



Safety and insurance

A balloon flight has been shown to be the safest way of getting into the air. Its very simplicity and slowness provides occupants with inherent protection against the unlikelihood of any failure or accident. Every year, each of our balloons undergoes a rigorous inspection and your pilot, who will possess a British Commercial Balloon Pilot's license (yes, there is such a thing!), is flight tested.

Weather is the limiting factor for ballooning and your pilot will use extensive experience to decide whether conditions allow for a safe flight. Everyone who flies in the balloon is insured against injury subject to advising us beforehand of any condition they may have that a balloon flight could affect.

Our in-flight photos make great souvenirs. Right: our two balloons.

Fitness and health

Ballooning is not a particularly energetic activity. Nevertheless, you should be able to climb into the basket (footholes are provided) and be able to adopt a crouched posture to safely absorb the bump of a landing, which can sometimes be a little hefty. It would thus be inadvisable to fly when pregnant or if you have any ankle, back or bone weaknesses. Talk to us and your doctor if you are in any doubt. We do need some passengers or spectators to help to assemble and later pack away the balloon but this is all part of the experience!

Fear of heights

Everybody can have a fear of heights, but it is oddly rare in a balloon! The sides of the basket reach up to lower chest height (unless you're particularly tall), giving a good feeling of security. The balloon doesn't so much as leave the ground as the ground leaves the balloon! You'll feel no acceleration as you do in a lift or aeroplane. We float gently along with the wind, so there is total stillness and stability when we're in the air. The first few minutes can sometimes be a little unsettling for some people, purely because of its unusualness, but the pilot is there to reassure and help you with this novel feeling and you'll soon be in awe like everyone else.



We involve you in the balloon inflation.

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Civil Aviation Authority certified operator BL184
Member of the British Association of Balloon Operators
Member of the Scottish Tourist Board

Alba ballooning

Carried by the wind

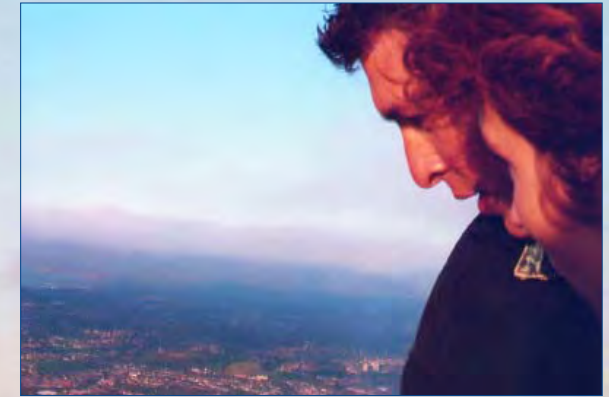
the experience of a lifetime



Champagne balloon flights over Edinburgh's surrounding picturesque Lothian and Scottish Borders countryside, or over the scenic landscapes of Kinrosshire and Fife.

Alba ballooning

Carried by the wind - the experience of a lifetime



Alba Ballooning

Founded in 1999, Alba Ballooning has firmly established a reputation for a friendly and professional service with many letters of thanks and recommendations from its passengers and maintains a perfect safety record. If you have Internet access, you might like to view some more photographs and read feedback from our passengers on our website.

Alba Ballooning is a member of the Balloons over Britain syndicate. A voucher purchased from us can be used instead at one of eleven other balloon operators spread throughout England.

When we fly

Ballooning is a weather dependent activity, only possible in light wind and dry conditions. Although we try to fly all year round, April to September tend to be the busiest months. Flights may occur an hour or so either after sunrise or before sunset when the atmosphere tends to be more stable and suited to ballooning. Even then, favourable conditions don't occur every day, so it isn't unusual for flights to be cancelled – but then it's a simple matter to re-book another date and so on until we strike lucky. Patience and perseverance always eventually pays!

Arranging a flight

To arrange a balloon flight, a gift voucher can be purchased which is initially valid for one year but can be renewed indefinitely for an annual fee if it is not used within the validity period. A flight date can then be booked. These vouchers make excellent presents for Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries. Simply fill in our Booking Form and return it to us by post or fax. We normally send out our vouchers within 24 hours of receipt.

Once you've booked a date, you will be asked to call us sometime before the meeting time for the flight to check whether the flight can go ahead or not. If we think the weather suitable, we'll join you at our meeting point. For Lothian flights, this is the small car park at the entrance road to the Midlothian Ski Centre at Hillend. For Kinrosshire flights, we use the Moto Service Station off Junction 6, M90, by Kinross.

From the meeting point, we will drive you to the chosen launch site for the flight which is selected, based on the prevailing wind direction, to give us the best chance of staying aloft for an hour and then finding somewhere suitable to land.

The balloon flight

On Lothian flights, we will launch from one of the several sites we have in either Midlothian, such as Penicuik, Bush House or Mount Lothian, or in the northern Scottish Borders such as West Linton, Eddleston or Peebles. A typical flight may take us over the dramatic Moorfoot or Pentland Hills or over Midlothian's rural landscape with its picturesque villages, castles and reservoirs.

On a Kinrosshire flight, we might launch from Balado near Kinross or the Bridge of Earn depending on wind direction, giving us views of Loch Leven, Kinross or perhaps Perth, and the beautiful Ochil Hills.

After landing and packing away, we will celebrate our flight in traditional style with a glass or two of champagne and a commemorative certificate will be awarded to everyone. We can then ferry you back to the meeting point in our vehicle that has been following our airborne progress. Alternatively, you may have brought along your own spectators who've similarly followed us along and they can drive you directly home. In all, you should allow 3 to 4 hours for the entire experience.

Photo: Midlothian in autumnal colours.