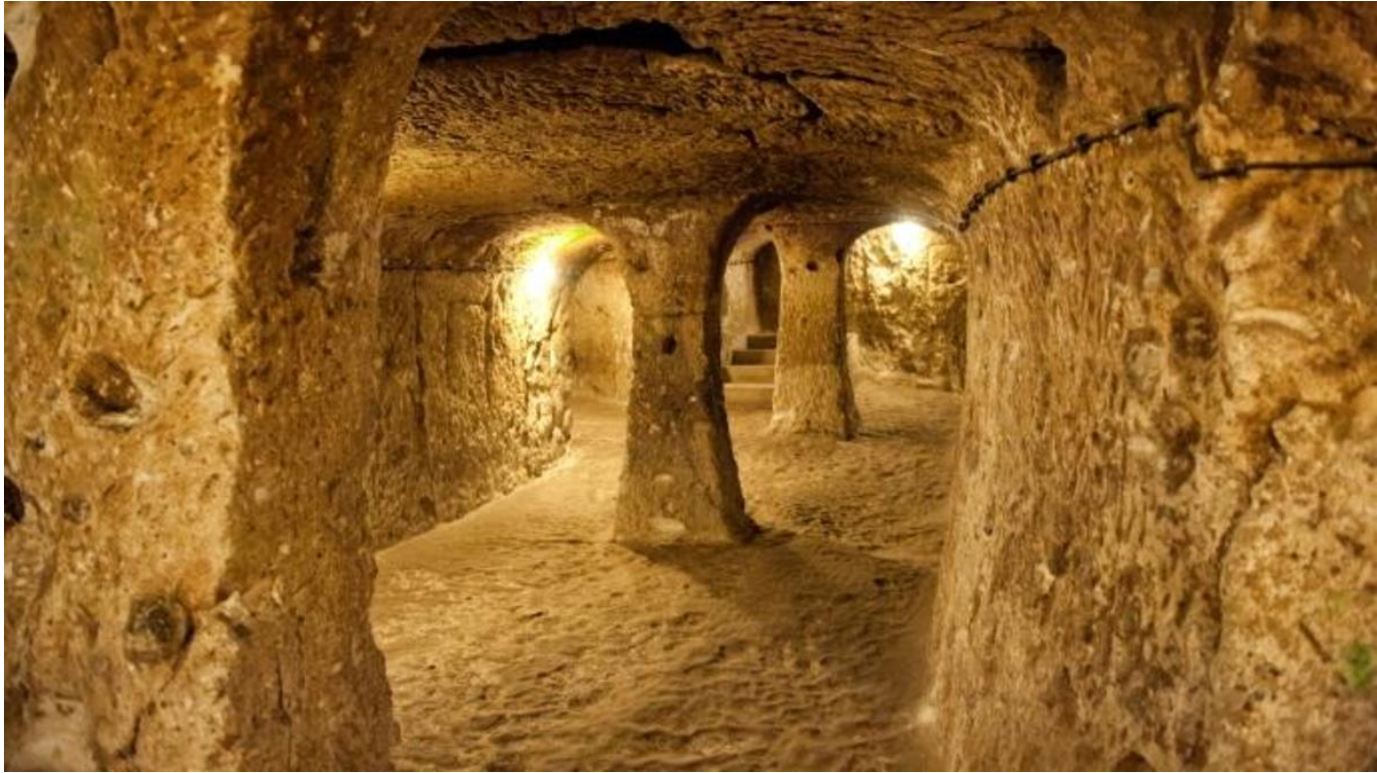


Inspector Rex's History Snippet #27

Derinkuyu



Derinkuyu Underground City is an ancient multilevel underground city in the Derinkuyu district in Nevsehir Province, Turkey. (Credit: [ralucahphotography.ro/](https://www.ralucahphotography.ro/)Getty Images)

The volcanic rock landscape of Turkey's Cappadocia region is pockmarked with several different underground cities, but perhaps none is as vast or as impressive as Derinkuyu. This labyrinthine complex dates to around the 8th century B.C. and was most likely built to serve as a refuge during periods of war and invasion. With this in mind, its 18-story interior was a self-contained metropolis that included ventilation shafts, wells, kitchens, schoolrooms, oil presses, a bathhouse, a winery and living space for some 20,000 people. When threatened by attack, each level of the city could be sealed off behind a collection of monolithic stone doors. Historians believe that the Hittites or the Phrygians were among Derinkuyu's earliest builders, but it was later occupied and expanded by a host of other groups including Byzantine-era Christians, who left behind a collection of underground frescoes and chapels. Despite its long history, the city wasn't rediscovered until the 1960s, when a local man stumbled upon some of its tunnels while renovating his home.