



becoming a balloonist

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will I like ballooning?

Hot air ballooning is an exciting sport with many opportunities. Balloonists vary from those that enjoy fun-flying to those who fly commercially as a 'day-job' in far-flung holiday destinations. There are even regular national and international competitions for the more serious flyer, but you don't have to become a pilot to enjoy ballooning. Every balloon will need crew to assist with its launch and recovery. So nearly everyone can become a balloonist.

The perfect way to start ballooning or get a bit more involved is to go for a passenger balloon flight. A quick search of the internet will offer the relevant information and prices. Almost every passenger wants to go flying in a balloon again and some even report that ballooning is the best form of aviation they have ever tried! Most of the passenger-ride operators fly Cameron balloons as they are regarded as excellent quality, highly innovative and tremendously reliable as this type of balloon has to work hard, day in and day out.

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Cameron Balloons offer sales service, advice and support. We have over 900 years of hot-air balloon manufacturing experience in house.



becoming a private pilot

Unlike some other forms of aviation, you can be 'hands on' from the start, you can play an active role in a balloon team and very likely try out some of the skills that you will need in order to pass the 'check flight' examination.

Gaining your PPL(B) (private pilots licence, balloons) requires 16 hours of flight training, the completion of a few written examinations and a practical flight test with an examiner. Your doctor will also have to sign a certificate that confirms you are medically fit enough to be a pilot.

We can recommend a school in Italy where you can usually complete the flying part of your training in just two weeks and we run regular study courses at our factory in Bristol to help you with the examinations.

With additional experience you can extend the privileges of your licence to a CPL (Commercial Pilot's Licence). A CPL allows you to fly for hire and reward: ie. You can get paid for enjoying yourself!

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Conversion from fixed-wing is easy, with usually just a short theory exam and 16hrs 'on type' is required.



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More information is available from the British Balloon and Airship Club website - www.bbac.org





if being a pilot is not for you, dont worry...

There are many other aspects of hot-air ballooning to enjoy, including the 'indispensable' retrieve crew. They unpack the balloon and prepare it for inflation and launch. After it becomes airborne the team follow the balloon to the place where it lands – unless its your turn to go for a flight in the basket. The balloon travels with the wind in a (more-or-less) straight line, but the crew has to navigate their vehicle to the landing site using the road network, which is quite a skill and can be great fun.

After the flight the crew help pack the balloon away and will then balloon teams usually find their way to the local pub to socialise and meet other pilots and crew. All you need is a sense of adventure, humour and lots of enthusiasm.



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