

The Statue of Liberty

Iconic symbol of freedom and opportunity

Located in New York, the Statue of Liberty is one of the most recognizable figures in the world. It was created to commemorate the friendship between the United States and France. As a joint effort between the two nations, the French created the statue, and Americans created the pedestal it sits on. The statue's official name is Liberty Enlightening the World. It stands at 305 feet, including its pedestal.



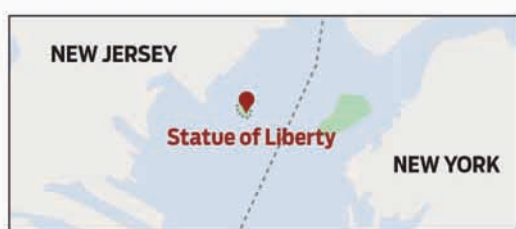
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The head of the Statue of Liberty was displayed in France in 1884 before being shipped to the U.S.

Total height
Height of statue
Torch height

29 feet

305 feet
151 feet



Location

The Statue of Liberty is located on a small island in Upper New York Bay, off the southern tip of Manhattan. The island has had a few names in the past, including Love Island and Bedloe's Island, but it was renamed Liberty Island in 1956.

Idea and design

In 1865, as the American Civil War drew to a close, French historian Edouard de Laboulaye proposed that France create a statue to give to the United States. Laboulaye wanted to celebrate the close relationship between France and America.



French sculptor **Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi** began conceptualizing the structure. Bartholdi's design was a woman wearing a crown of rays, holding a torch in one hand and a tablet in the other.

In Bartholdi's design, the crown represented light. The tablet, inscribed with July 4, 1776, in Roman numerals, was a symbol of American independence. And in order to recognize the end of slavery, Bartholdi placed chains and a broken shackle at the statue's foot.

Fundraising

While France was in charge of the statue, the American people were responsible for funding and building the pedestal. To raise funds in France, Laboulaye formed the Franco-American Union in 1875. Donations began coming in throughout the country. Public fees, various forms of entertainment and a lottery were also used for fundraising.

In the U.S., contests, benefits, exhibitions and auctions were held. Poet Emma Lazarus also wrote her famous sonnet "The New Colossus" in 1883 for an auction. But despite these efforts, fundraising went slowly in America. So in 1885, Joseph Pulitzer, a newspaper publisher, placed an ad in his paper prompting readers to donate to the cause. In exchange, Pulitzer would print each donor's name in the newspaper. Pulitzer's idea was a success, and the newspaper raised more than \$100,000 to complete the project.



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Workers hammered copper while constructing the Statue of Liberty in a workshop in Paris.

Construction

Because funds had to be raised, work on the sculpture didn't begin until 1875. The statue was constructed out of copper sheets that were hammered into shape by hand and assembled over a framework of four steel supports.

Bartholdi was assisted by Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, an engineer who also constructed the Eiffel Tower. In America, architect Richard Morris Hunt was selected to design the statue's granite pedestal. Construction of the statue was completed in France in 1884.

Transport

After completion, the statue was disassembled into 350 individual pieces and packed into more than 200 crates in order to be shipped to New York. The ship arrived in New York Harbor on June 17, 1885.

Final touches

Workers reassembled the statue and mounted it on the pedestal that was completed in April 1886. On Oct. 28, 1886, President Grover Cleveland officially dedicated the Statue of Liberty in front of thousands of spectators.

Changes

Originally, the statue looked like a new penny, but by 1920, the exterior oxidized to the green hue still observed today.

Over time, the torch underwent several modifications, including its conversion to electric power in 1916 and its redesign in the mid-1980s. A livestreaming camera was installed in the torch in 2011.

A national monument

The U.S. Lighthouse Board operated the Statue of Liberty until 1901, as its torch was a navigational aid for sailors. After that, it was placed under the jurisdiction of the U.S. War Department due to Fort Wood's status as a still-operational Army post. In 1924, the statue was declared a national monument, and it was transferred to the care of the National Park Service in 1933.

The statue has an observation deck in the pedestal for visitors and a spiral staircase leading to an observation platform in the figure's crown. Exhibits on its history were contained in the statue's base until 2018, then were moved to the adjacent Statue of Liberty Museum.

Statue stats

Weight: 62,000 pounds of copper, 250,000 pounds of framework

Thickness of copper sheeting: 3/32 of an inch (the thickness of two pennies placed together)

Wind sway: 50 mph winds cause the statue to sway up to 3 inches and the torch up to 6 inches

The crown has 25 windows and seven rays.

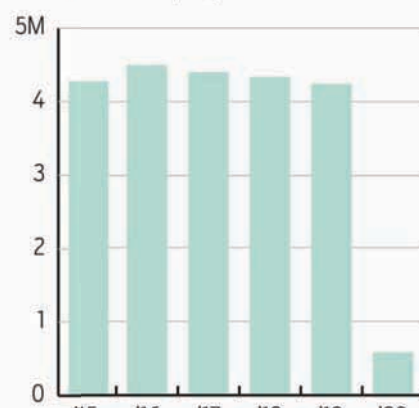
Chains and a broken shackle are at the statue's feet and cannot be seen from below.

The tablet displays the date of American Independence, July 4, 1776, in Roman numerals.

The torch: The current torch is a replacement of the original and was installed in 1986. This version is copper, covered in 24 karat gold leaf.

Yearly visitors to the Statue of Liberty (in millions)

Pre-pandemic, the monument saw around 4 million visitors per year.



Replicas

There are more than 100 replicas of the Statue of Liberty around the world. The official replica standing near the Eiffel Tower in Paris was created even before the original monument was unveiled in New York. France is actually home to more than 30 replicas. Other places where the statue can be found include China, Denmark, Norway, Spain and Ukraine.

Earlier this year, France sent the U.S. another, smaller Statue of Liberty. At about 10 feet tall, this replica was originally installed at a museum in Paris in 2011. It was sent to New York to be exhibited on Ellis Island from July 1-5. It was then moved to the French ambassador's residence in Washington, where it will be on display until 2031.

Height of base: 154 feet (not fully shown)