



Imperial War Museums' exhibition to display largest collection of Spitfires under one roof

Often referred to as "the home of the spitfire", IWM Duxford's historic airfield was the base from which the first RAF squadron received the aircraft in 1938. Today the museum still boasts the largest range of different Spitfire marks anywhere in the world and, from 27 December 2021 until 20 February 2022, *Spitfire: Evolution of an Icon* will present the largest exhibition of these historic aircraft. Bringing together 12 Spitfires of varying marks in IWM Duxford's AirSpace hall, the exhibition – free with entry to the museum – will demonstrate how the iconic warbird evolved throughout the Second World War. The exhibition will be accompanied by a programme of tours, talks, events and family activities which will delve deeper into the Spitfire's history.

Characterised by its graceful curves, elliptical wings and powerful Rolls Royce engine, the Spitfire has remained a British icon since its heroic efforts in the Battle of Britain in 1940. A familiar sight across the skies over Duxford, *Spitfire: Evolution of an Icon* will see 12 Spitfires brought together to show how this aircraft underwent continual refinement in order to keep pace with German aircraft development. Alongside IWM's own iconic Mk Ia Spitfire – one of few remaining airworthy Spitfires to have seen conflict in the Second World War – there will also be Mk V, Mk IX and Mk XIV among the most noteworthy. Visitors will also find information about each aircraft and how the Spitfire cemented its place in history as one of the greatest fighter aircraft of all time. This exhibition has been made possible thanks to a number of private owners who have loaned their Spitfire to IWM for the duration of the exhibit.

IWM Curator, Adrian Kerrison, said, "The Spitfire became synonymous with hope and protection as the threat of German invasion loomed heavy over Britain. The aircraft captured the hearts of the home front to such an extent that members of the public from across Britain and the Commonwealth would dig deep into their own pockets to fund their production, and the love for them has not subsided since they were first produced. It's a great honour for us at IWM Duxford to know that we were not only the location from which the first operational Spitfire squadron flew, but that now we can bring together so many of them in one place for the first time and enable visitors to get up close and learn more about this icon of victory."

Spitfire: Evolution of an Icon will be open to general admission visitors to IWM Duxford from 27 December 2021 with associated events and activities taking place for the duration of the exhibition, enabling visitors to learn more about this legend of the skies.

Family Activities

New for winter 2021, ***Spitfire Engineers*** will give families the chance to complete activities and learn about the design of the Spitfire, its engineering principles, and the forces of flight. From wing design to fuel consumption, find out more from IWM's knowledgeable team and take part in hands on challenges to discover how the Spitfire became a force to be reckoned with in the skies.

Tours and Talks

Twice a week for the duration of the exhibition expert guides will be running an ***Evolution of an Icon: The Spitfire Exhibition Tour***. Priced at £10, this 60-minute in-depth tour will offer the chance to discover more about the development of the Spitfire and look at examples highlighting

the evolution of this historic machine whilst getting up close to displayed aircraft. On Wednesday 29 December there will also be the chance to delve into the Spitfire's history from the comfort of your own home with the one-off **Introduction to an Icon** which will use IWM's extensive photo archive to introduce the history and development of the Spitfire and look at the tied history between Duxford and this famous aircraft.

Evolution of an Icon: The Spitfire Exhibition Tour | Twice weekly during January and February | 14:00 – 15:30 | £10

Spitfire: Introduction to an Icon | Wednesday 29th December 2021 | 19:30 – 21:00 | £10

In-the Cockpit Experiences

Join an expert guide and sit inside the cockpit of our airworthy [Mk 1 Spitfire N3200](#), which flew with 19 Squadron from Duxford. Guests will first explore the history and restoration of the aircraft, followed by 15 minutes inside the cockpit, complete with photo opportunities, learning the controls and immersing yourself in the conditions experienced by those who flew them.

In The Cockpit: Spitfire N3200 | Slots available daily, 10:20 – 17:00 | £45, Gift Experience £60

Airfix Event

This all-day event explores the design process behind Airfix's iconic modelling kits. Airfix Product Designers will discuss the research, design and production methods they use, and an IWM expert will take visitors behind the ropes of Spitfire: Evolution of an Icon and observe the intricate details of the aircraft up close.

Spitfire: An Icon In Airfix | 9 January 2022 | 10:00 – 16:00 | £35

Photography

Duxford in a Different Light returns in February 2022, following our first successful night photography event in 2020. All twelve Spitfires gathered for the exhibition will be lit by white and coloured lights throughout the evening and complete re-enactors from living history groups. Tickets include admission to the site from 3:30pm.

Duxford in a Different Light: Spitfire: Evolution of an Icon | Saturday 19th February 2022 | 16:00 – 20:30 | £75

More events will also be added at a later date and a selection of images is available [here](#).

Ends

For further press information, images and interview requests please contact:

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IWM Duxford

IWM Duxford is Europe's largest air museum, with a fascinating history that dates back to the First World War. Duxford has been a witness to world-changing events over the past 100 years where ordinary people have had extraordinary experiences. Exploring state of the art exhibition halls and historic buildings, visitors can walk in the footsteps of the men and women who served at RAF Duxford. Through the powerful stories of the individuals involved and the rich displays of aircraft, we tell the story of the impact of aviation on the nature of war and on people's lives. Historic aircraft can regularly be seen taking to the skies from the historic airfield and IWM

Duxford also holds annual Air Shows and Flying Days with entertaining ground content and signature flying displays.

Open Wednesday to Sunday (except during school holidays and half term, when we are open seven days a week. Also open bank holidays except 24, 25 and 26 December)

Last entry an hour before closing.

Winter hours: 10am-4pm (from 31 October)

Admission including voluntary Gift Aid: £22.50 Adults; £18 Concessions (Senior, Student, Disabled); £11.25 Child (5-16); Free Child (under 5); Family tickets available; Special rates for groups of 15 plus. Free for members.

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