

# Eiffel Tower: Interesting facts and secrets you may not know

The Eiffel Tower has long been one of the most recognizable landmarks in the world. Let's explore the history, science and stories behind Paris' most famous landmark - the Eiffel Tower.

**The Eiffel Tower** — or la Tour Eiffel — has long been one of the world's most recognizable landmarks, symbolizing the romance and ingenuity of the City of Light. Discover the history, science, and stories behind Paris' most famous **landmark** .



Designed as the centerpiece of the 1889 World's Fair, the structure was intended to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution and highlight France's modern industrial might on the world stage. The Eiffel Tower's construction—completed in just two years, two months, and five days—was considered a feat of precision and speed. Gustave Eiffel's civil engineering firm used 7,300 tons of iron and 2.5 million rivets. The result was a triumphant Champs de Mars, which welcomed more than two million visitors during the fair.

There's actually a lot more to this iconic landmark than meets the eye. Despite being visited by over 300 million people since its opening, the Eiffel Tower still has a few little-known secrets.

## The Eiffel Tower almost wasn't built.

Although the Eiffel Tower's now famous silhouette has been emulated around the world in places like Las Vegas, Prague, Tianducheng (China), and Paris, Texas, the design was not without its critics. A letter "Protesting the Eiffel Tower" from the likes of Guy de Maupassant (who famously dined in the Eiffel Tower's restaurant every day so he wouldn't have to look at it), Alexandre Dumas, and other prominent artists, was published in the

newspaper *Le Temps* before the project was completed. The letter argued that the tower would be " *a gigantic black factory chimney, its 'massive' mass overwhelming and 'humiliating' all other monuments and degrading our architectural works, which would vanish before this incredible folly .*"

Of course, despite such protests, the Eiffel Tower was put into use and has stood the test of time. It remains one of the most visited monuments in the world, welcoming nearly seven million visitors each year.



## **There is a penthouse at the top of the Eiffel Tower.**

Gustave Eiffel reserved the top floor of the Eiffel Tower for himself, where he entertained famous guests like Thomas Edison in an apartment he designed himself. The space has since been converted into a replica of Eiffel's office — complete with wax figures of him, his daughter, and Edison. It is now open to the public.

## **Gustave Eiffel didn't actually design it.**

Although the Eiffel Tower is named after him, it was actually designed by Maurice Koechlin and Emile Nouguier, two engineers who worked for his company. They also commissioned French architect Stephen Sauvestre to design the appearance of the project as a way to allay public concerns about the harsh, utilitarian nature of the original design. They ultimately beat out over 100 other projects in a competition to be the main attraction of the 1889 World's Fair.



## **The Eiffel Tower is expected to be demolished.**

The Eiffel Tower was built to showcase France's industrial might for the 1889 World's Fair, and was originally scheduled to be demolished after 20 years. That was until Eiffel cleverly incorporated a radio antenna and wireless telegraph transmitter into the tower's design. After demonstrating the usefulness of radio to the government in 1910, Eiffel's lease was extended for another 70 years. Of course, by 1980, the landmark had become such an indelible symbol of both Paris and France that it was in no danger of being demolished.

## **It was almost destroyed in World War II.**

In August 1944, as Nazi Germany lost control of occupied Paris, Adolf Hitler ordered his generals to level the city and planned to blow up the Eiffel Tower. Fortunately, the Allies rushed in before the order could be carried out. Subsequent air raids on Paris caused significant damage, but the Eiffel Tower survived the war intact.

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