

SOLAR POWER GOING THE DISTANCE



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Solar powered cars are something of the past, old news, been there done that.

Shocking, I know. But I bet you've never thought about a solar powered airplane!

Nope, I can't say that I have either. In fact, when researching the new/old technology behind blimp ships and space shuttles capturing asteroids, one overlooks the thought of solar energy powering any of these vessels.

YES! They did it! The brilliant among us created solar powered fliers, and without any of us demanding it either! But then again who would want to fly Air Japan on solar energy and find themselves stuck in overcast for 12 hours, that'd be a big uh oh. Lets not "fly" ahead of ourselves just yet.

Solar Impulse has created just that miracle plane we are talking about. The Solar Impulse HB-S1A has a wingspan of 208 ft. and weighs only 3,500 lbs, not all too heavy because of its carbon fiber structure, and most of the weight comes from the solar panels. It was able to attain an altitude of 30,300 feet and stayed aloft for a record 26 hours, 10 minutes, and 19 seconds at an average flying speed of 43 mph. In fact, the plane continued to fly throughout the night on energy stored in the day. This HB-S1A vessel was actually a prototype and in 2015 Solar Impulse plans to launch Solar Impulse HB-S1B which is expected to circumnavigate the Earth. I think the coolest thing about this newer model is that it will incorporate nanotechnology to help with battery storage. I am always excited about prospective new technology and its uses!

Can you imagine the implications of an airplane that flies on solar power? The cost reduction in substituting jet fuel for something easily attained on a clear day? How about just the thought of solar power being so effectively researched and put into use that our government will be forced to use it as an alternative source of power?! On a bad note, those poor birds; they don't even stand a chance with more things in the air... At least we can say that we got all the needed Vitamin D for the day when taking one of these bad boys out for a spin! Move over solar salamanders!

Source: <http://wondergressive.com/solar-power-going-the-distance-literally/>