

# Amazing facts about the deepest place on Earth, the Challenger abyss

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The Challenger abyss at the southern end of the Mariana Trench — a fissure in the western Pacific Ocean, extending for more than 1,580 miles (2,540 km).

## Humans explore the abyss Challenger



There have been very few human expeditions to the Challenger abyss. The two explorers Jacques Piccard and Don Walsh were the first to explore this abyss which took place in 1960, with the Trieste – a spherical submersible.

The next person to explore the Challenger abyss was James Cameron, director of the 1997 film "Titanic", aboard the James Cameron submersible he helped design. The submersible has reached a depth of about 10,908 meters, setting a world record in 2012.

## A plastic bag found in the Challenger abyss



In 2019, explorer Victor Vescovo returned to this site with a depth of 10,927 meters. He observed a plastic bag and candy wrapper at the bottom of the Mariana Trench. Humanity has impacted even these seemingly untouchable remote locations.

## **Home to unique aquatic life and mud volcanoes**



According to NOAA, in the Mariana Trench there are a series of undersea mud volcanoes and hydrothermal vents that support unusual life forms.

Although there is no sunlight, the water coming out of the hydrothermal vents is quite rich in nutrients. So exotic species and microscopic organisms can still exist in hydrothermal vents in mud volcanoes even though they discharge hot, acidic water.

## **The exact depth of the Mariana Trench is unknown**

In fact, humans have only discovered a very small part of the ocean floor. Humans can even make maps of the Moon and Mars that are much more detailed than maps of the ocean floor.

According to NOAA's 2022 data, despite having explored the ocean's surface for tens of thousands of years, humans have only mapped about 20% of the seabed. Researchers have made efforts to explore the Mariana Trench, but this has not been easy due to the depth and vastness of the ocean floor. Thanks to developed technology, scientists have estimated the depth of the Challenger abyss at about 10,935 meters, most recently updated in 2021.

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