

These graphics show the crucial differences between the world's 3 types of Aircraft Carrier

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By **Jeremy**



(REUTERS/Adnan Abidi)

Aircraft carriers are the ultimate symbol of a country's military power and prestige. These floating islands of military power take years to build, and they do not come cheap. The first of the US's new Ford-class of supercarrier has a [\\$13 billion](#) price tag.

Still, despite the cost, a number of countries have succeeded in building or acquiring a carrier. Although the US has the largest number of carriers with the most advanced technology and the largest flight decks, a variety of carriers of various sizes and sophistication are in use around the world.

The following graphics, created by US Naval Institute member Jeff Head at [World-Wide Aircraft Carriers](#), breaks down the various carrier classes in use around the world today.

The first class, **Catapult Assisted Take-Off, Barrier Assisted Recovery (CATOBAR)**, are the largest and most complex carriers currently in use.

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World-wide Aricraft Carriers - CATOBAR Comparison (Catapult Assisted Take-Off, Barrier Assisted Recovery)

Key:

CVN - Nuclear Carrier
CV - Conventional Carrier
CTOL - Conventional Take-off & Landing



Note: Some line art is from, or modified from, pics at www.shipbucket.com

US Ford Class, CVN (CTOL)



US Nimitz Class, CVN (CTOL)



French Charles De Gaulle Class, CVN (CTOL)



Brazil San Paulo Class, CV (CTOL)



(Jeff Head/World-Wide Aircraft Carriers)

The catapult-based launch system [allows](#) the carriers to fly a greater variety of heavy and lightweight planes and at a greater takeoff rate and velocity, compared to noncatapult systems. The majority of CATOBAR carriers are nuclear-powered.

Short Take-Off, Barrier Assisted Recovery (STOBAR) carriers differ from CATOBARs in more than just their launch technology. The carriers are equipped with "ski-jump" ramps that allow for aircraft to take off from the carriers. They are technologically simpler and thus easier to operate than CATOBAR carriers, although aircraft must be lighter to successfully take off from their decks.

STOBARs, like CATOBARs, still use assisted-recovery methods such as trap wires that help aircraft land and decelerate on a dangerously short runway.

World-wide Aircraft Carriers - STOBAR Comparison (Short Take-Off, Barrier Assisted Recovery)

Key:
CV - Conventional Carrier



Note: Some line art is from, or modified from, pics at www.shipbucket.com

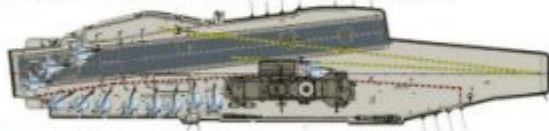
Russian Kuznetsov Class, CV (STOBAR)



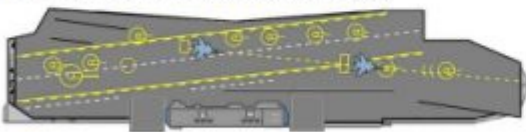
Chinese Liaoning Class, CV (STOBAR)



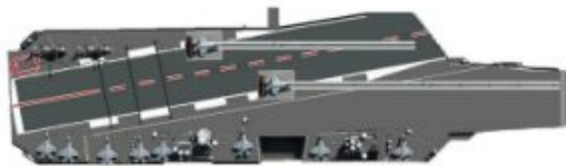
Indian Vikramaditya Class, CV (STOBAR)



Indian Vikrant Class, CV (STOBAR)



UK Queen Elizabeth Class, CV (CTOL)



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(Jeff Head/World-Wide Aircraft Carriers)

Short Take-Off and Landing (STOL) carriers are the [cheapest type](#) to build. Like STOBARs, they run off of conventional rather than nuclear power. Although the carriers sometimes feature a ski-jump to assist with takeoffs, the vessels do not feature any recovery systems to help aircraft land.

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World-wide Aircraft Carriers - STOL Comparison


(Short Take-Off and Landing)

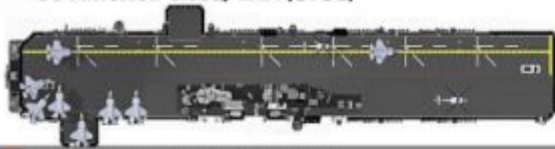
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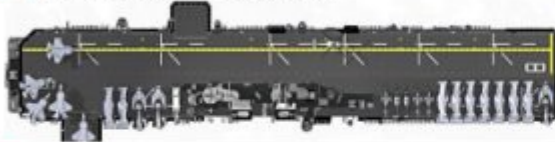
Key:


- CVL** - Light Carrier
- CVH** - Helicopter Carrier
- LHA** - Landing Platform Aircraft
- LHD** - Landing Platform Dock
- LPH** - Landing Platform Helicopter

 **US America Class, LHA (STOL)**




 **US Wasp Class, LHD (STOL)**



 **UK Invincible Class, CVL (STOL)**




 **UK Ocean Class, CVL (STOL)**



 **French Mistral Class, LHD (STOL)**



 **Russian Vladivostok Class, LHD (STOL)**



 **Australia Canberra Class, LHD (STOL)**



 **Italian Cavour Class, CVL (STOL)**



 **Italian Garibaldi Class, CVL (STOL)**



(Jeff Head/World-Wide Aircraft Carriers)