

Zeppelin European Tours (ZET) – semi-rigid airship

Peter Lobner, updated 8 March 2022

1. Introduction

In mid-2003, ZLT Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik GmbH, based in Friedrichshafen, Germany, announced that it planned to produce a long-range version of its Zeppelin LZ N07 semi-rigid airship for transcontinental tours. Flight Global reported:

“The German manufacturer has started work on a 125 m (410 ft)-long ZET version of the New Technology (NT) airship, and plans to deliver the first of 10 ZET airships to launch customer Zeppelin Europe Tours by 2008.”

The tour operator, Zeppelin European Tours GmbH, also had options for two more ZET airships.

2. The European Zeppelin tour concept

The tour operator planned to offer 20-day round-trip zeppelin tours of Europe with 10 destinations.



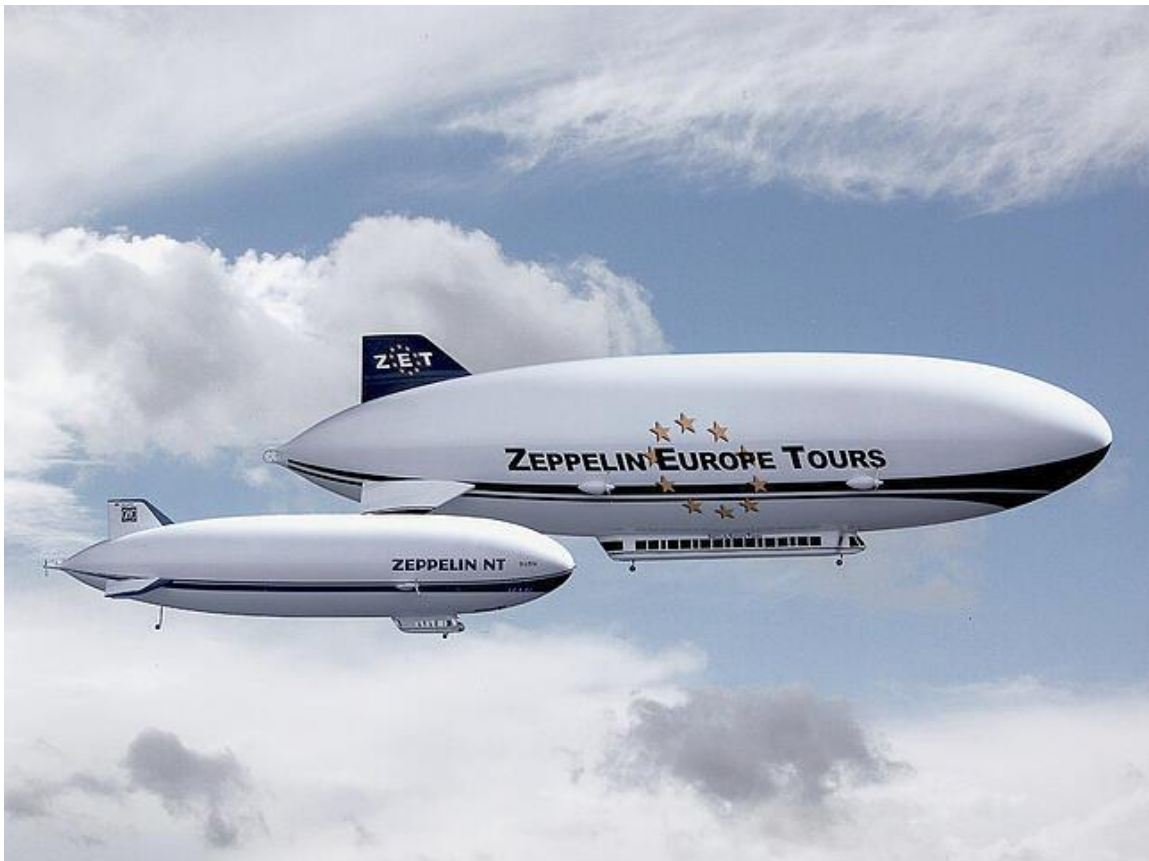
Example 20-day European zeppelin tour route. Source: ZET

Ten airships, each with 45 seats, would be based in the 10 destination cities. These airships would change their positions every two days and complete the round trip course in the allotted 20 days. In addition to the transit between city pairs, these airships also could perform 1 - 2 hour scenic flights over the destination cities and adjoining regions.

Travellers could book individual segments or part or all of the 20-day itinerary.

3. The ZET airship

The ZET airship was a scale-up of the basic design of the 12-passenger, semi-rigid Zeppelin NT Type LZ N07, which first flew in September 1997. Since then, several Zeppelin NTs have been in regular operation, primarily for short tourist flights.



Scale comparison of the Zeppelin ZET and the NT. Source ZET

Design parameter comparison of the Zeppelin ZET and the NT

	Zeppelin ZET	Zeppelin NT
Length	125 m (410 ft)	75 m (246 ft)
Diameter	27 m (88.6 ft)	14.2 m (46.4 ft)
Gas volume	50,000 m ³ (1,765,733 ft ³)	8,255 m ³ (290,450 ft ³)
Maximum speed	130 kph (80.8 mph)	125 kph (77 mph)
Range	1,100 km (684 miles)	900 km (559 miles)
Passengers	45	12

Like the Zeppelin NT, the ZET airship has a diesel-electric power system. Propulsion is provided by four flank-mounted vectored thrust propulsors plus one vectored thrust propulsor at the stern. Also at the stern is one fixed lateral thruster.



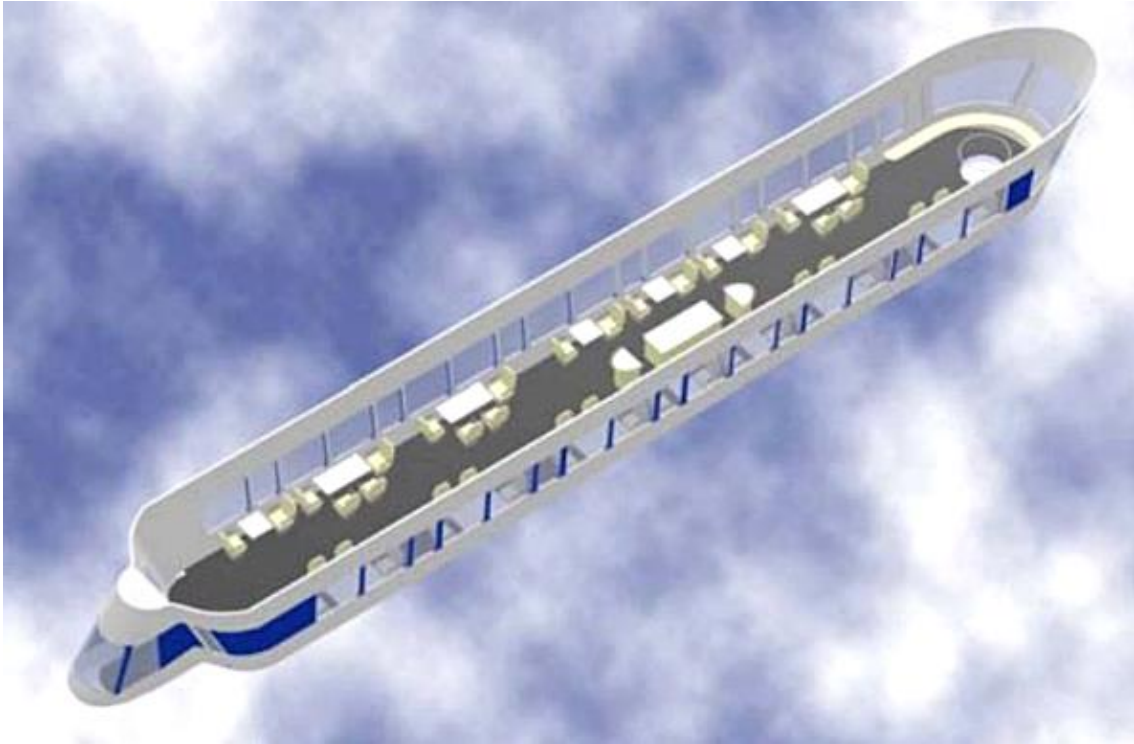
The ZET airship and its hanger. Source: ZET



Profile view of the ZET airship. Source: migenda.weebly.com



The passengers enter and exit the gondola via stairs on both sides of the cockpit. Source, both graphics: ZET



The gondola can seat 45 passengers in 14 seating groups, with a panoramic bar at the stern. Source, both graphics: ZET



Interior and exterior views of the passenger gondola. Windows can be opened in flight for photography. Source: ZET

4. The end of a great idea

On 1 June 2018, the German news organization Südkurier reported the demise of the ZET business venture:

‘It was a proud, ambitious project to send Zeppelins on a tour of Europe. To be more precise, ten airships that are a good double the size of those that can be seen over Lake Constance every day and take 45 passengers instead of 14. But nothing comes of it: Zeppelin Europe Tours GmbH is dissolved. What remains is the story of an adventurous search for investors and Wolfgang von Zeppelin's dream that the vision will become reality again.’



“Oops. Belly flop.” Source: Südkurier (1 June 2018)

5. For more information

- “Zeppelin to build long-range tourer,” FlightGlobal, 30 June 2003: <https://www.flightglobal.com/zeppelin-to-build-long-range-tourer/49654.article>
- “Zeppelin Europe Tours (ZET) – A further development of the Zeppelin,” Press information: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/509072/zeppelin-europe-tours-zet>

- “Zeppelin Europe Tours (ZET) – Information (in German), 2015: <https://docplayer.org/42680867-Zeppelin-europe-tours-information.html>
- “Zeppelin Europe Tours GmbH wird liquidiert: Abenteuerliche Suche nach Investoren scheitert” (in German), Südkurier, 1 June 2018: <https://www.suedkurier.de/region/bodenseekreis/friedrichshafen/Zeppelin-Europe-Tours-GmbH-wird-liquidiert-Abenteuerliche-Suche-nach-Investoren-scheitert;art372474,9759167>

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