The **Brooklyn Bridge** is a hybrid [cable-stayed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cable-stayed_bridge)/[suspension bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspension_bridge) in [New York City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City), spanning the [East River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_River) between the boroughs of [Manhattan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manhattan) and [Brooklyn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn). Opened on May 24, 1883, the Brooklyn Bridge was the first fixed crossing of the East River. It was also the [longest suspension bridge in the world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_longest_suspension_bridge_spans#History_of_longest_suspension_spans) at the time of its opening, with a main span of 1,595.5 feet (486.3 m) and a deck 127 ft (38.7 m) above [mean high water](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mean_High_Water). The span was originally called the **New York and Brooklyn Bridge** or the **East River Bridge** but was officially renamed the Brooklyn Bridge in 1915.

Description

The Brooklyn Bridge, an early example of a steel-wire [suspension bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspension_bridge),uses a hybrid [cable-stayed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cable-stayed_bridge)/suspension bridge design, with both vertical and diagonal suspender cables. Its stone towers are [neo-Gothic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-gothic_architecture), with characteristic pointed arches. The [New York City Department of Transportation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City_Department_of_Transportation) (NYCDOT), which maintains the bridge, says that its original paint scheme was "Brooklyn Bridge Tan" and "Silver", although a writer for *The New York Post* states that it was originally entirely "[Rawlins Red](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rawlins,_Wyoming#%22Rawlins_Red%22)".

### Planning

Proposals for a bridge between the then-separate cities of Brooklyn and New York had been suggested as early as 1800. At the time, the only travel between the two cities was by [a number of ferry lines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ferries_across_the_East_River).Engineers presented various designs, such as chain or link bridges, though these were never built because of the difficulties of constructing a high enough fixed-span bridge across the extremely busy East River. There were also proposals for tunnels under the East River, but these were considered prohibitively expensive. The current Brooklyn Bridge was conceived by German immigrant John Augustus Roebling in 1852. He had previously designed and constructed shorter suspension bridges, such as [Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roebling%27s_Delaware_Aqueduct) in [Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lackawaxen,_Pennsylvania), and the [John A. Roebling Suspension Bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_A._Roebling_Suspension_Bridge) between [Cincinnati, Ohio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cincinnati,_Ohio), and [Covington, Kentucky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covington,_Kentucky).

In February 1867, the New York State Senate passed a bill that allowed the construction of a suspension bridge from Brooklyn to Manhattan. Two months later, the New York and Brooklyn Bridge Company was incorporated with a board of directors (later converted to a board of trustees).There were twenty trustees in total: eight each appointed by the mayors of New York and Brooklyn, as well as the mayors of each city and the auditor and comptroller of Brooklyn.The company was tasked with constructing what was then known as the New York and Brooklyn Bridge.Alternatively, the span was just referred to as the "Brooklyn Bridge", a name originating in a January 25, 1867, [letter to the editor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_to_the_editor) sent to the [*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn_Eagle)*.*The act of incorporation, which became law on April 16, 1867, authorized the cities of New York (now Manhattan) and Brooklyn to subscribe to $5 million in [capital stock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_stock), which would fund the bridge's construction.

### Construction

Construction of the Brooklyn Bridge began on January 2, 1870. The first work entailed the construction of two caissons, upon which the suspension towers would be built.The Brooklyn side's caisson was built at the Webb & Bell shipyard in [Greenpoint, Brooklyn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenpoint,_Brooklyn), and was launched into the river on March 19, 1870. Compressed air was pumped into the caisson, and workers entered the space to dig the sediment until it sank to the bedrock. As one sixteen-year-old from Ireland.

#### **Opposition**

There was substantial opposition to the bridge's construction from shipbuilders and merchants located to the north, who argued that the bridge would not provide sufficient clearance underneath for ships. In May 1876, these groups, led by Abraham Miller, filed a lawsuit in the [United States District Court for the Southern District of New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_District_Court_for_the_Southern_District_of_New_York) against the cities of New York and Brooklyn.

In 1879, an Assembly Sub-Committee on Commerce and Navigation began an investigation into the Brooklyn Bridge. A seaman who had been hired to determine the height of the span, testified to the committee about the difficulties that ship masters would experience in bringing their ships under the bridge when it was completed. Another witness, [Edward Wellman Serrell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Wellman_Serrell), a civil engineer, said that the calculations of the bridge's assumed strength were incorrect. The Supreme Court decided in 1883 that the Brooklyn Bridge was a lawful structure.[[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn_Bridge#cite_note-164)

## Notable events

### Stunts

There have been several notable jumpers from the Brooklyn Bridge. The first person was [Robert Emmet Odlum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Emmet_Odlum), brother of women's rights activist [Charlotte Odlum Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_Odlum_Smith), on May 19, 1885. He struck the water at an angle and died shortly afterwards from internal injuries.[Steve Brodie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve_Brodie_(bridge_jumper)) supposedly dropped from underneath the bridge in July 1886 and was briefly arrested for it, though there is some doubt about whether he actually jumped. [Larry Donovan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Larry_Donovan_(bridge_jumper)) made a slightly higher jump from the railing a month afterward. The first person to jump from the bridge with the intention of suicide was Francis McCarey in 1892. A lesser known early jumper was James Duffy of [County Cavan, Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Cavan,_Ireland), who on April 15, 1895, asked several men to watch him jump from the bridge. Duffy jumped and was not seen again. Additionally, the cartoonist [Otto Eppers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Eppers) jumped and survived in 1910, and was then tried and acquitted for attempted suicide. The Brooklyn Bridge has since developed a reputation as a [suicide bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide_bridge) due to the number of jumpers who do so intending to kill themselves, though exact statistics are difficult to find.

Other notable feats have taken place on or near the bridge. In 1919, [Giorgio Pessi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giorgio_Pessi) piloted what was then one of the world's largest airplanes, the [Caproni Ca.5](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caproni_Ca.5), under the bridge.In 1993, bridge jumper [Thierry Devaux](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thierry_Devaux) illegally performed eight acrobatic [bungee jumps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bungee_jumping) above the East River close to the Brooklyn tower.