Beechcraft C23 Sundowner Model Guide

The Beechcraft C23 Sundowner is a four-seat, fixed-gear piston single built 1974-1983, with a 180-hp engine (Lycoming O-360-A4K per a 1980 review) and a 2450 lb gross weight. It is roomy and rugged rather than fast. Used examples have sold for less than comparable Piper Archers.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Roomy cabin and rugged build (stressed to six positive and three negative Gs), but slower: about 119 kt at 75% power versus 129 kt for a Piper Archer.
- Gross weight is 2450 lb with about 56-57 gallons usable fuel. Full tanks limit what the seats can carry; the baggage area takes 270 lb.
- A 1986 article put used Archers at $8,000 to $10,000 more than comparable Sundowners, so the Sundowner can be the lower-cost buy.
- Before buying, check the stabilator hinge rivets, the nose shimmy damper, and how the fuel gauge reads against the tank tabs.

FUEL AND RANGE

Each tank holds 29.9 gallons (28.6 usable). The gauge reads full at only 20 gallons, so check fuel visually. The tab marks 15 gallons (13.7 usable) at its bottom and 20 gallons (18.7 usable) at the slot. One 1979 airplane's card shows 10 GPH and 5.5 hours with no reserve. A 1980 review quotes more than 550 nm at 65 percent power.

WEIGHTS AND LOADING

Empty weights listed for one flight school's Sundowners run from 1,480.1 to 1,645.6 lb. Unusable fuel varies by serial: 7.8 gallons on M-1358, 2.6 gallons on the later airplanes listed. It is already counted in empty weight, so use usable fuel at 6 lb per gallon. The baggage area is 24.3 cubic feet and takes 270 lb.

WHAT TO INSPECT

Ask for AD/BEECH 23/44 (FAA AD 87-02-08) compliance on the stabilator hinge. Bulletin AWB 27-017 (2013) warns corrosion can hide failed rivets. Replace the shimmy damper if it leaks or skips. The induction filter is inspected at least every 50 hours. Wing bolt torque is checked at the first 100-hour inspection. Checking the engine means removing a two-piece cowl; only the oil has a small hatch.

SPECIFICATIONS

Wingspan Ft	32.8
Length Ft	25.7
Tail Height Ft	8.2
Engine Power Hp	180
Fuel Capacity Gal	58
Fuel Usable Gal	56
Baggage Capacity Lbs	270
Max Takeoff Weight Lbs	2450

PERFORMANCE

Cruise Speed 75pct Power Kts	119
Fuel Burn Gph	10
Endurance No Reserve Hrs	5.5
Range At 65pct Power Min Nm	550
Best Glide Speed Kts	78
Approach Speed Full Flaps Kts	65
Approach Speed No Flaps Kts	73

V-SPEEDS

Vx Kts	69
Vy Kts	75
Va Kts	118
Vfe Kts	96
Vno Kts	136
Vne Kts	152
Vs Kts	62
Vso Kts	52

WEIGHT & BALANCE

Max Takeoff Weight Lbs	2450
Empty Weight Lowest Lbs	1480.1
Empty Weight Highest Lbs	1645.6
Unusable Fuel Typical Gal	2.6
Unusable Fuel M1358 Gal	7.8

SAFETY NOTES

- Stabilator hinge rivets can fail from hidden corrosion with the heads still in place. The bulletin warns of in-flight separation and loss of control; it suggests replacing rivets 15 years or older.
- The stall warning horn is inoperative when the battery and alternator switches are off.
- The fuel gauge reads full at 20 gallons in a 29.9-gallon tank. Check fuel visually on every preflight.

AI-aggregated guide for the Beechcraft C23 Sundowner · sources: CHECKLIST FOR SUNDOWNER C23 VFR N6012J (#15261) · Sunclowner (#15265) · WEIGHT & BALANCE INFORMATION-BEECHCRAFT SUNDOWNER (#15067) · Airworthiness Directives for Beechcraft C-23 Sundowner (#15111) · AIRWORTHINESS BULLETIN Beechcraft 19, 23 and 24 Series Stabilator Hinge – Fastener Shearing (#15090) · Performance Data for Beechcraft C23 Sundowner (#15281) · AC 150/5300-13 (#15317) · Performance Data for the Beechcraft Sundowner (#15282) · BEECHCRAFT Sundowner 180 C23 (M-1285 and After) Emergency Procedures (#101776) · generated 2026-10-16 · Reference only, not for flight. Check the original documents before relying on this guide.