

At the level of C1 (atlas), the **vertebral foramen** is an ovoid opening, which is narrowed in its anterior half by the lateral masses and bounded by the anterior and posterior arches. The anterior part of the vertebral foramen houses the **dens of the C2 (axis)**, the posterior part contains the spinal cord and its associated meninges, the spinal root of the accessory nerve and the anterior and posterior spinal arteries.