

# The Eiffel Tower

The Eiffel Tower in Paris is one of the most famous landmarks in the world. For more than a century it has been a symbol of Paris, of France, and even of travel and foreign countries in general. The tower is so closely linked to travel that it often appears in travel brochures and on travel Web sites even when they are not related to travel to France.

The Eiffel Tower was constructed in 1889 for an international exposition in Paris. It was designed by Gustave Eiffel and his engineering firm. It was chosen from many other proposals to be the theme piece of the exposition. It was originally called the *Tour de 300 mètres*, or 300-Meter Tower. Later it took the name of Eiffel, the man who owned the company that designed and built it.

Puddled iron was used to construct the tower. This is a very pure form of iron that was commonly used in the nineteenth century. Steel was available in 1889, but Eiffel was very familiar with iron and knew what he could do with it, so he chose to build the tower of iron, just to be on the safe side. Even before he built the Eiffel Tower, Eiffel was famous for other things he had built in France. He even built the frame inside the Statue of Liberty.

The tower was designed to be 300 meters tall, but today it is about 20 meters taller, because of a spire and antennas that were installed on the tower after it was built. It is about the same height as the Chrysler building in New York City today.

There are three platforms in the tower. The first platform has a restaurant and a post office, souvenir shops, and exhibits about the tower for people to visit. The second platform is much higher and smaller, and it has one very exclusive restaurant, the Jules Verne, plus more souvenir shops. The top platform is just beneath the summit of the tower, and it has only two observation decks, one outside and one inside. At the top, on the inside observation deck, there are signs showing the direction and distance of many famous cities in the world. There are elevators that take visitors to each of the platforms, but they can also walk up and down stairs to the first and second platforms if they wish.

The tower is very light even though it is made of iron. It weighs only about 7000 metric tons. In fact, if you made a cylinder of air as tall and wide as the tower, the air would weigh more than the tower weighs.

The tower is painted in three slightly different shades of brown, to make it seem taller. It takes two years to paint the tower, and it must be painted by hand, by painters who are not afraid of heights. It is repainted about every seven years.

The Eiffel Tower is lighted at night. The lights are yellow and make the tower look like solid gold when they are on. There are also sparkling lights that are turned on at the beginning of each hour.

The Eiffel Tower is one of the most visited tourist attractions in the world. About seven million tourists visit it every year.