
KIEV TREASURES - UKRAIN

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One of the biggest aircraft collections of Europe is located in Kiev in the State Aviation Museum. This exhibition is only recently discovered by tourists. Of course the more relaxed political situation creates the possibility for foreign tourists to visit this collection but it was for years a fact that simply very few people from the West were informed about the existence of this collection. At this moment one can freely have a look at 'cold war' aircraft from the East.

COOPERATION

The owner of the museum claims he is cooperating with the aircraft museum in Krakow, Poland and together they have almost the whole possible collection of common types built in former Soviet Union, some heavy bombers excluded. For the latter, one has to visit Monino museum in Moscow. Cooperation was a wish because of the completeness of both collections together. While we can find some Western type of aircraft in Krakow this is not the case in Kiev where only purely Soviet designed and produced aircraft are brought on the museum grounds. The State Aviation Museum is located at the border of the domestic airfield of Zhulany, just in the South of Kiev. The museum was opened by Yuri Ziatdinov on September 30th in 2003 and on 15 hectares you may find some 70 aircraft today.

INTERESTING TO EVERYONE

Who plans to make a walk in the park with airplanes will not return easily to the exit and will have to walk some kilometres. For everybody can be something to find for his exclusive interest. Not only military aircraft but also legendary civil aircraft are in the State Aviation Museum and some even seldom seen in other collections. Some aircraft are painted in Ukrainian colours but others are in Russian air force or Aeroflot markings and remembering us that the Ukraine was a former part of the Soviet Union. On specific times the museum enables the public to climb into cockpits in interactive sessions. Also the museum is committed to maintenance which is regularly done by students, and can be noticed when comparing with photographs of previous date. The Museum tried to place the aircraft of the same period together but this is not always easy to recognize for all people. As already said, some aircraft are that rare that it could be a specific reason for aircraft photographers to go exclusively to Kiev for this purpose. One of the eye catchers is the splendid painted Tu-104 aircraft located near the entrance and in a condition hard to find elsewhere. This concurrent of the British Comet was much more reliable, but less comfortable because it was developed from a Tupolev Tu-16 bomber. There is a rumour saying the Nikita Khrushchev while visiting France and flying in a Caravelle noticed a noise reduction when comparing with his Tupolev Tu-104. He was charmed about the position of the engine on the rear of the fuselage. Everybody knows the Caravelle was not a quiet aircraft at all, but nevertheless it caused the development of the Tupolev Tu-134 which resembles a Tu-104 with engines on the aft side.

MIG'S AND OTHERS

Several generations Mig's and Sukhoi's are in the fighter part, and some rare examples are to be mentioned. Of course some kind of thrill is there when meeting a Mig-25. This Mach 3+ was superior in speed and could only be succeeded by the USAF Sr-71A Blackbird. The typical aerodynamics inspired the USA to develop the F-15 fighter. Very special is also the Yakovlev Yak-28 fighter in trainer version which is very unique in the world. Also the silver painted Sukhoi Su-15 Flagon is a collector's item. This type shot down the Korean Boeing

airliner with the command 'zapustil' which means fire. In the helicopter part are several Mil helicopters to find including a with UN markings white painted Mil Mi-26.

Other helicopters are civilian Mil Mi-1 and Mil Mi-2 and one of the first version of the Mi-24 Hind helicopter with angular cockpit and which version only flew in the Soviet Union and some countries in Africa and Asia and surely is not easily to find in a museum.

NAVY

A very beautiful part is platform with naval aircraft. Part of these naval aircraft are helicopters from Mil and Kamov, but also flying boats from Beriev. Very attractive is the blue Kamov Ka-25 Hormone, used on the first Soviet Moskva class helicopter carriers and Kiev class aircraft carriers. The type is now replaced by modern Kamov helicopters. The Yakovlev Yak-38 is the equivalent of the British Harrier and this bright blue painted VTOL aircraft operated also from Kiev class aircraft carriers. One colourful blue example is parked on the platform. The Beriev Be-6 and Be-12 flying boats are attracting your camera, and the Beriev Be-6 is one of the last examples in this good condition and surely a highlight.

STRATEGIC AIRCRAFT.

On the other side of the platform is the strategic part of the collection. No less than three Tupolev Tu-22m Backfires are on exhibition. Two examples are Tu-22M2 Backfire-B and the third one is the latest variant, Tu-22M3 Backfire-C and this aircraft visited Fairford in the UK and after return entered the museum grounds. Two earlier versions differs from latest variants by other forms of the air intakes. Directly on the ground under the wings are Air Launched Cruise Missiles (ALCM's) placed and makes you considering that this type was originally designed strategically and with the aim to reach your home in Western Europe with atomic weapons.

Later versions of this aircraft (Backfire-C) were reduced in range by lacking mid-air refuelling possibility after START negotiations and therefore only a threat for Europe and not directly to the U.S.A. The Russians describe the Backfire-C as a tactical and not a strategic weapon platform. Fascinating to watch everything at Zhulany what was once deeply secret for the opponent. Between the bomber aircraft also a Tupolev Tu-134UBL is parked on the concrete. This aircraft was specialised in training pilots for The Backfire. Somehow the same weight and figure and fitted with Backfire nose. One of the most legendary aircraft is the Tupolev Bear and the one you find here at Zhulany is painted with the red star of the Soviet time and is a maritime version also designated as Tu-142M version. Today upgraded version of the Bear sometimes visit Northern Europe again like in the old days of the cold war period. This is a cat- and mice game and thereby each others readiness is tested. To meet a Bear with his giant Kuznetsov 8 blades double contra propellers in the air must be an awesome experience. Who plans to visit Kiev, must also go to Zhulany airfield to see the treasure at the State Aviation Museum. It is very much worth while.

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