



Icicles, Stalactites and Stalagmites

Icicles

- Icicles typically form on days when **the air temperature is subfreezing but sunshine warms and melts some snow or ice**. As it drips off, a water droplet freezes when it loses its heat to the cold air.
- It starts with a few frozen droplets and after reaching a certain size drops begin to drip along the side of the structure turning into a pointy stick-like structure.
- Icicles formed in caves are also known as **ice stalactites**.



Stalactite

- It is an icicle-shaped formation that hangs from the ceiling of a cave and is produced by the **precipitation of minerals** from water dripping through the cave ceiling. Most stalactites have **pointed tips**.

Stalagmite

- It is an **upward-growing mound** of mineral deposits that have precipitated from water dripping onto the floor of a cave. Most stalagmites **have rounded or flattened tips**.
- The dominant mineral in such deposits is **calcite (calcium carbonate)**, and the largest displays are formed in **caves of limestone and dolomite**. Other minerals that may be deposited include other carbonates, opal, chalcedony, limonite, and some sulfides.



PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/icicles-stalactites-and-stalagmites>