

The Washington Monument



Basic Information

Located in Washington, DC, at the western end of the National Mall, this four-sided stone structure (modeled after a classic Egyptian obelisk) honors the "Father of our Country," General, Founding Father, and the first president of the United States (1789-1797), George Washington.

It's design

At 555 feet 5 1/8 inches (169.29 meters) high, the Washington Monument towers over everything in Washington, DC and is one of the tallest masonry structures in the world. Fifty flags surround the base of the Washington Monument and symbolize the 50 states of the Union. If you take the elevator to the pyramid top, windows in the observation room offer views of the Lincoln Memorial, the White House, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, and the Capitol building.

Construction

The cornerstone for the monument was laid on July 4, 1848, and the monument was opened to the public on October 9, 1888. In total, there are 36,491 stones. Inserted into the interior walls of the monument are 188 carved stones presented by individuals, societies, cities, states, and nations of the world.

Ring Around the Collar :)

Did you know that there is a "ring" around the monument? Due to several setbacks, the monument stood incomplete at the height of about 150 feet for 25 years. Work resumed in 1880; however, the new marble stones came from a different quarry than the original. There is a discoloration on the outside of the obelisk that clearly marks the older structure from the later one, even though it is the same kind of marble. Since the marble came from three different quarries, it was impossible to match the later marble to the older perfectly.

The Reflecting Pool

Located between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial lies the Reflecting Pool. This 2000x160 foot pool contains 7 million gallons of water. It was modeled after similar pools at Versailles and the Taj Mahal. The design of the pool minimizes wind ripples and sharpens the watery image of the monument.