

Tupolev Tu-22M2 (Backfire-B)

The Tupolev Tu-22M (Backfire) became one of Soviet Union's front line bombers from 1976. With supersonic speed and armed with cruise missiles it could attack land or naval forces with atomic and conventional weapons.

Development of the Tu-22M began in 1967, to replace the earlier Tu-22 (Blinder) supersonic bomber. Flight testing commenced in 1973 and it was deployed by Soviet air force and naval air forces. A total of 211 were produced between 1973 and 1983. They were capable of low-level high speed flight to overcome ground defences and their main armament of air-to-surface missiles allowed them to attack strategic ground targets and navel targets like United States carrier groups. From 1981 the upgraded Tu-22M3 (Bakcfire-C) began superceding them.

This model represents a standard Backfire-B in USSR service around 1980.

Data: *Engine* two NK-22 turbofans of 22,000kg (48,500lb) thrust each. *Wing span* 25m 82ft) minimum and 34,28m (112ft 5in) extended. *Length* 41.46m (136ft. *Maximum take-off weight* 122,000kg (268,963lb). *Maximum speed* 1800km/hr (1118mph). *Armament* one to three H-23 missiles and two GSH-23 23mm cannon.

Revell 1/72 kit completed by Leigh Edmonds in November 1989.



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