

Frequently Asked Questions

To those who have not yet savoured the beauty and gentle exhilaration of ballooning, and indeed sometimes to those who have, the experience retains an air of anticipation, magic and intrigue. You will always find our Pilots, Crew and Office Staff approachable and eager to help, but here are answers to some of the most popular questions asked of our Crew and Staff over the years.

WHEN DO THE BALLOONS FLY?

Our normal season is from March to November inclusive, with morning flights taking off about one hour after sunrise, and evening flights about two hours before sunset.

WHY SO EARLY OR SO LATE IN THE DAY?

Balloons flights are more enjoyable, and safer, in the gentlest of winds. By flying at the beginning and end of the day, we avoid the stronger and more turbulent winds created when the sun has warmed the air around us, generating thermals and sea breezes.

HOW LONG DOES THE FLIGHT LAST?

The flight itself generally lasts for 45 minutes to one hour. Our aim, however, is to make your trip one of the most memorable experiences possible, and thus you should allow at least four hours to accommodate the additional procedures and celebrations.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

Preferably, natural fibre clothing suitable for a country walk at the time of year - trousers and long sleeves, sturdy or waterproof footwear. The temperature in the air will be similar to that on the ground.

WHY IS IT NOT POSSIBLE TO SELECT THE TAKE-OFF SITE UNTIL THE DAY OF THE FLIGHT?

Balloons are carried by the breeze, and therefore we will not know our direction of travel until we obtain our final weather forecasts a few hours before the flight. Once these details are to hand, we can select the take-off site best located to give a safe and lengthy flight.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE WEATHER IS NOT SUITABLE ON THE DAY?

The flight is simply arranged for another date convenient to you - most people fly on their first chosen flight date, the remainder within just a few attempts.

WHAT IF THE WEATHER CHANGES WHILE WE ARE IN THE AIR?

We will only fly if we can be certain that the weather will be perfect for the flight. Before each flight, our teams obtain highly detailed weather forecasts from established meteorological centres such as Bracknell and Bristol, which are cross referenced with other, equally detailed, forecasts from other sources. These forecasts are extremely accurate over the short time that we intend to be in the air, and thus we are able to be as certain as we can be that we will not experience any deterioration in the weather during the flight.

WHAT IS THE LANDING GOING TO BE LIKE?

One of the main reasons for choosing to fly at the beginning or end of each day is to ensure a landing speed as low as possible. The vast majority of balloon landings are so gentle, passengers have been known to break out in spontaneous applause at the Pilot's apparent skill and dexterity. Very occasionally, the balloon will have a landing speed that is just fast enough to create a short drag or landing run, giving rise to a few gentle bumps before coming to rest.

HOW FAR WILL WE FLY?

The distance we fly will be dictated by the wind speed at higher altitudes, but you can expect to travel between 8 and 15 miles on average.

CAN FAMILY AND FRIENDS FOLLOW?

Certainly, although in practice we find that the majority of people prefer to await the return of the balloon and passengers to the take-off site.

CAN I TAKE A CAMERA OR VIDEO RECORDER?

In fact, we recommend it! Please note, however, that personal effects are carried at your own risk and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss or damage to the equipment. You will be asked to switch off any mobile telephones before take-off, as these are a potential hazard to our fuel systems and navigation equipment.

WHAT ABOUT INSURANCE?

Airborne is fully insured at Lloyds for personal and third party risks, and your own personal policies are normally unaffected by the activity. As previously mentioned, personal effects are not covered by our policies, but again your normal insurance arrangements usually remain valid.

ARE THERE ANY AGE LIMITS?

Providing you are reasonably fit and mobile, age is not a limiting factor. We often fly people in their 80's and above. Children are also very welcome, but must be at least 7 years of age and above 1.4m in height. Children under 16 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.



Certificate No BL 195



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THE BRITISH BALLOON AND AIRSHIP CLUB

Terms and Conditions

As with all businesses, it is necessary that we are precise about the terms of our contract with you, and the following details are intended to do just that. If, however, you are unsure about any aspect of your intended flight, please do not hesitate to contact us at our Information and Booking Office, where our staff will be pleased to answer any queries you may have.

1) It is our intention that all the terms of the contract between us, the purchaser and passenger if different, are contained in these Terms and Conditions and in the brochures and associated documents (if any) issued by us. If you do not wish to be bound by them, please return your Flight Vouchers within 14 days of the date of purchase, for a full refund (less a £10 charge per Flight Voucher to cover credit card and banking costs). After this period, the costs incurred in maintaining the operation and setting up flights are such that a refund will not be possible, except under the circumstances described in paragraph 10. The Flight Voucher is not redeemable for cash.

2) Flight Vouchers will not be valid until full payment for the Flight Voucher has been received. All Flight Vouchers are valid for a period of 12 months from the date of purchase.

3) The purchase of a Flight Voucher entitles the passenger to a flight in a hot air balloon operated by Airborne Balloon Flights Ltd, from a site selected by the operating Pilot, plus additional benefits such as flight certificates, post-flight celebrations etc, which may be varied by us as appropriate to the flight.

4) All our balloon flights are subject to suitable weather conditions and the terms of the Air Navigation Order (ANO) and are undertaken at the discretion of the pilot in command. It may be necessary to postpone a flight at any time if in our judgement the flight may not be made safely or within the requirements of the ANO. We will give you as much warning as operational procedures permit of a postponement, but we reserve the right to order such a postponement at any time up to the moment of launch. Whilst most passengers are able to fly on their first chosen date, it is important that you are aware that for the above reasons it may be necessary to cancel and reschedule your flight. All Flight Vouchers are issued on the basis that they are for any day in the category chosen, and not for a specific day, even when a flight date has been chosen at the time of purchase. If flights are suspended due to operational restrictions beyond our control, the validity period of Flight Vouchers will be extended by at least the period of such restrictions.

5) Cancellations on the launch site are rare but occasionally necessary when the meteorological office does get the forecast wrong! Airborne and Leeds Castle Enterprises Ltd are unable to accept liability for any consequential loss (financial or otherwise) for such circumstances, which are beyond our control.

6) In the event of postponement of the flight, passengers should contact the Information & Booking Office to book a further flight date within the original validity period. We advise passengers to book flight dates at the start of the flying season (April to October) to allow sufficient time to reschedule should the flight be cancelled.

7) The expiry date of a Flight Voucher may be extended for a further 12 months at any time at a cost of £30 per Flight Voucher.

8) If a passenger has not been able to fly during the validity period of their Flight Voucher, but has attempted to fly on at least one occasion during that period, Airborne will exceptionally allow the extension of the Flight Voucher to the end of the month following the expiry date (or the first month of the following season if the Flight Voucher expires during the last month of a season or during a non-flying period). If a flight date is not booked in that month, the Flight Voucher will be deemed to have expired.

9) The pilot has ultimate responsibility for deciding the duration and conduct of any flight and the appropriate time and place of a final landing. We cannot guarantee that a flight will follow any particular direction, and you should note in particular that the launch site will be chosen to ensure that the flight can be conducted safely and within the terms of the ANO. The grounds of Leeds Castle are the normal launch site of the Leeds Castle Balloon, but if the wind speed or direction are such that a safe and lengthy flight will not be possible, then the balloon will move to a more appropriate site for launch. Purchasers and recipients of Flight Vouchers or Gift Vouchers are therefore advised that we are unable to guarantee that the balloon will launch from the grounds of Leeds Castle on the chosen flight date.

10) We will make a refund of the Flight Voucher, less 25% of the ticket cost to cover financial and administration costs, only following the death of the passenger, or certification from a doctor that the passenger is or will be medically unfit to fly (other than by reason of pregnancy). If a passenger is unable to take their flight as a result of pregnancy, the Flight Ticket will be extended to the end of the following calendar year.

11) If you wish to change your chosen flight date please note that 7 days notice is required. It is a requirement that passengers telephone the appropriate Flight Information Line as instructed, prior to the flight. Passengers arriving after the meeting time detailed on the Flight Information Line, or failing to take a confirmed flight, will render their Flight Voucher invalid and forfeit the Voucher purchase cost. Flight Vouchers rendered invalid in this manner are not entitled to the provisions of paragraphs 7 and 8.

12) The pilot in command or the company may refuse to fly any person deemed to be especially at risk or a liability to the crew or other passengers. Prior to taking their flight passengers should ensure they are in good physical health and that there are no medical or physical reasons why they should not take their flight. Passengers should not fly if pregnant.

13) To accommodate unforeseen changes in the personal circumstances of the passenger, Flight Vouchers are fully transferable allowing the nomination of alternative passengers.

14) Our standard insurance policy covers us against our legal liability to you for accidents or injury during the flight. We can provide further details upon request and if you do not consider the extent of our insurance coverage adequate to compensate you for loss for which we are legally liable whether for death or personal injury, we would advise you to take out your own additional cover. Please note that personal effects such as cameras, video equipment etc. are not insured and are carried entirely at the passenger's own risk.



Experience the magic of a flight with Airborne...



The balloon flight...

Flying shortly after sunrise or before sunset, a balloon flight over the stunning Kent and Sussex countryside is an exhilarating yet tranquil experience that will be remembered long after the flight is over. Drifting with gentle winds you view the landscape from a new perspective.

After meeting your pilot at a pre-arranged location in Kent or Sussex you will be taken to the launch site nearby where participation in the assembly and inflation of the balloon create an entire ballooning experience!

Many passengers never even feel the balloon take off as it gently leaves the ground behind. At the balloon's normal cruising height of between 1500 and 2000 feet, all that's left for to do is just relax and enjoy the flight. The balloon flight lasts approximately 45 minutes to an hour although you should allow three to five hours for the whole experience.

During the flight, all our pilots are happy to answer any questions you may have about ballooning or the spectacular scenery that surrounds you. When the time comes to return to earth, you'll be met by our retrieve crew and the balloon packed away. Your flight will then be celebrated in traditional style with a toast of chilled champagne and a presentation of a personalised flight certificate signed by your pilot. You will then be returned to the original meeting point by Land Rover.

We....

- fly early in the morning & evening during the months of April to November
- offer Flight Vouchers valid for 12 months from the date of purchase
- include full insurance and VAT in the price
- provide a full and detailed pre-flight briefing
- provide a balloon ride that lasts approximately 45 minutes to an hour
- give a whole ballooning experience lasting three to four hours
- take an in-flight photo during the flight available to pre-order or purchase on the day
- celebrate with a couple of glasses of chilled bubbly following the flight
- present each passenger with a first flight certificate signed by the Pilot
- return passengers to the meeting point by Land Rover

For that extra special occasion!

A VIP flight for two passengers in our Exclusive Balloon flying at either sunrise or sunset



Purchasing a Flight Voucher from Airborne could not be easier...

Book online at

www.airborneballoons.co.uk

vouchers can be downloaded instantly 24hrs a day or posted out First Class

By telephone

01622 873200

All Flight Vouchers and memorabilia are posted out First Class

At our office

The Balloon Office, Beltring TN12 6PY

Collect your Flight Vouchers from us directly from Monday to Saturday

In-flight photograph vouchers and other gifts and memorabilia are available and may be pre-ordered for collection on the day of the flight, or posted to the passenger in advance in an Airborne Gift Box.

