

Spanish Airline Orders 10 Airships for Domestic Flights

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Comeback (Noun) /'kʌmbæk/ an act of becoming popular or successful again
Example: The actor released his very first movie after his comeback.
2. Range (Noun) /reɪndʒ/ the largest distance that something can reach, cover, etc.
Example: The mountain ranges from 850 meters to 950 meters in length.
3. Helium (Noun) /'hi:liəm/ a chemical element that is very light gas and cannot burn
Example: Helium is the gas used in some balloons.
4. Combustion (Noun) /kəm'bʌstʃən/ the process of burning a substance
Example: Combustion may occur at high temperatures.
5. Hybrid (Adjective) /'haɪbrɪd/ made by combining two or more different things
Example: The band plays a hybrid of jazz and rock..
6. Emission (Noun) /ɪ'mɪʃən/ the production and release of gasses, especially those that are bad for the environment
Example: The emission of gases such as carbon dioxide should be stabilised at their present level.



Airships could be making a comeback as an environmentally friendly solution to mid-range air travel, with one of Europe's largest airlines buying several from a British developer. Air Nostrum, a Spanish airline, has ordered 10 "Airlander 10" airships to operate on domestic passenger flights within Spain, with delivery of the aircraft expected in 2026. The airline operates mid-range flights in Europe and North Africa, and carries more than 5 million passengers a year. The airships are part of Air Nostrum's plan to reduce its impact on the environment.

The airships, made by UK-based Hybrid Air Vehicles (HAV), use helium to float. While the current Airlander 10 also uses combustion engines to move, HAV aims to develop

hybrid-electric engines by 2026 that it says will reduce the Airlander 10's carbon emissions by 90% compared to other aircraft. The company is also developing an all-electric version for 2030, and hopes the Airlander 10 will be the world's first large-scale aircraft to achieve zero-emission flight.

According to HAV, the Airlander 10 can fly as high as about 6,000 meters and carry 10 metric tons. Each airship promised to Air Nostrum will be able to carry 100 passengers, and would typically fly 300-400 kilometers, about the distance between Valencia and Madrid — a route the airline currently operates. However, if you're in a hurry, the Airlander 10 might not be the best option, as the airship's maximum speed is only 130 kilometers per hour.

Airships were a popular form of travel in the early 20th century, crossing the Atlantic Ocean in under 48 hours — less than half the time required to go by ship. But they were typically filled with hydrogen, which can catch fire very easily. They stopped being used for commercial travel after the Hindenburg disaster of 1937, when the world's largest passenger airship crashed, killing 36 people. Modern airships are filled with helium, which cannot burn. While it is not as light as hydrogen, it is much safer. However, helium is also quite rare on Earth, because it quickly escapes into space.

DISCUSSION

1. When was the last time you flew? Where did you go?
2. What are the best domestic airlines in your country?
3. What are the most pleasant flights you've been on?
4. Do you know anyone who avoids air travel for environmental reasons?
5. Are there any companies in your country known for their environmental efforts?