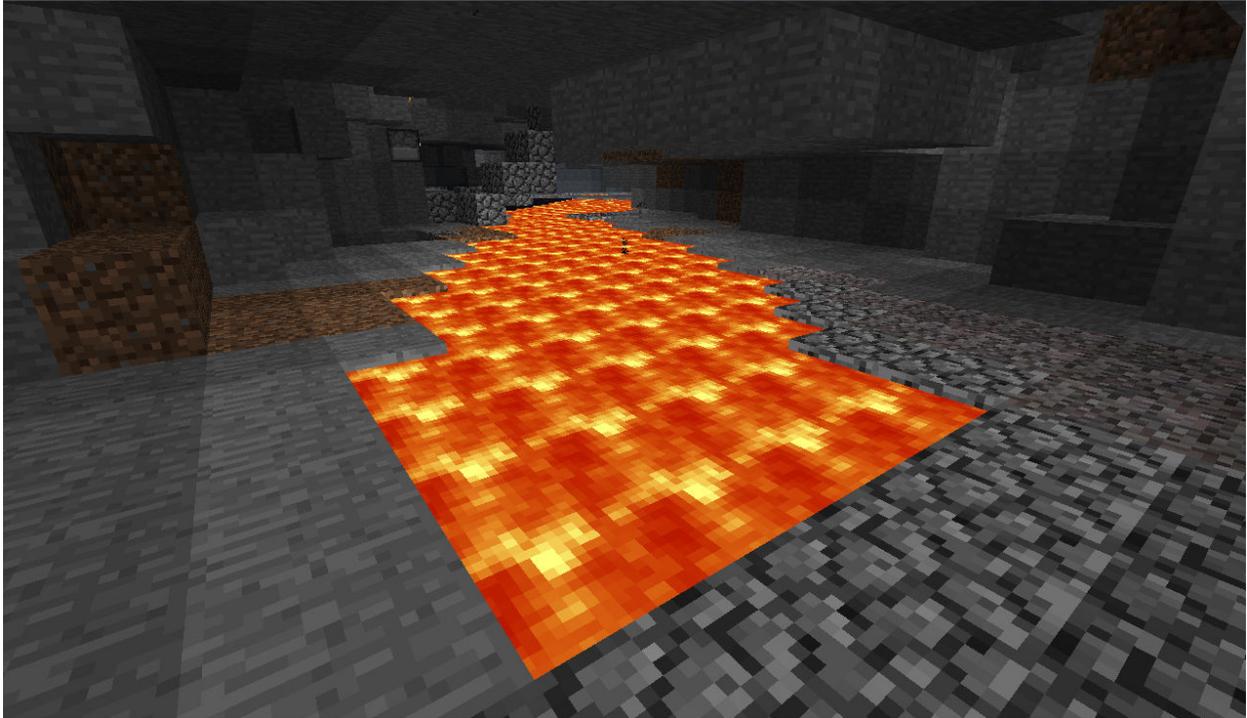


Effective Obsidian Gathering in Minecraft Alpha

Now, the excellent Minepedia describes how to safely farm obsidian, using a trench, seven buckets of lava and a bucket of water – plus, of course, the diamond pickaxe to mine it all. But it's a bit of a bind, going back and forth to get your lava. Besides, if you've managed to reach the lower depths of your mine, the chances are that you've found lovely, big lava lakes – and don't they look tempting?



Of course they do. So we're going to use them to get *obscene* amounts of obsidian.

Now, just so we're clear on this, it's quite unlikely that I'm the first ever person to come up with this. But at least I included pictures (no video, sorry, my computer sucks).

DISCLAIMERS...

1. As the title suggests, this guide was written while Minecraft is still at the Alpha stage. The behaviours upon which this technique is dependent may change or even be removed in the game's progress to full release.
2. This technique is *not 100% effective*. It turns out that the blocks don't pop directly upwards, but at an angle, so there will be odd occasions when the block is burned by the lava before the water reaches it. It *may* be possible to stand close enough to the block to pick it up when mined on those odd occasions, but I can't guarantee it.

Ingredients

1 lava lake (all of it should be stationary lava, or it'll form cobblestone when the water hits it)

1 bucket of water

1 diamond pick

1 or more stone or iron picks (using the diamond on anything less than obsidian is a disgusting waste)

Torches (optional, but it's going to get darker once that lava turns to obsidian)

Patience – those obsidian blocks take 15 seconds each to mine with a diamond pickaxe!

Method

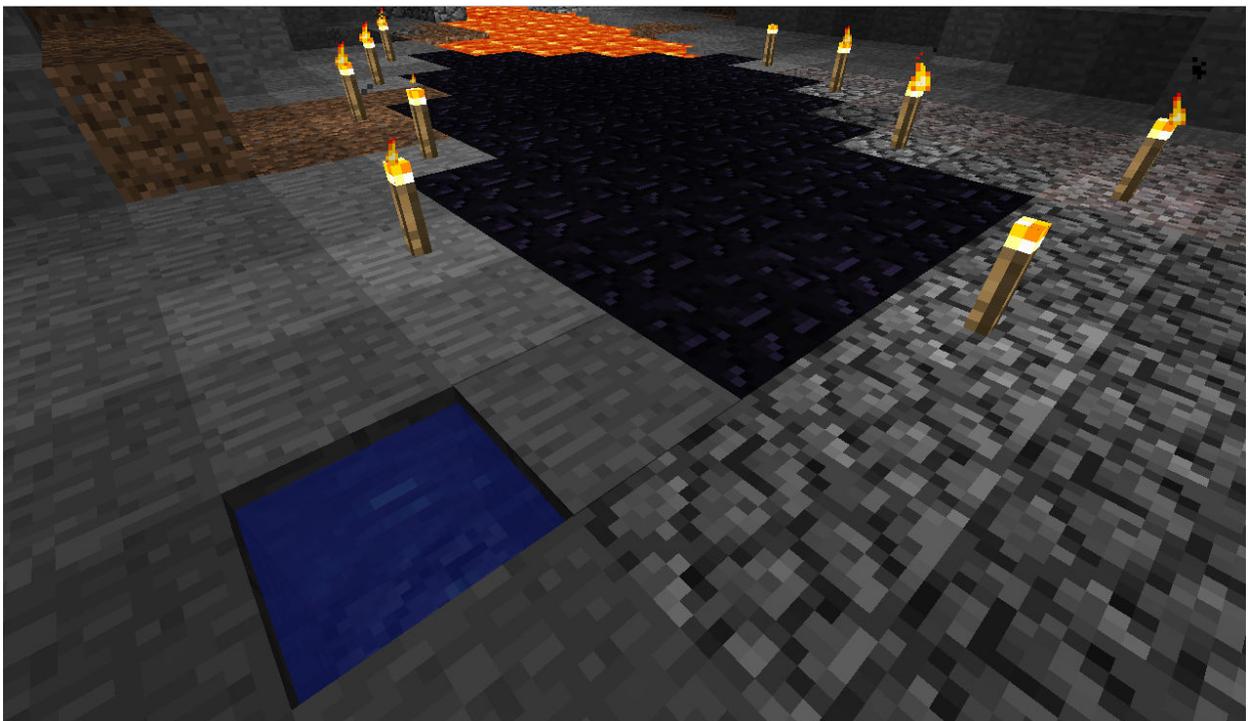
Make sure you've got a border of at least one block around the far edge of the lava, so we can see what we're dealing with, and two at the near edge, because we need a gap to work with.

First, drop your bucket of water and turn the lava into obsidian. If you don't know how to do this... learn first, please!



Place some torches after forming the obsidian, so you can see what you're doing.

Next, leave a gap of one block, mine the block behind it with your non-diamond pickaxe, and then drop the bucket of water into the hole:



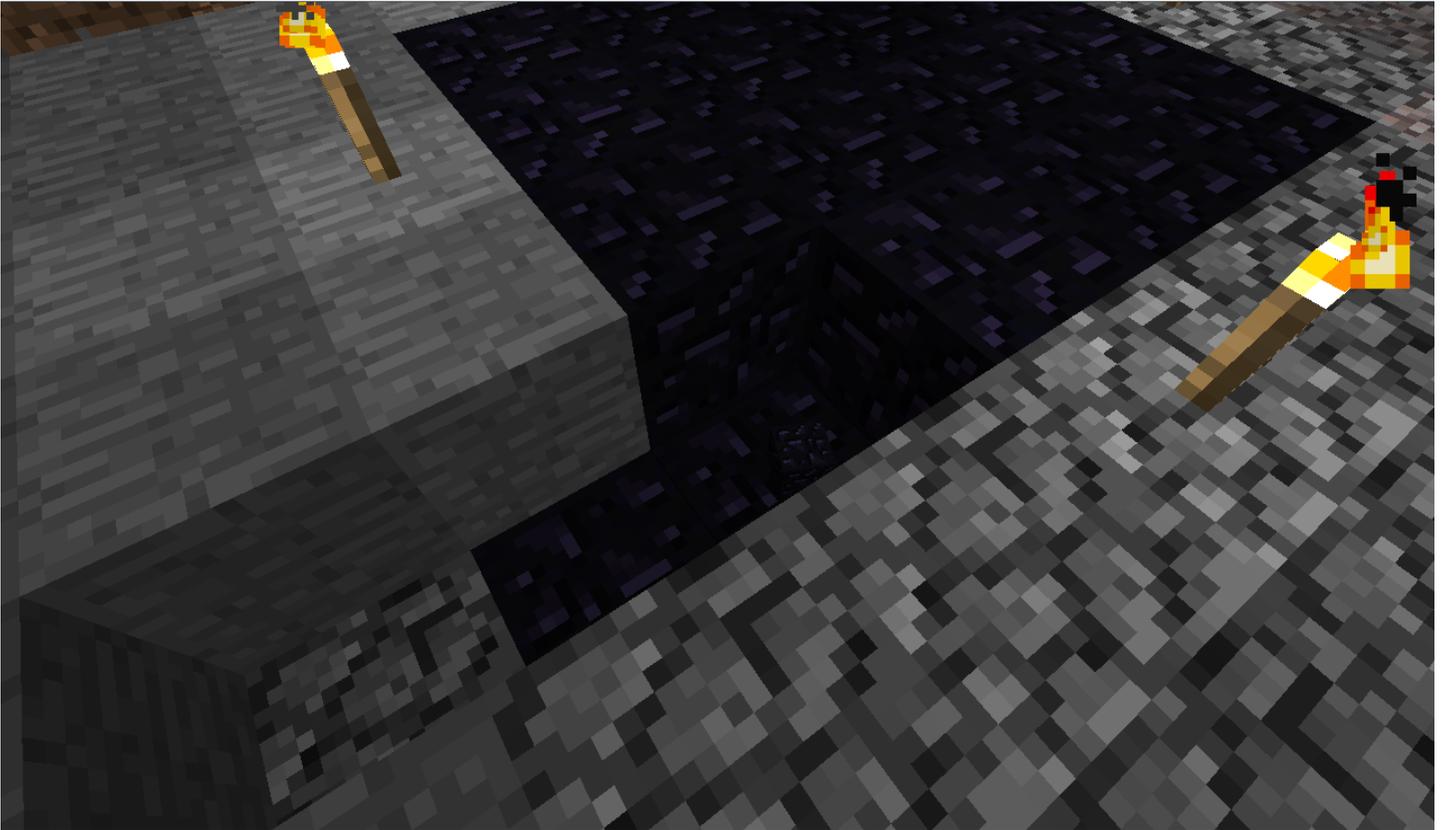
It doesn't matter too much if you reveal lava (like I did, when I was setting up these screenshots), because when you dump the water into there, it's going to turn into either cobblestone or obsidian, depending on the type of lava you revealed. Of course, making more obsidian is great, because you get to mine that later.

The next step takes advantage of two nifty little features in Minecraft (and hopefully, Notch won't change these!):

- When you mine a block, it pops upwards;
- Water moves *faster* than lava, but *slower* than a block that's popping upwards.

The step is... mine the block! Yes, that's all there is to it. But remember not to waste the diamond pick on mining stone!

The mined block – whatever it is – should move upwards quickly enough to be out of the way of the water as it moves in to extinguishing any revealed lava. In the picture below, I've gone on to mine the obsidian, but I removed the water afterwards, just so that I could show that little floating purple-black block; obviously, you don't need to do this. And, in my case, there was stationary lava beneath, making more obsidian to be plundered...



Oh, yes: If the row you're mining is too long for the water to reach (remember the total distance that water travels is seven blocks from the source), you'll have to shift the water source every so often.

Happy mining!

Mark Cooper, a.k.a. Astragali

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