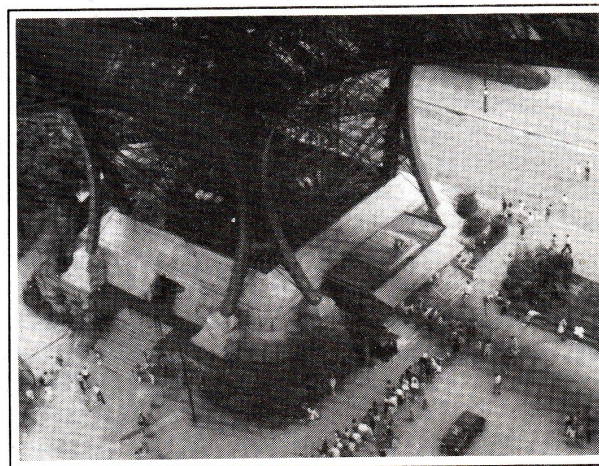


COME AND GET AN EIFFEL

Paris is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities in the world and is rightly noted for its parks and architecture as much as for its cuisine. Although one associates many buildings with Paris: the Arc de Triomphe, the Louvre, the Maison de Victor Hugo . . . the one which always springs immediately to mind is the Eiffel Tower. This massive structure dominates the city, but it isn't until you visit it and stand underneath its magnificent arched legs that you realise just how enormous it is.



The Eiffel Tower is named after its designer, Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel (1832 - 1923), and was built as the result of a competition for French architects and engineers to design and construct an iron tower on the Champ de Mars on a square base 125 metres and 300 metres high, by far the tallest building in the world at that time. Eiffel also has a street named after him: the Avenue Gustave Eiffel is between the Tower and the Parc du Champ de Mars.



Statistics on the Eiffel Tower are freely available from a number of sources (though they don't always concur), but the Tower, which beat 106 other entries to win the competition, had its foundations laid in 1887 for the 1889 Exposition Universelle. It was originally 300.51 metres

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(985ft. 11in.) high, but with its TV mast it is now 320.75 metres (1,052ft. 4in). Until the erection of the Empire State Building, it was the tallest building in the world, and weighs a surprisingly light 7,300 metric tonnes. The Tower took two years, two months and two days to build, being completed on 31st March, 1889. Its cost has been calculated very precisely at 7,799,401 francs 31 centimes. (A centime is now worthless). Between 150 and 200 builders were engaged on the project.

The Eiffel Tower has a maximum sway in high wind of 12.7 cm., an expansion of 17.92 cm. due to temperature and requires 45 tonnes of paint every 7 years. Repainting the Tower takes two years. From the top, one can see for 67 km (42 miles) on a clear day. According to the **Guinness Book of Records, 1989**, the Tower has a total of 1,792 steps, but according to a book published for the Tower's centenary (**The Eiffel Tower**, by François Sagan and Winnie Denker, published by Andre Deutsch (1989)), the Tower has 75 employees, which may be true, but claims also that until 1989 it had received a total of four and a half million visitors, yet was currently receiving them at the rate of 20,000 a day. This would work out to over seven million visitors a year! Clearly this is a **faux pas**. In fact, the Tower had its 25 millionth visitor in 1953 and its 35 millionth in 1959. The number of visitors to the Tower has of course increased over the years, and for the very simple reason that travel has increased dramatically over the hundred plus years of its existence.