



Hindenburg: How to Visit and History

What if you could travel back in time to take a ride on the rigid airship the Hindenburg? Would you jump at the thought of riding one of the most luxurious forms of transportation in the 1930s? Or would you pass in a heartbeat, unsettling footage of the fiery inferno hardwired into your brain? While most of us think of zeppelins as among the sketchiest and most dangerous forms of transportation, they used to have a different reputation.

in the 1930s, travel by zeppelin represented a luxurious and expensive way to voyage between the States and Europe, right up there with the Titanic of a couple decades earlier. What was the Hindenburg like on the inside? And why did so many people fork out the big bucks for a ride? Here's what it was like traveling on this one-of-a-kind airship.

The Graf Zeppelin was the largest airship of its day, and it proved instrumental in launching the first commercial transatlantic air service. Where did the Graf Zeppelin fly? It traveled round-trip between Brazil and Germany, providing an increasingly popular service. During its air career, it flew more than 1 million miles over the course of nearly 600 flights, per Airships.net. What's more, the Graf Zeppelin carried "thousands of passengers and hundreds of thousands of pounds of freight and mail, with safety and speed." Ultimately, the Graf Zeppelin paved the way for a more ambitious rigid airship, the Hindenburg.

Like the Graf Zeppelin, the Hindenburg made regular flights between Germany, North America, and Brazil, according to Airships.net. But it proved even more luxurious and bigger than the Graf Zeppelin, and it set a new standard for transatlantic air travel as the world's largest airship. An

emphasis on luxury proved essential to restoring the image of the zeppelin. You see, even though the Hindenburg disaster was many years in the future, airships had a troubled history for other reasons.

The Hindenburg enjoyed a maximum speed of 84 miles per hour, according to Airships.net, and it cruised at 76 miles per hour. How about its cruising altitudes? The giant dirigible enjoyed a standard cruising altitude of 650 feet, which many passengers found pleasant for a transatlantic journey. That said, the Hindenburg would go down to as low as 330 feet, as reported by Airships.net. This would provide passengers with incredible views of the landscapes below.

But there proved a more critical reason dirigible pilots wished to stay out of the clouds: to avoid thunderstorms. The last thing rigid airships such as the Hindenburg wanted was to fly in electrically charged air. Moreover, sailing too high necessitated "valving hydrogen" from the top of the dirigible, which always presented a fire hazard. Flying at such low altitudes meant passenger compartments weren't pressurized (except for the smoking room). Passengers could even open the Hindenburg's windows to get a little fresh air.

During the Great Depression, it proved the equivalent of \$450 per passenger to ride the airship. Factoring in inflation as of 2023, that's \$10,372 per passenger. How did these prices compare to the ocean liners of the day? The Travel reports first-class passenger ticket prices of between \$157 and \$240 for German ocean liners. In other words, Dolan paid nearly twice as much money to take a zeppelin over a ship.

One can now take a tour of the crash site and hangar for the Heindenburg. Tours are set every Wednesday and the second and 4th Saturday of the month. One must send a request to the Lakehurst Naval Air Station in NJ.

Our walking tours include:

- The Cathedral of The Air
- The Hindenburg Crash Site
- The Navy Lakehurst Heritage Center
- The Ready Room
- The POW-MIA Room
- Historic Hangar One

The all-volunteer Navy Lakehurst Historical Society and cooperation with the Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst & NSA Public Affairs Office offers tours as follows:

November through March – every Wednesday and the second Saturday of the month from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

April through October – every Wednesday and the second and fourth Saturday of the month from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Please call (732) 323-6547 for information about the tours.

Strict Security Requirements

Everyone wishing to take the tour must adhere to strict security requirements and must pre-register by calling (732) 600-8055 or contacting tours@nlhs.com

All guests must be registered two weeks before the date of their tour.
No walk-ins or additions to the group will be accepted on the day of the tour.

Tours may be canceled for the following reasons without notification:

Due to military operations

Security issues

Weather