

Space travel offered by first UK holiday booking website



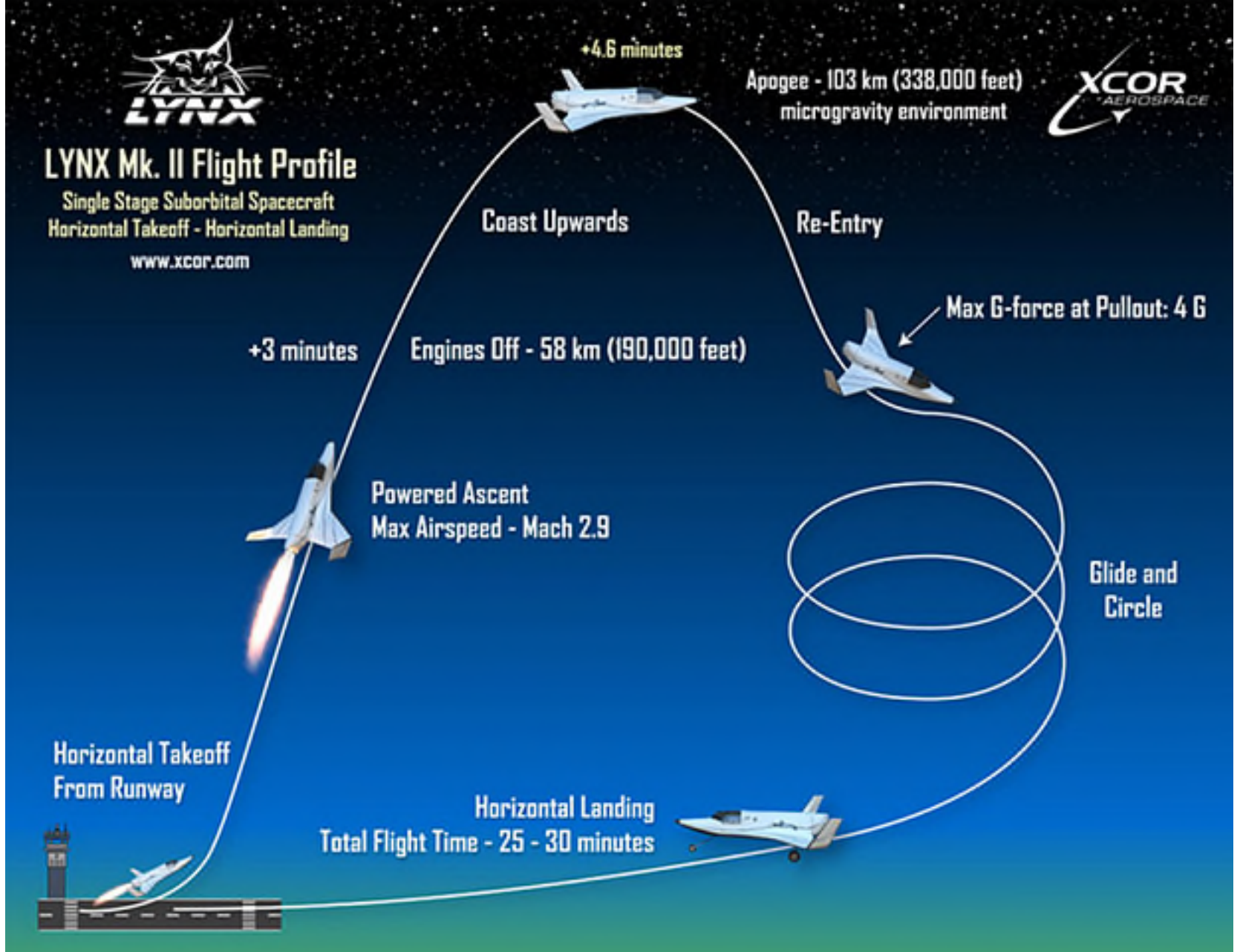
The XCOR Lynx spacecraft has been in development since 2003

“Out of this world” flights, offered by XCOR Space Expeditions, are now being sold on the Kayak website, departing from either the spaceport in California’s Mojave Desert or the Dutch Caribbean island of Curacao.

Available from 2016, flight prices vary depending on the selected travel date as well as the currency exchange rate from US dollars to the British pound. On August 31, a flight was available for £68,272 during a search done on Kayak.co.uk today. Other search results included £81,402 for travel on January 29 and £74,837 for travel on December 5 next year. While travel dates beyond 2016 are available, users of the Kayak website can only search for flights up to a year in advance.

The flights can be found in the search engine by entering Mojave, for the Mojave Air and Spaceport (MHV), or Curacao for Curacao International Airport (CUR) in the departure slot, and Thermosphere in the destination slot as well as ticking the first class passenger box.

Accompanied only by one other person - the pilot - the one hour voyage takes each passenger either 60 or 100 kilometres above Earth, depending on which of the two Lynx Mark spacecraft you are on. It is yet to be confirmed which will be used for the flights, but the flight path for both are said to be “similar and equally exciting” according to [XCOR](#).



A graphic of the flight journey on the XCOR Lynx Mark spacecraft Photo: XCOR Space Expeditions

Passengers will break the sound barrier within a minute from take-off and enjoy six minutes in space, with 360-views of Earth from above, seen through a 45.2 square-foot cockpit canopy window, before a "40-minute glide back to Earth".

Upon returning from the flight, each passenger will be awarded their official astronaut wings.

While the XCOR Lynx spacecraft has been in development since 2003, space travel has seen a strong growth in interest in recent years, with several companies developing plans for commercial space flights, including Richard Branson's long overdue Virgin Galactic flight, whose [test launch last year resulted in a fatal accident](#) in the Mojave Desert. Virgin Galactic has claimed that a [new SpaceShipTwo aircraft will be ready to test by the end of the year.](#)

Earlier this year, NASA announced it would provide \$2.3 million (£1.5 million) in funding for research into supersonic aviation and make it a reality for the masses.



Virgin Galactic's SpaceshipTwo at the Mojave Desert space port in 2009
Photo: Getty Images

More than half of Britons (52 per cent) want to try space travel, a figure which rises to 74 per cent for those under 35, according to the latest Kayak survey of nearly 2,000 Britons. Men were more likely to explore space (66 per cent) than women (39 per cent), while more than a third (37 per cent) believe there is a possibility that recreational space travel will become commonplace within their lifetime, the survey revealed.

Last year, the Spanish company Zero2Infinity revealed plans for its ["near-space flights", costing €110,000 per flight](#), on board a zero-emission craft called Bloon, where a four-person cabin is chained to a balloon filled with inert helium. Once fully inflated, the balloon will pull the cabin to an altitude of about 22 miles or 116,000 feet, reaching around 99.5 per cent above the mass of Earth's atmosphere.



The Bloon

Also last year, the [Boston-based engineering firm Spike Aerospace](#) revealed its plan to develop [Spike S-512](#), a 12-18 seater supersonic private jet designed for commercial use and supposedly capable of flying from New York to London in under four hours – around half the time taken by current commercial flights.



The Spike S-512 jet

Spike Aerospace is not the only company seeking to offer supersonic flights. The Nevada-based company Aerion Corporation also submitted plans for the development of a private jet that could reach speeds of Mach 1.6, potentially carrying its first passengers by the end of the decade.

HyperMach Aerospace Ltd, meanwhile, has proposed the development of SonicStar, a jet the company claims would reach Mach 4 (about 2,600mph and approximately twice the speed of Concorde) and could speed from London to Sydney in an afternoon or from New York to London in about an hour. The firm estimates it could enter production in the 2020s.