

Important facts

Hot-air balloons were first used in Paris, France in 1783. They were invented by two French brothers, Joseph Michael and Jacques Etienne Montgolfier. They discovered that heated air, when collected inside a large lightweight paper or fabric bag, caused the bag to rise into the air.

At first, they sent up an empty balloon and basket. They filled their balloon with heated air by burning straw and wool under the opening at the bottom of the bag. The balloon rose into the air about 3,000 feet (1,000 metres), remained there some 10 minutes, and then settled to the ground more than a mile and a half from where it rose.

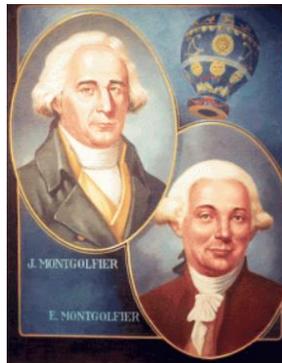
Then they put up a sheep. They then put up a sheep and a rooster. Then they put a sheep, a rooster and a duck in the basket. They flew for 8 minutes and landed safely about 2 miles (3.2 kilometres) from the launch site. It was watched by King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette. Next, two men travelled in the balloon. On Nov. 21, 1783, the first manned untethered flight took place in a Montgolfier balloon with two passengers. The balloon sailed over Paris for 5.5 miles (9 kilometres) in about 25 minutes.

Key Vocabulary

invent	to create or design something that has not existed before
launch	to send something it into the air
manned	having a human crew.
tethered	tie with a rope or chain so as to restrict its movement. 
untethered	released or free from a tether.
passenger	a traveller
rise	to go up
heated	made warm or hot



The first human flight in a hot air balloon designed by the Montgolfier Brothers in Paris.



Joseph Michael and Jacques Etienne Montgolfier were French brothers who invented the hot air balloon.



A hot air balloon must be filled with air and the air must be heated for the balloon to be able to lift off the ground. The air has to be kept warm of the balloon will fall.

Timeline

June 1783

The Montgolfier brothers. The first unmanned hot air balloon in public.

Sept 1783

The Montgolfier brothers demonstrate the first hot air balloon flight with a sheep, duck and rooster

Oct 1783

Montgolfier Brothers made first tethered balloon flight with human passengers.

Nov 1783

The first free hot air balloon flies in the air with human passengers. The flight lasted 25 minutes.

1785

The first flight across the English Channel in a hydrogen balloon.

1870

Hot air balloons were first used at war (during the Franco-Prussian War).