

Solar plane on global trip soars from California to Arizona

May 2 2016



In this April 23, 2016 file photo, Solar Impulse 2 flies over the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco at the end of its journey from Hawaii, part of its attempt to circumnavigate the globe. The next leg of the solar-powered around-the-world flight is scheduled to start from Mountain View, Calif., Monday, May 2, 2016, at 5 a.m. PDT, bound for Phoenix. (AP Photo/Noah Berger, File)

A solar-powered airplane soared above the clouds Monday after taking off from California for Arizona to resume its journey around the world

using only energy from the sun.

The Swiss-made Solar Impulse 2 left Mountain View south of San Francisco shortly after 5 a.m. Monday for an expected 16-hour trip to Phoenix.

Swiss pilot Andre Borschberg was at the helm of the plane that began circumnavigating the globe last year. Video from a wing-mounted camera showed the aircraft taking off in a westerly direction before swinging to the southeast and rising above the clouds.

About an hour after takeoff, Borschberg used his phone to snap photos of the sun coming up along the horizon. Then he prepared for media interviews and made breakfast plans.

"I'm heating up water for coffee," Borschberg told his ground crew. "A nice Nescafe."

His co-pilot, Bertrand Piccard, also of Switzerland, made the three-day trip from Hawaii to the heart of Silicon Valley, where he landed last week.

The Solar Impulse 2's wings, which stretch wider than those of a Boeing 747, are equipped with 17,000 solar cells that power propellers and charge batteries. The plane runs on stored energy at night.

After Phoenix, the plane will make two more stops in the United States before crossing the Atlantic Ocean to Europe or northern Africa, according to the website documenting the journey.



In this April 23, 2016 file photo, Solar Impulse 2 flies over San Francisco at the end of its journey from Hawaii, part of its attempt to circumnavigate the globe. The next leg of the solar-powered around-the-world flight is scheduled to start from Mountain View, Calif., Monday, May 2, 2016, at 5 a.m. PDT, bound for Phoenix.(AP Photo/Noah Berger, File)

The two legs to cross the Pacific were the riskiest part of the plane's travels because of the lack of emergency landing sites.

"We have demonstrated it is feasible to fly many days, many nights, that the technology works" said Borschberg, 63, who piloted the plane during a five-day trip from Japan to Hawaii and who kept himself alert by doing yoga poses and meditation.

The crew was forced to stay in Oahu for nine months after the [plane's](#) battery system sustained heat damage on its trip from Japan.



In this April 23, 2016 file photo, Solar Impulse 2 lands at Moffett Field in Mountain View, Calif., completing the leg of its journey from Hawaii in its attempt to circumnavigate the globe. The next leg of the solar-powered around-the-world flight is scheduled to start from Moffett Field Monday, May 2, 2016, at 5 a.m. PDT, bound for Phoenix.(AP Photo/Noah Berger, File)

The single-seat aircraft began its voyage in March 2015 from Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates and made stops in Oman, Myanmar, China and Japan.

The layovers will give the pilots a chance to swap places and engage with local communities along the way so they can explain the project, which is estimated to cost more than \$100 million and began in 2002 to highlight the importance of renewable energy and the spirit of innovation.

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