THIS AIRPLANE’S WINGS FOLD UP SO YOU CAN TAKE IT ON YOUR NEXT CAMPING TRIP

News / Manufacturer



The ICON A5 bills itself as a plane for anyone and everyone: perfect for weekend camping trips, impressing a date, or just flying around New York City.

The experimental personal aviation market is not new: There's the miniscule Flynano, the Terrafugia flying car and the eco-friendly Synergy. But the ICON A5 is unique in that its main selling point is its safety.

Instead of relying on “perfect pilots who can recover from emergency situations,” the ICON A5 developed "spin resistance." This summer the aircraft earned received a Light Sport Aircraft airworthiness certificate from the FAA.

Flying for dummies

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"The plane is very forgiving if the pilot makes a mistake," Kirk Hawkins, co-founder of ICON told Inc. "The plane will give you all the warning signs, but if you stay in trouble the plane will not lose control and will not drop out of the sky."

A spin, the cause of 41% of all pilot-related fatalities according to ICON, is caused when an aircraft slows down so much that it stops flying: The plane falls to the ground in an out-of-control spiral. ICON's main goal was to eliminate this.

Before a spin even occurs, the ICON A5 signals to the pilot that something is not right and gives a chance to recover. If the pilot doesn't fix the situation, the design of the plane takes over. According to NASA, "a wing cuff on the aircraft to separate the wing into two distinct parts: one that allowed a stall to begin and one that prevented it from continuing," is what differentiates this plane from others.

Although it sounds a little like Airplane Flying for Dummies, flying the plane still requires a pilot's license, and ICON is offering to take care of that, too, with a two-week course for interested buyers for $9,500.

The plane's wings can be folded up so the craft fits on a trailer — in case you want to take it camping — bringing us that much closer to realizing the Jetsons suitcase car.

The cost

The ICON A5 is available to order, and retails for $197,000. The price is similar to other new experimental planes , but more expensive than some hobby planes. Other light sport aircrafts can start at $59,000 for a used plane.

More than 1,500 people have paid $5,000 deposits for an A5, and production isn't quite keeping up with demand: Planes ordered now won't be shipped out until 2019.

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