



# THE HOOVER DAM EXPERIENCE

By Crystal Elsasser

At 726 feet high the Hoover Dam is a gigantic, awe inspiring, engineering wonder. Seeing the Hoover Dam has always been on my bucket list, and finally this past summer, I got to see and tour the fabulous Hoover Dam.



The Hoover Dam is 45 feet wide at the top, and 660 feet thick at the bottom and was made using three and one-quarter million cubic yards of concrete!

The tour of Hoover Dam starts by going 530 feet down the rock wall of Black Canyon in an elevator. The elevator doors open into a tunnel drilled in the 1930s for construction of the dam and visitors walk a short distance to the Penstock Viewing Platform.





The Penstock Viewing Platform is over one (of four) huge 30 foot diameter pipes that transport 90,000 gallons of water each second from Lake Mead to the dam's hydroelectric generators.



Next stop on the tour was the Nevada power plant balcony for a panoramic view of eight of the dam's seventeen huge generators.

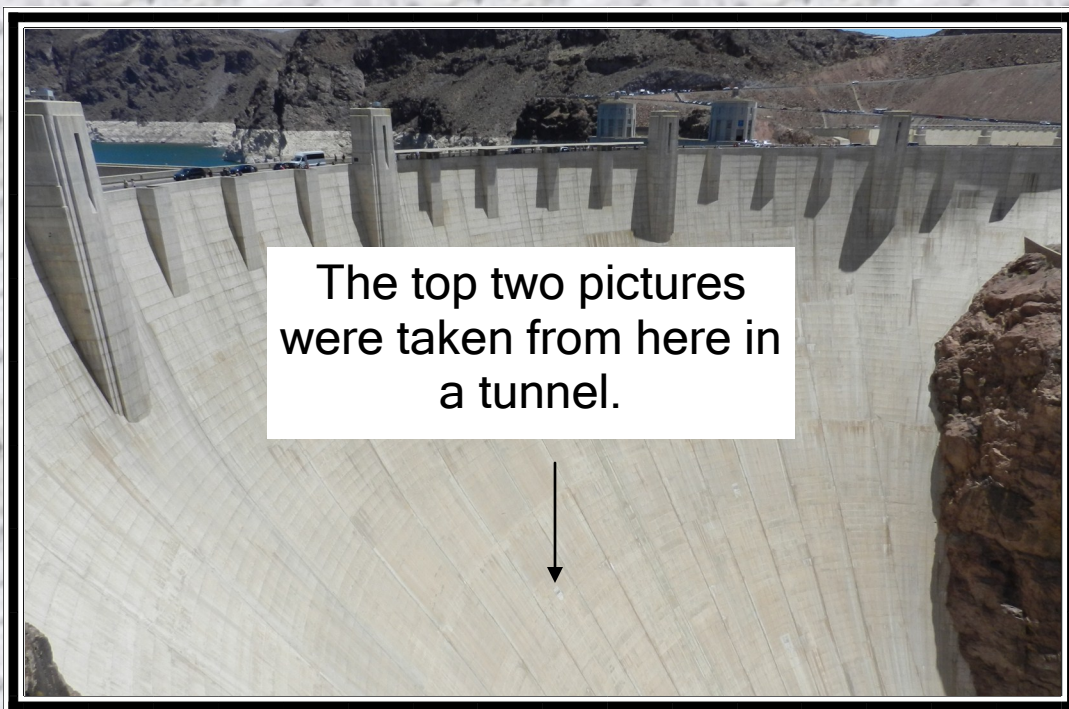
The best part of the dam tour was next. Tour guides navigate visitors through multiple tunnels in the dam. In the tunnels, the dam has been routinely inspected for cracks since it was built. New cracks are marked and then monitored for any changes.



In one tunnel, visitors can look out of an air vent opening on the downstream face of the dam.







The top two pictures  
were taken from here in  
a tunnel.



Tunnel with staircase that goes from the top to the bottom of the dam. Air quality is so poor in tunnels at the bottom of the dam, that humans rarely go there to inspect them. When inspection is necessary, special equipment and procedures are used.

The final stop of the tour is the top of Hoover Dam.







Four intake towers (two on each side of the dam) direct water to the turbine generators to make electricity.

On each side of the dam are huge spillways to direct high water from Lake Mead around the dam through tunnels in the canyon walls. The spillways have only ever been used twice. They were tested once in 1941. Then in 1983, Lake Mead spilled over due to flooding from melting snow from severe winter storms far away upstream.



At the middle of the dam, visitors can stand with one foot in Nevada and one foot in Arizona.



Original crane that was used to help carry materials to build the Hoover Dam and is still used to do work at site today.





# Lake Mead







View of  
power plants  
from top of the  
dam.



View of Mike O'Callaghan-Pat Tillman  
Memorial Bridge





Spectacular view of Hoover Dam from the  
Mike O'Callaghan- Pat Tillman Memorial  
Bridge

The Hoover Dam has always been fascinating to me and was on my bucket list of things to see. This past summer when I went on vacation, I got to go and visit the Hoover Dam. Of course, I had seen many pictures of the Hoover Dam, but seeing it in real life, made me truly appreciate how magnificent the Hoover Dam really is. In addition, touring the power plant and tunnels is very interesting and educational, because the tour guides explain many facts about the whole building process, including the amounts of material and man power needed to build the dam. Many people I talked to about the Hoover Dam didn't even know that you can tour the inside of the Hoover Dam.

With my photo essay, I wanted to try and show how awe-inspiring the Hoover Dam is in sheer size and also show a few of the interesting and beautiful things surrounding the Hoover Dam. I also wanted to take people on a photo tour of the Hoover Dam, so they can experience the Hoover Dam as I did when I was there. There are many people who would like to visit the Hoover Dam, but due to health or financial issues, they will never have the opportunity. Sharing my photos is one way to help these people to have the Hoover Dam experience. In addition, maybe I can spark someone else's interest in the Hoover Dam, and they will be inspired to see it for themselves. Finally, this photo essay is another way to help preserve the memory of this trip and experience for me and future generations of my family. The images and words will tell the story long after I'm gone.

Writing a story is hard for me to do, but trying to tell a story with just pictures is challenging also. I have come to the conclusion that sometimes the best way to tell a story is a combination of words and pictures, because one compliments the other. The pictures will show what I can't find the words to tell, and the story will be told in a more interesting manner.

The photo essay is a good way to tell the Hoover Dam experience, because the Hoover Dam is very hard to describe with just words. You must see the Hoover Dam to truly appreciate it's grandeur and beauty as much as I do.



## Works Cited

U.S. Department of the Interior. Bureau of Reclamation. *Hoover Dam Factoids for Kids*. 2004.  
Web. <<http://www.usbr.gov/lc/hooverdam/educate/kidfacts.html>>.