

Information for balloon passengers

Important

Please read the 'Terms and Conditions' which you will find either on the rear of your voucher or on an attached sheet. Pay particular attention to aspects of safety, voucher validity, renewal fees and forfeiting your flight. You will be asked to confirm that you are medically fit and able to undertake a balloon flight on the launchfield, else we are unable to fly you, so do discuss any concerns with us well beforehand if you have any doubts. We are unable to fly you if you are pregnant.

Flight availability

Ballooning requires very light winds, no rain and reasonable visibility. Northern UK weather thus limits us to being able to fly about a quarter of the hundreds of flights we schedule each season which typically runs between mid-March and late October. You may have to rebook several times before flying. Patience and perseverance may be required! Please note that in order to be fair to everyone, we only accept one booking at a time.

In season, balloon flights take place either a few hours after dawn or near dusk. The most heavily booked slots for flying are Saturday and Sunday evenings. Booking outside these slots greatly increases your chances of flying sooner. Our flights also tend to get more booked up as the season progresses, so please try to book a flight slot as soon as you can after receiving your voucher.

If your flight is cancelled, please rebook another flight as quickly as possible.

Be as flexible as possible in your choice of dates and times, else you may find that you have not flown by the time your voucher expires and you may need to pay a fee to extend it. We waive this fee if you have been unlucky enough to have made five unsuccessful in-season bookings.

Ways to book with us

Please call us or use our website www.alb ballooning.co.uk (which lists our Flight Schedules).

Telephone 01875 830709 (office)
or 07775 666544 (mobile)

The pre-flight call

It's a good idea to note the arranged flight date and time onto your voucher with the time you need to call us to 'weather check' the flight. If you have a morning flight, please call us mid-afternoon of the day before. If you have a dusk flight please call us around three to four hours before the meeting time. We should then be able to let you know whether or not the flight can go ahead.

We will only ask you to meet for a flight if we consider the conditions likely to be suitable and safe. There can nevertheless be instances of a flight cancellation either shortly prior to meeting, upon meeting, or even on the launchsite. Do ensure that we have your mobile phone number and have your phone switched on whilst travelling to the meeting point in case we need to make a late cancellation.

The meeting point

See overleaf for maps of our meeting point locations. Please arrive in good time and bring your voucher or confirmation letter and any due balance with you. We usually leave a few minutes after the meeting time to go to our chosen launch site. If you are late, and consequently miss the departure, you may well forfeit your flight so please telephone our mobile number if you are delayed and we will try to rendezvous. Please note that we can transport only passengers to the launch site and back to the meeting point and that we do not return to the launch site after the flight. Spectators will need to drive in their own transport.

What to wear

We recommend that you wear sturdy footwear with ankle protection. The temperature in the basket aloft is generally similar to that on the ground. Please wear long-sleeved durable clothing, ideally made of a natural fibre, suitable for a country-side walk or ramble. Don't wear clothing that is difficult to clean as we may land in muddy farmland possibly recently occupied by livestock. If you bring a camera or small video camera, make sure that it can be contained in a soft protective case.

Important safety information

Please switch off mobile phones in flight and do not smoke near or in the balloon. Please also ensure that any companions, particularly children, do not endanger themselves around the balloon.

We require a number of passengers to help prepare the balloon for flight and help pack away afterwards. All passengers must be able to clamber into and out of the 1.2 meters sided basket; two footholes are provided.

In the air, the balloon is quite stable but, depending on the wind speed, the landing may vary from a series of light bumps to a bigger bump and the basket tipping onto its side and being dragged a short distance. The pilot will show you how to brace for the tipped landing (lightly crouched, back against the padded basket wall and holding on with both hands to the rope handles) to safely absorb any such bumps. You will get to practice this before the landing.

Thousands of people have safely returned to earth this way, so unless you have a medical condition that may be affected by such bumps, it's not something to worry about. Please do however ensure that you follow these instructions. The impact can be similar to that of standing on a dining chair and jumping off, landing with both feet on the ground. If you wear glasses, it may be advisable to pack them into a case for the landing.

After the flight

After packing away and drinking a celebratory glass of champagne, and the award of a certificate, we will return you to the meeting point. Alternatively, you may have come with spectating friends or family who have driven behind our vehicle as it follows the balloon. Naturally, you are then able to leave with them from our landing site.