

EYE OF THE SAHARA

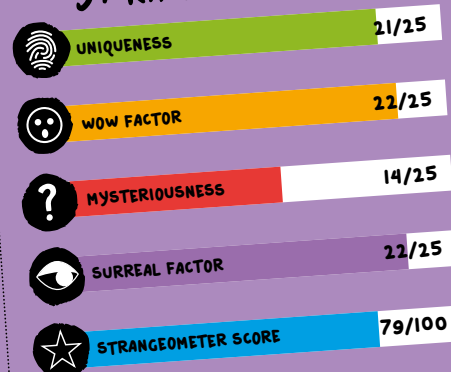
The Eye of the Sahara is a huge bull's-eye feature in the middle of the desert. It is 40km (25mi) wide, but it was only noticed when astronauts were taking pictures of the Earth from space.

At first, scientists thought the Eye of the Sahara was a crater formed after an asteroid had smashed into the Earth. Now they think it might be the result of a volcanic eruption.



Mauritania

STRANGEOMETER



The Eye of the Sahara has become a landmark for astronauts. Even though you can't really see the formation from the ground, people still visit this remote area. You can even stay in a hotel in the middle of the eye.

#17

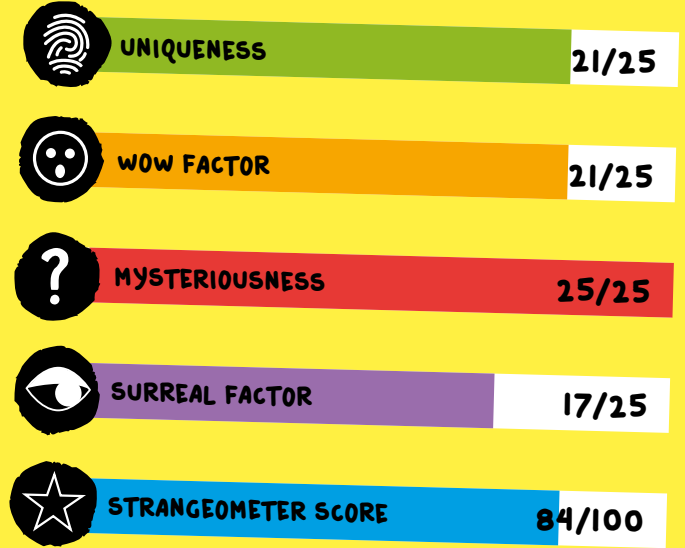
#12



Scientists think ancient tribes dragged some of the massive stones that make up Stonehenge for 225km (140mi), all the way from Wales. They might have rolled them along on logs or stone balls. Those must have been some very important rocks!

The Stonehenge we see today is smaller than it used to be. Some of the stones have been removed over the years.

STRANGEOMETER



STONEHENGE

The ancient circle of giant stone slabs in the middle of Salisbury Plain has puzzled people for centuries. Parts of Stonehenge are around 5,000 years old.

Nobody knows what Stonehenge was for. Some people think it was a temple. Other people say it was a kind of prehistoric computer for predicting eclipses. There are lots of other ideas as well!

quiz

See if you can answer these questions on the ten places you've just learned about!

1.

How many people's bones are in the Paris catacombs?

3.

How long does a living root bridge take to grow?

Who first discovered the Eye of the Sahara?

4.

2.

Where in the world is this?



6.

What kind of lakes should you watch out for in Africa's Danakil Desert?

5.

What poisonous snake inhabits Snake Island?

7.

Where in the world is this?



8.

Why is Wave Rock striped?

9.

How old is Stonehenge?

10.

How does the Skeleton Coast get its name?

ANSWERS

1. AROUND 6 MILLION 2. SALAR DE UYUNI, BOLIVIA 3. 15-20 YEARS
4. ASTRONAUTS 5. THE GOLDEN LANCHEAD VIPER 6. LAVA OR SULPHUR
AND DISSOLVES THE MINERALS 9. PARTS ARE 5,000 YEARS OLD
10. FROM THE SHIPWRECKS AND WHALE BONES THAT ARE FOUND THERE

#5

DARVAZA GAS CRATER

Locals call this sinister pit of boiling mud and flames the Door to Hell. It has been burning for more than 40 years.

The crater is the size of a football field and reaches temperatures of 1,000°C (1,832°F).



STRANGEOMETER



UNIQUENESS

24/25



WOW FACTOR

23/25



MYSTERIOUSNESS

25/25



SURREAL FACTOR

19/25



STRANGEOMETER SCORE

91/100

It's thought that when scientists started drilling for oil here in 1971, they released huge amounts of methane gas by accident, which made it hard to breathe. They were worried about the gas exploding, so they set it on fire to get rid of it – but there was a lot more than they expected.