



Transport
Canada

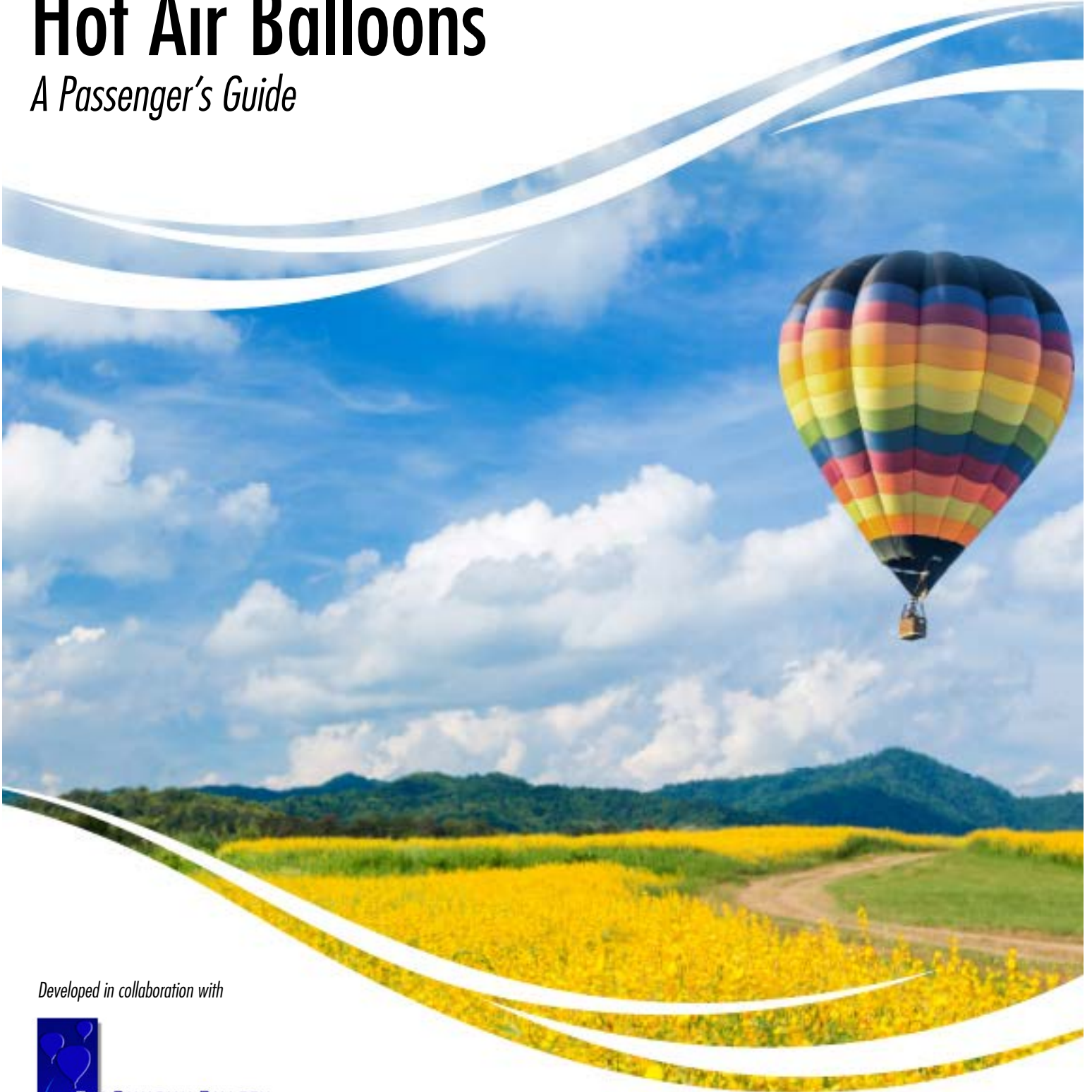
Transports
Canada



TP 15245E
(01/2014)

Hot Air Balloons

A Passenger's Guide



Developed in collaboration with



THE CANADIAN BALLOON
ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION MONTGOLFIÈRE
CANADIENNE

Canada 

FLYING ON BOARD HOT AIR BALLOONS

Transport Canada and hot air balloon flight operators take balloon flight safety very seriously

BE PREPARED!

A flight in a hot air balloon is an enjoyable outdoor activity. Reading these questions and answers may help you fully appreciate the experience.

ARE HOT AIR BALLOONS REGISTERED AIRCRAFT IN CANADA?

Yes, they are registered aircraft in Canada regulated by Transport Canada under the *Canadian Aviation Regulations*.

ARE CANADIAN HOT AIR BALLOON PILOTS LICENSED?

Yes. Balloon pilot licence requirements include receiving formal ground and flight instruction, completing a written exam, and demonstrating skills and knowledge. Pilots must also meet requirements to keep their qualifications current.

Balloon operators that offer paid passenger rides must have a Special Flight Operations Certificate issued by Transport Canada.

WHEN DO BALLOONS FLY?

Hot air balloons fly when winds are at their most stable, usually shortly after sunrise or a few hours before sunset. This is because the heating and cooling of the earth during the day create thermal winds, which make conditions unsuitable. During the winter, snow covering the ground reduces thermal activity and balloons may fly throughout the day.

HOW LONG WILL THE FLIGHT LAST?

The experience of a hot air balloon flight is more than the flight itself. The experience includes the pre-flight activities of meeting at the launch site, the passenger safety briefing and the inflation of the balloon.

Once you are in the air, a crew will follow the balloon. After the flight, the crew will recover the balloon equipment and the passengers and crew will return to the launch site or some other predetermined meeting point. The entire experience may last several hours.



WHAT WILL THE SAFETY BRIEFING INCLUDE?

The safety briefing should include the following items:

- flight overview (length, different phases from inflation to landing, etc.);
- where to position yourself during the inflation of the balloon;
- where to find emergency equipment (fire extinguisher, drop line, first aid kit, etc.);
- rules about smoking and alcohol;
- precautions relating to the fan;
- precautions relating to the hot phase of inflating a balloon;
- precautions relating to the burner and flames throughout the flight;
- how to enter and exit the basket;
- where to position yourself in the basket;
- what to do during the flight;
- landing procedures (handholds, bracing, not leaving basket until directed to do so, etc.);
- procedures for deflating the balloon; and
- what to do during an emergency.

WILL PILOTS CANCEL A BALLOON FLIGHT DUE TO WEATHER?

Perhaps. Pilots are trained and qualified to evaluate the weather conditions and decide whether to fly the balloon. Do not be afraid to ask questions or share your concerns. On the other hand, do not pressure the pilot to fly if they decide to wait for better weather. Discuss options with your pilot if he or she cancels your flight.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR DURING A BALLOON FLIGHT?

Dress to be outside and active for several hours, taking into consideration the day's weather. This may include:

- Comfortable shoes such as running shoes or light hikers – **not** high heels, sandals, flip-flops or open-toed footwear.
- Long pants, since shorts will not protect you from vegetation at the landing site. Do not wear a skirt or dress.
- A t-shirt or shirt that covers your torso.
- A jacket if the weather is cool.
- A hat and/or sunscreen on sunny days.

Note: Keep all loose clothing, long hair, drawstrings, jewelry, cameras or other loose items under control at all times to prevent them from being tangled in cables, ropes or the inflation fan.



ARE THERE ANY MEDICAL RESTRICTIONS FOR PASSENGERS?

Yes. Be aware that:

- The balloon flight could aggravate any previous injuries.
- Passengers must be able to see over the edge of the basket (~42 in. or 106 cm), hang on by themselves, stand for the entire flight, and enter/exit the basket unassisted.
- You may need to use a step hold in the side of the balloon basket and lift your leg over the edge of the basket to enter/exit the basket.
- If you are pregnant or suspect you are pregnant, consult your doctor and advise your pilot. We recommend that you **do not** fly in a balloon.
- Landing impact is like a jump from the seat of a kitchen chair. In some cases, impact may be harder, or the basket may tip on its side and drag along the ground. Passengers should be physically able to handle the impact of landing.
- If you have had any joint replacement surgery, consult your doctor and advise your pilot.
- Passengers should be able to walk across uneven terrain.
- Inform the pilot if you have serious allergies and come prepared (i.e., bring your EpiPen, insulin, etc.). Remember, ballooning is an outdoor, rural adventure.
- If you take medication on a regular schedule, bring all required medications with you since some flights may be longer than others.

Note: If you have a medical condition or questions about your capabilities, please ask your doctor for advice and inform your pilot, if you do choose to go on a balloon flight.

Do you have other questions?
Ask us: services@tc.gc.ca.

ENJOY your
balloon flight!