

If you visit Las Vegas, as advertised, you'll be dazzled by all the glitter and glamor of Sin City. Additionally, if you have some time to roam around like a tourist, be sure to visit one of the world's greatest man-made wonders of engineering and conservation, Hoover Dam. It's a 40-minute drive from the Strip, or if you want to take one of the many bus or air tours, your hotel and other sources can book you for them to pick you up at the hotel's door. The chopper tour is touted as the most exciting as it swoops over the huge dam and man-made Lake Mead below. However, we opted out. We like thrills, but we're a bit too old for that much excitement.



The top of the dam, spanning the border of Arizona and Nevada, is a breathtaking sight. It is especially dramatic when you can lean over and peer way, way down the almost endless cement cliff to the water of Lake Mead below. We enjoyed that part of the trip, and also were fascinated by the elevator ride to the depths of the earth to see the working parts of Hoover Dam.

We walked through what seemed to miles of spooky cement tunnels and gurgling pips, knowing there were millions of tons of water above us that could crush us like ants. The huge generator room resembled a space ship hangar from another planet, with rows of house-sized turbines rotating and humming away like giant beetles.

Next time you're in Las Vegas, tear yourself away from the casino tables and slot machines, and visit what may be the last government project ever built on schedule and within budget. For more than 70 years, Hoover Dam has actually saved taxpayers money. It supplies water to cities, farms and orchards in Arizona, Nevada and California that couldn't exist today without it.