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Brooklyn Bridge, New York

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The Brooklyn Bridge extends across the East River in New York, connecting the boroughs of Brooklyn and Manhattan. It is one of the oldest suspension bridges in the world and at the time of construction, was famous for being the longest suspension bridge ever built. With a length of 1825m, it was 50% longer than any other.

The Brooklyn Bridge was a bridge of many firsts. It was the first suspension bridge that made use of steel for the cable wire and the first to use explosives inside high pressure caissons, to create the foundations for the two towers. The architect in charge of the project, John Augustus Roebling, also designed the bridge to be six times as strong as it needed to be. For these reasons the building project was complex and dangerous. 27 people died during construction including Roebling himself. His son, Washington, took over the project, but also became ill with decompression sickness (the "bends") and had to rely on his wife Emily to oversee the building.

By the time the bridge was opened on 24th May 1883 the project had cost \$15.5 million, the equivalent to \$312 million in 2008. Today, the lower level of the bridge is home to a six lane motorway and the upper level is used by pedestrians and cyclists.