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Hot Air Balloons

How Much Do Hot Air Balloons Cost? (Detailed)

April 19, 2022



It can seem like a fun idea to own a hot air balloon. It might even be a personal goal for those who absolutely love hot air balloon rides.

But how much does a hot air balloon cost? The cost of owning a hot air balloon can be pretty high and a lot for your average person to maintain.

The second question you need to ask is, "Is it worth it?" That answer will vary per person. We'll look at some of the factors that go into the cost of owning a hot air balloon and if it's really worth it.

How the cost of a hot air balloon is determined

Owning a hot air balloon can be looked at as similar to the costs associated with owning a car. The initial price is usually a lot of money, and you're going to spend a lot more on maintaining it.

On average, you're looking at spending a wide range of money to make the initial hot air balloon purchase. It can cost anywhere from \$20,000 to over \$100,000. Granted, if you're spending over \$100,000, you're probably buying a commercial hot air balloon, which can [carry more people](#) than a personal hot air balloon.

What causes a hot air balloon to fluctuate in price is the components. Everything from the size to the burners is an expense you need to consider.

Size

[The size](#) of the hot air balloon is a prime factor in the cost. Bigger hot air balloons, which can carry more people, will cost a lot. Conversely, smaller hot air balloons will be cheaper.

Basket

The basket is the portion of the hot air balloon passengers and pilots ride in. Most hot air balloons will use a wicker basket, but some are made from aluminum or fiberglass. The shape is generally a square or rectangle, but sometimes triangular shapes can be purchased.

Envelope

Right next to the basket, the envelope is a critical component in operating a hot air balloon. The envelope is the top portion of the hot air balloon and is attached to the basket via cables. **The material used** to make the envelope is typically fire-resistant nylon.

The burner

A burner is used to generate heat into the hot air balloon. Burners will rely on propane gas tanks stored in the basket to release heat into the envelope, which will cause it to rise. The burner output will vary depending on the size of the envelope. Most of the time, hot air balloons will rely on one burner, but some will have more which will add more expenses.

Additional components

There are several additional components to take into account. For instance, some hot air balloons may use GPS tracking devices so the ground crew can track the balloon. There are other instruments, such as an altimeter or a variometer, that people will get to help with piloting.

Additional costs



While some people might budget for the initial cost of buying a hot balloon, they might not budget all the additional costs. There's quite a bit to take into account, including [tipping](#).

Pilot license

In order to operate a hot air balloon, you need a pilot license. You need to factor in whether you'll be aiming for a private or commercial license.

The training for each type of license isn't cheap. You will probably have to spend anywhere from \$1000 to \$4000 to get your license.

Insurance

In the unfortunate event your hot air balloon gets damaged or you experience a crash, you'll absolutely want hot air balloon insurance.

You'll also want to factor in the insurance on the trailer to haul your hot air balloon. Insurance for a trailer is separate from the hot air balloon.

Safety

Safety is vital when owning a hot air balloon. Hot air balloons must comply with FAA safety regulations and need certificates of proof. After 100 hours of use, your hot air balloon will need to undergo a safety inspection.

Maintenance

Just like a car, you'll have to do regular maintenance on your hot air balloon. This can include getting new propane gas tanks, repairs, and cleaning expenses.

You'll generally want your maintenance work to be done by an FAA-certified shop. This will ensure your balloon complies with regulatory standards.

Storage and operating space

Storing a hot air balloon isn't easy. You'll need an ample amount of space to store it safely.

Additionally, you'll need a significant amount of space to launch and land your hot air balloon. Typically, you'll want to launch and land in an open field. Odds are you'll probably have to rent out this space, which can get costly if you go out often.

Ground crew

A ground crew is needed to help get your hot air balloon off the ground and to chase it when it lands. Having a ground crew is especially important when it comes to landing and transporting your hot air balloon back into storage.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why Are Hot Air Balloons So Expensive?

Creating hot air balloons is costly due to the use of high-quality materials, specialized equipment, skilled labor, insurance, maintenance, and storage. Each balloon is custom-made, making it an expensive investment.

How Many Years Does a Hot Air Balloon Last?

Hot air balloons can last up to 1000 flight hours depending on material quality, upkeep, and storage. They can remain in good condition with proper care for a decade or more.

How Much Is a Hot Air Balloon Ride in the US?

Hot air balloon rides in the United States can have varying costs based on different factors. These can include the location, the company offering the service, the duration of the flight, and the number of passengers. However, a standard flight can cost you anywhere between \$150 to \$350 per person.

Is Owning a Hot Air Balloon Worth It?

Well, for your average person, probably not. Hot air balloons cost a lot and require far more specialized maintenance and care than something like a car or motorcycle. Not many people have the time or funds to maintain a hot air balloon.

However, if you feel you can manage all the costs that come with owning a hot air balloon, go for it. If you're genuinely passionate about hot air balloons, owning one might be worth it.

Keep in mind that most of the costs mentioned in this article are unavoidable. There might be some ways you can save money, like if you buy a used hot air balloon, but most of the expenses mentioned are necessary.

If you love hot air balloon rides but don't want to spend a fortune buying and maintaining one, consider taking a hot air balloon ride with [Napa Valley Aloft](#). We are committed to providing our passengers with a safe and memorable experience.



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