

Junkers A50 Junior Tour 2025

A high-tech classic aircraft follows historical trails

Long-distance flights the length and breadth of Europe have a long tradition in the history of Junkers. Back in the 1930s, the Junkers A50 Junior made aviation history and set numerous records with pioneers like Marga von Etzdorf, Väinö Bremer and Yoshihara Hikotaro. Junkers Aircraft is now picking back up on this tradition – with a modern interpretation of air travel that combines past and present. The aim of this unusual project is to show the interested public how breathtakingly beautiful it can be to fly across Europe in an open aeroplane.

In an era where everything is becoming increasingly faster, the flight planned stands for a return to authentic flying in its original form. At the same time, the aircraft being used, the new edition of the Junkers A50 Junior, shows that historic charm and aviation history, as well as safety, advanced technology and all things modern, by no means exclude each other, but instead complement each other in a contemporary way.

- The aircraft
- The pilot
- The route
- The passion
- The challenge

The aircraft

The Junkers A50 is a modern, ultralight aircraft, which is based on the original model that first took flight on 13 February, 1929. Developed by the aerospace engineer, Hermann Pohlmann, the A50 was expected to become an aircraft for the people in the characteristic Junkers corrugated metal design. The A50 successfully took part in the round Europe flights in 1929 and 1930, chalking up numerous records recognised by the FAI, the World Air Sports Federation.

The best known female pilots of the A50 included the afore-mentioned Marga von Etzdorf, who undertook advertising and postal flights with her bright yellow aeroplane called “Kiek in die Welt” and repeatedly made a name for herself with aeronautical acrobatics such as loops and inverted flights. She became world famous as the first woman to fly from Berlin to Tokyo in several stages – naturally with the A50 Junior.

The newly built Junkers A50 goes back to an idea born from the avid pilot and businessman, Dieter Morszeck, who set himself the task, together with Dominik Kälin, of reviving the traditional Junkers name, preserving its history and at the same time reissuing it – combined with innovation and the latest technology. The first newly constructed Junkers aircraft, a replica of the F13, took off in 2016, after a set of brilliant minds had pondered for many hours about how to bring historic aircraft building together with modern requirements of technical standards and safety. The second stage of the “new” Junkers chapter followed in 2021 with the maiden flight of the first newly built A50. Based entirely on its role model in terms of visual appearance, the engineers found a good compromise with the modern 100 PS Rotax engine instead of the original five-cylinder radial engine with 80 PS of power. As regards the instruments in the cockpit as well as the radio and navigation equipment, the new A50 is also state of the art – and yet remains a time machine with its open cockpit and classic corrugated skin, a ticket to the 20s and 30s era of aviation.

Junkers A50 junior technical data

Dimensions

Wingspan: 9.84 m / 32 ft 3 in

Length: 7.41 m / 24 ft 4 in

Height: 2.89 m / 9 ft 6 in

Weights and quantities

Empty weight: 375 kg

Payload: 225 kg

MTOW: 600 kg

Fuel capacity: 105 l

Engine:

Manufacturer: BRP-Rotax

Type: Rotax 912 IS

Design: Four-cylinder boxer engine with fuel injection

Power: 100 PS / 74 KW

Fuel consumption: ~ 15l/h

Propeller Twin-blade fixed wood propeller

Flight performance data

Top speed: 208 km/h

Stall speed: 83 km/h

Cruising speed: 155 km/h

Range: > 1000 km

The pilot

A good aircraft alone is naturally not enough: only with an adept pilot at the controls is such a machine able to achieve top performances.

Claus Cordes, born in 1960, is a flyer with heart and soul and can look back on more than 45 years of experience in the cockpit and well over 28,000 hours in the air. He trained at the Lufthansa school for commercial pilots from 1980 to 1982, after which he earned his first money in aviation as a professional pilot of a Cessna 172 with the airline Westküstenflug on the island of Föhr.

In 1983 he began his career at Lufthansa, where he flew passengers and freight to the point of retirement on the Boeing 737, Airbus A300, A310, A319, A320, A321 and McDonnell-Douglas MD-11 aircraft, ultimately topping his career off as a captain on the Airbus A380, the world's largest passenger aeroplane, over a period of six years.

Alongside his career, Cordes completed an engineering degree and in 1988 also became a pilot with the Lufthansa Berlin Stiftung foundation, firstly as a co-pilot on the Ju 52/3M – the legendary “Tante Ju” – which he flew as a captain from 1994, and three years later started looking after trainee pilots as an instructor and assessor. In 2010 he was also appointed a captain on the four-engine Lockheed L-1049 Super Constellation, which he flew until 2016.

Even in his free time, Claus Cordes used to take to the air and still does. He has been a glider pilot since 1982 and a glider instructor since 2015. Here is what he says about gliding: “This is where

pilots learn how to properly fly manually. If it was down to me, no pilot would be allowed to sit in the cockpit of a passenger jet without a gliding licence." On top of this, he has a flying instructor's permit for single-engine aircraft such as the Cessna 172 and a licence for ultralight aircraft.

It was through the latter that Cordes ultimately returned to the Junkers A50 Junior. "I first saw this aircraft model as a young Boeing 737 pilot in the departure area of Helsinki Airport and was completely blown away," he says, adding: "I knew straight away that I would like to fly a plane like that one day too!" 31 years as a pilot on the Ju 52 D-AQUI operated by the Deutsche Lufthansa Berlin Stiftung infected Cordes with the corrugated metal bug, which he never shook off. On a trip in 2010 with Bernd Junkers, the grandson of the company founder, Hugo Junkers, and Holger Steinle, at that time head of the aerospace department of the German Museum of Technology in Berlin, he visited Port Macquarie in Australia because Junkers wanted to buy an original A-50 that had been mothballed there. However, the trio arrived too late, as the aeroplane had already been sold elsewhere.

Claus Corde got his opportunity to fly his own A-50 with the new edition of the aircraft revived by Junkers Aircraft. Since August 2023 he has owned his D-MQUI, whose serial number is reminiscent of the Ju 52 operated by Lufthansa Stiftung and which, as president of the Deutscher Aero Club, takes him to the hotspots of aviation throughout Germany.

To the question of why, at the age of 65, he is following the trails of the Junkers record-breaking flights of the 1920s, Claus Cordes replies: "Firstly, I like to fly open, with the wind on my face and the smell of the engine in my nostrils. That is pure freedom. Secondly, I like to look beyond the horizon and find out what there is to discover there. Thirdly, I have flown long-haul in an airliner cockpit for the majority of my life, now I'm trying something different. Fourthly, I would like to tag on to the long-standing tradition of the Junkers record-breaking flights. And fifthly, I would like to support the idea of reviving legendary, old aircraft with new technology. The A50 is perfect for that."

The route

The backdrop for the start of the tour is Dessau, a symbolic place, which will forever be linked with the history of Junkers. The town on the Elbe was the headquarters of Junkers Flugzeugwerke, and it was here that icons of aviation such as the F13 and the Ju 52/3m were born. To mark the Hugo Junkers Festival on 7 June, the wheels of the A50 and Claus Cordes will leave the ground for the first time and embark on new horizons in Europe. Setting off from Central Germany, the route passes via Poland to Finland first off, where the A50 will glide in as the star guest at the Kauhava Airshow and where a visit to the aviation museum is scheduled, whose collection houses an original A50. The next highlight on the route is North Cape, the most northerly point of the European mainland, where the accompanying photo team would like to show the corrugated metal flying machine in a quite spectacular setting. The journey continues via western Sweden and the Scandinavian mountains to Bergen, where the A50 will undergo a technical inspection before making a hop across the North Sea to the Shetland Isles. After this adventure, a visit to the legendary Shuttleworth Collection in Old Warden, England, plus participation at the Air Show taking place there, is on the agenda at the end of June.

The second part of the journey will be marked firstly by entering the EU via Brest in France, with the next stop being the Casarubius del Monte airfield south-west of Madrid. After calling off in Beja, Portugal, another exciting photo shoot with the A50 is planned, this time over the Gibraltar region, Europe's most south-westerly point. From here the route passes via Mallorca, Sardinia and Sicily to the Italian mainland and onwards via the beautiful Lido aerodrome near Venice, probably to Austria

and Czechia, before the journey comes to an end with a big welcome party at the gates of the Flugwerft Oberschleißheim aviation museum on 19 July.

The passion

The *Junkers A50 Junior Tour 2025* is much more than a technical demonstration or a nostalgic look back at times gone by – it is an invitation to rediscover Europe in all its beauty and diversity from the air. Flying across the continent with the new edition of the Junkers A50 Junior means not only seeing its landscapes, but literally sensing them: the cool wind of Scandinavia on your face, the warm scent of the Mediterranean in your nostrils and the gentle trembling of the air above the Alps under the wings.

Open flying is the most original form of travel through the air – slow, intense and genuine. There is no filter between man and nature, between machine and sky. In an era when speed appears to be everything, this tour invites you to slow down – and to consciously take in what makes Europe so unique.

The route passes over the widest variety of landscapes: From the wide plains of Central Europe to the wild coasts of Scandinavia, the rugged mountains in Norway through to the sun-drenched regions of south-west Europe. In this respect, not only the geographical, but also the cultural variety can be seen – from the technical heritage of Finland to the warm-hearted hospitality in Spain, from the British passion for aviation to the Italian zest for life.

The journey is evidence of just how much Europe thrives from its diversity. It demonstrates that history, innovation, tradition and progress do not contradict, but instead harmoniously complement each other – as in the Junkers A50. Every landing site, every encounter, every village flown over tells its own story, revealing the depth of the European identity.

Consequently, this tour is not only an homage to the history of aviation, but also a poetic reminder of how valuable it is to travel through Europe with an open mind, as well as in an open cockpit.

The challenge

The scheduled route, on which Claus Cordes wishes to discover Europe with the Junkers A50 Junior, takes man and machine on a 14,000-kilometre journey over lowland, mountains and open sea. Even though the Junkers features the latest communication and navigation systems, the weather remains the biggest uncertainty factor. Because in contrast to his long-haul flights in the airliner, this time, like his predecessors on the big Junkers record-breaking flights in the 1920s and 30s, Cordes will be flying by sight. The customary abbreviation “VFR” used in pilot speak stands for Visual Flight Rules and means that the pilot chooses his route based on the weather, instead of getting his flight path and altitude dictated by air traffic control like the crews in commercial aircraft. Fog, clouds, rain showers – Claus Cordes and the pilot in the photo aeroplane accompanying him must surrender themselves to all these factors and find their way across Europe. Following in the tracks of aviation pioneers could hardly be any more intense. Junkers Aircraft, the A50, Claus Cordes and his team take on the challenge.

10,392 characters of body text, plus technical data

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About JUNKERS Aircraft GmbH

JUNKERS Aircraft GmbH continues the legacy of Professor Hugo Junkers (1859–1935) and combines historic engineering craft with modern technology. His visionary ideas shape the company's aspirations to this day.

After reproducing the legendary F13, JUNKERS set new milestones with the first flight of the A50 Junior (2021), the A60 (2023) and the A50 Heritage (2024). At AERO 2025 the company presented the complete A60 family for the first time – including a closed version with 100 PS Rotax engine, a more powerful 130 PS version with Edge Performance propulsion, as well as the Cabriolet A60 RG with retractable gear and open cockpit.

At the heart of the business is the in-house manufactory in the Black Forest. In Oberndorf-Hochmössingen, the aeroplanes are put together with the ultimate hand-crafted precision – each one requiring over 2,500 hours of meticulous manual labour. Around 98 per cent of all the components are developed, manufactured and assembled on site. More than 1,000 custom-made parts and over 10,000 rivets placed by hand make every aircraft a unique masterpiece.

This uncompromising production depth not only ensures quality and authenticity, but also preserves the spirit of classic aviation technology. JUNKERS Aircraft stands for a tradition of manufacturing where technology, handicraft and passion merge to create a unique flying experience – timeless, reliable and full of character.