

Tupolev Tu-22 (Blinder)

The Tupolev Tu-22 (code named *Blinder* in the West) was designed to penetrate enemy airspace at high speed and altitude. Over 300 were manufactured but they were not very successful and few remain in service.

In 1954 the Tupolev design bureau began work on a new bomber that could fly fast and high enough to penetrate enemy airspace. The prototype of the resulting bomber made its first flight in June 1958 but a number of teething problems meant that production did not begin for another year. Between 1959 and 1969 more than 300 Tu-22s were manufactured in several versions including maritime reconnaissance, trainer and stand-off bomb carrier. Despite their speed Tu-22s did not offer any real increase in capability over subsonic bombers because of their restricted payload. They were replaced by the more advanced Tu-22M and only a few remain in service today.

This model represents a standard Blinder-A

Data: *Engine* two Kolesov RD-7M 16500kg thrust turbojet engines. *Wing span* 23.5m. *Length* 41.6m. *Maximum take-off weight* 94 000kg. *Maximum level speed* 1610km/hr. *Armament* one R-23 23mm cannon and up to 9000kg of bombs or nuclear weapons.

Esci 1/72 kit completed by Leigh Edmonds in July 1998.



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