

## Berlin TV Tower, Berliner Fernsehturm -- Symbol Of United Berlin

When Walter Ulbricht (of the German Democratic Republic) commissioned the Berlin TV Tower in the early 1960's, I wonder if he knew what a smash hit it was going to be?

(But, between you and me, I'm not giving him too much credit; he's the one who signed the order for the building of the [Berlin Wall](#)...)

More than a million people come to visit the tallest building in Germany. Yeah, I'd say that counts one of the city's largest attractions.

You might not give much thought to what it took to build it, but I do. The Berlin TV tower is gigantic, standing some 365 meters above the ground. It was built at 1198 feet above the ground, adding nine additional feet after its new antenna was added after [Germany's reunification](#) (the 1990's).

Of course sitting down in its revolving restaurant you're not that high up, only 207 meters (679 feet) from the bottom. It's been said that on a clear day you can see forever. No, just kidding it's a mere 26 miles or 42 kilometers in the distance. It doesn't turn too fast though, about twice an hour; which is twice as fast as it used to be, so don't complain. ;-)

From its observation deck (which is three meters lower than the restaurant) you can still see off into the [Brandenburg](#) state. The tower overlooks the Reichstag (which was on the West Berlin side when the tower was built) and Marienkirche, as well as many new sites that have been added to this vibrant city.

Both the restaurant and observation deck are accessible by two elevators (which can have you at the top in less than a minute!); but sadly neither are wheelchair accessible.

As exciting as the *Berliner Fernsehturm* is, we can't forget this is a workhorse. It blasts both radio and television signals across [Berlin](#) and beyond. Television stations such as *Das Erste* (Germany's primary TV station), *QVC* (the shopping channel), and *Eurosport* (for us sports fans) transmit their signal from here, as well as radio stations like *Deutschlandfunk*, *Klassi-Radio*, and the *BBC*.

The Berlin Television Tower isn't without controversy. It's called the "Pope's Revenge," because of its cross-like reflection on its silver dome (stainless steel actually). You see, it was built in the very secular GDR, which tried so hard to squash any form of religion. U.S. President Ronald Regan even gave it a mention when he was in Berlin for its 750th anniversary in 1987.

It's also been decorated for special events like the FIFA World Cup in 2006.

The Berlin TV Tower isn't all that original, though. It's modeled after the Stuttgart TV Tower, in case it looks a bit familiar.

For the more technical & statistical side of the *Berliner Fernsehturm*, its dome weighs 4800 tons, adding to the weight of its 26 thousand ton shaft; with evacuation platforms at the 188 meter and 191 meter marks. It also has 986 steps from its pavilion at the bottom to the top. Whew, I couldn't even imagine having to climb all those. Could you?

Even though Walter Ulbricht is the one who ordered the tower to be built (next to the famous Alexanderplatz), it was Hermann Henselmann who's its architect. Construction started in August 1965, taking more than four years to complete (finally on October 3, 1969) with much fanfare.

For sure, I'd say the million or so people who come here every year (to look over the skyline or have lunch) still give the Berlin TV Tower as much fanfare now as it did back then. Even better now that Berlin is united again. Don't ya think? :-)