

The Golden Gate Bridge

The 1.7-mile-long bridge has endured earthquakes, lead paint and record crowds since its historic construction in 1937.

Glossary

- Atop: on top of or at the top.
- Blare: make a loud noise, as of sirens.
- Commuters: someone who regularly travels between work and home.
- Flow: the steady and continuous movement of sth.
- Groan: make a long low sound.
- Hefty: large in amount.
- Horn: a piece of equipment used to make a loud sound as a warning.
- Measure: something that is done so that a bad situation is stopped.
- Outlandish: strange and unusual and difficult to accept or like.
- Primer: a substance put on a surface to cover it before painting.
- Rust: a dark orange substance that appears on metal, especially when it is wet.
- Sag: sink or bend down.
- Span: the length between the supports of a bridge or arch.
- Stilts: a pair of poles with supports for the feet, on which a person may stand and so walk raised off the ground.
- Sway: move slowly from one side to the other.
- Width: the distance from one side of something to the other side.

Choose the correct option.

The 1.7-mile-long Golden Gate Bridge, an icon of the San Francisco Bay region, connects the city of San Francisco to Marin County, California. At its completion in 1937, the suspension bridge was considered an engineering marvel—the longest main suspension bridge span in the world. It held that record until New York City's Verrazano Narrows Bridge opened in 1964 and, as of 2019, the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge in Japan boasts the world's longest _____.

Today, the West Coast landmark draws millions of _____—and tourists—each year. Here are eight historical and surprising fast facts about the Golden Gate Bridge.

1. An earthquake struck the bridge before it was even completed.

The Golden Gate Bridge under construction in San Francisco, California, April 1935.



In June 1935 an earthquake struck the region as men worked _____ the bridge's unfinished south tower. According to PBS' *American Experience*, one worker recalled, "the tower _____ 16 feet each way. There were 12 or 13 guys on top with no way to get down... The whole thing would sway toward the ocean, guys would say, 'here we go!' Then it would sway back toward the bay."

2. A safety net below the bridge saved the lives of 19 men during its construction.

The safety net installed under the Golden Gate Bridge which saved the lives of 19 men.

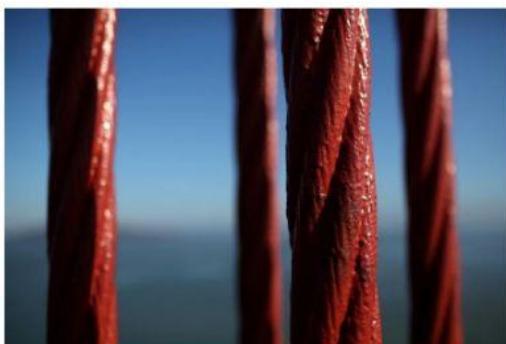


During construction, a safety net was suspended under the floor of the bridge, extending 10 feet wider than the bridge's _____ and 15 feet longer than its length. The net proved an invaluable precaution as it saved the lives of 19 men. These men became known as members of

the "Half-Way-to-Hell Club." Despite such safety _____, 11 men died during the bridge's construction.

3. The bridge's orange color was originally intended just as a primer.

Thick paint on cables of the Golden Gate Bridge in their iconic colour.



The U.S. Navy had lobbied that the bridge be painted in blue and yellow stripes to increase its visibility. But when the steel arrived in San Francisco painted in a burnt red hue as _____, the consulting architect decided the colour was both highly visible—and more

pleasing to the eye. The bridge's colour is officially called international orange.

4. Many 'firsts' were set on the bridge's opening day.

Some of the thousands of guests who walked across the Golden Gate Bridge once it was opened to pedestrians in 1937.



San Franciscans celebrated the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge with Pedestrian Day on May 27, 1937. As many as 200,000 people crossed the bridge that day. People competed to be the first to run, push a baby stroller, and even roller skate across the Golden Gate Bridge.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* recorded some of the more _____ firsts, including the first person to cross the Golden Gate Bridge on stilts. The bridge opened to vehicular traffic the following day.

5. It cost \$0.50—each way—to cross the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937.

Press cars crossing the bridge prior to opening day in May 1937.



The initial toll for the bridge was 50 cents each way—roughly equivalent to an \$18.00 roundtrip today—a _____ price to pay in the midst of the Great Depression. Today, Golden Gate Bridge tolls are collected in one direction only, heading southbound into the city of San Francisco.

6. Fiftieth anniversary crowds made the bridge temporarily flatten.

Eight hundred thousand people crowded onto the Golden Gate Bridge to celebrate its 50th anniversary on May 24, 1987.



San Francisco celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge on May 24, 1987 with a bridge walk. The bridge began to _____ and sway with an estimated 300,000 people packed like sardines onto it.

The middle of the bridge _____ seven feet under the unprecedented weight, causing the iconic arch to flatten.

Officials quickly closed the bridge, preventing an additional 600,000 people from crossing. Engineers afterward said that the bridge, which was built to bend, was never in danger of collapsing.

7. The Golden Gate Bridge's fog horns blare different tones.

The Golden Gate Bridge's fog _____, mounted at the middle and south tower (San Francisco side) of the bridge, may be nearly as iconic as the structure itself. The San Francisco Bay is famously foggy, and the bridge may have a slight influence on directing the _____ of the fog as it pushes up and pours down around the Bridge. Each horn emits a different tone at different times to help guide ships safely through dense fog.

During March, the fog horns may be heard for less than half-an-hour a day, though during the summer—San Francisco's foggy season—they may _____ for five or more hours for days at a time. The two fog horns, on average, sound for an average of 2.5 hours each day throughout the year.

The colour of the bridge, officially called international orange, was chosen in part because of its high visibility in fog.

8. It took 30 years to remove lead-based paint from the bridge.

Two painters suspended in a cradle at work on underside of the Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, California on June 24, 1965.



In the 1930s, the Golden Gate Bridge was coated with a primer that was two-thirds (by weight) lead. The architects intended the lead-based paint to protect the steel structure from corrosion, but later learned that lead is harmful to humans and the environment.

A massive cleanup effort to remove all the lead-based paint from the bridge started in 1965 and ended in 1995. Today, a zinc-based primer paint is used instead. The Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District calls the zinc a “sacrificial metal” that protects the steel from _____.