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MEXICAN MINERALS & MINI VOLCANOS FEATURED
AT THE DESERT MUSEUM'S MINERAL MADNESS

Tucson, AZ (January 4, 2016)— Collect a free rock or mineral specimen, sift for stones, make graceful crystal origami, explode your own mini-volcano and explore one of the most comprehensive regional mineral collections in the world. It's all a part of this year's *Mineral Madness* on January 16 & 17, 2016 at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.

Activities are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days and included in museum admission. Thanks to generous donors, there is a rich supply of Mexican minerals featured in the *Mineral Marketplace* in the Baldwin Education Building. For seasoned collectors, you're likely to find some new varieties (while supplies last) that would be great additions to your collection. Bargain hunters will find specimens starting as low as 50 cents. For those new to the gem and mineral world, the Museum's expert staff and docents will help guests make their selections.

"The very foundation of the Sonoran Desert is its geology. Whether it's from a large scale such as the mountains or the minutest micronutrient in the soil, the setting for everything that has ever lived here is the region's geology," says Debra Colodner, the Museum's Director of Conservation Education & Science. "Copper wires carry electricity, but copper also transports oxygen in the blood of tarantulas and other spiders. Humans and other vertebrates need iron in their diets for the same reason."

Also new this year are activities hosted by the University of Arizona's Society of Earth Science Students. Using different sized sieves, kids can dig through sand and dirt to collect and sort minerals and gemstones just like a geologist in the field. With a softly erupting dry ice volcano model in the background, UA students will help kids learn about the basics of the rock cycle and the inner workings of volcanos while setting off their own miniature volcano.

At each family activity station on the museum grounds, children can collect a free rock or mineral specimen in their own egg-carton collection box (if you don't have a carton, the Museum has some available). The Museum's Art Institute will help guests make graceful "crystal origami" in the Ironwood Gallery.

While at the Museum, don't miss the Earth Sciences Center cave housing one of the world's most comprehensive regional mineral collections. The stunning colors and sparkling regional gems are in contrast to a moon rock on loan from NASA!

For more information, check the website at <http://www.desertmuseum.org/visit/mineralmad.php>.

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Focused on the preservation of the Sonoran Desert, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum will turn your idea of a museum inside out. Nestled on 98-acres in the Sonoran Desert west of Tucson, a two mile walking trail features 230 native animal species, botanical gardens, an art gallery, an aquarium, educational activities, one of the world's most comprehensive regional mineral collections and more. Ongoing conservation and research programs enhance everything we do. Open every day 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 2021 N. Kinney Rd., Tucson AZ 85743 U.S.A. · 520.883.2702 · Plan your visit at www.desertmuseum.org.