



---FUN DESTINATIONS---

NRI Flying Club

Flying to San Diego
August 2016
by Griffin Schwarz



Here it was, the infamous flight to San Diego. After three months of waiting, the trip we had planned was going to be set into motion. Our scheduled departure out of Concord was 7:00AM. However, with Mom and two younger brothers taking a bit more time in the morning than expected, our departure time was a bit later, maybe 7:15. Not bad! It was a cool morning with very little wind. Dad headed to the airport to watch our takeoff and departure out of Concord.



Our Archer accelerated smoothly down the runway and climbed like a bat out of hell! In reality it was probably only 500 fpm but not bad considering we were flying at max gross weight. Next we checked in with Travis, receiving our beacon code and local altimeter setting. After checking in and getting set up with Air Traffic Control, we began our climb to 5,500. We took this altitude all the way to Bakersfield (KBFL) where we were stopping to get fuel. Approach into KBFL was a bit interesting. The tower advised us to make a short approach as a regional jet was right on our tail! Not to worry, I still made a good landing and my passengers were very happy! Next we taxied to Atlantic Jet Center to refuel.



After using the restroom and grabbing a quick snack, we were back in the air after our 20 minute stop. After taking off, we began a slow climb to 7,500 to pass over the grapevine and surrounding mountains.



With the light winds and cool temperatures this was actually a very scenic and enjoyable part of the flight. Our next task was to maneuver around the L.A. Class B airspace. Looks a little daunting on a VFR chart! We ended up pushing out eastward to avoid and continue the flight to San Diego. About 5 miles from the San Diego Class B airspace, ATC cleared us through it at 5,500 direct to Montgomery Field. After passing over Miramar Military Airfield, we contacted tower. They instructed us to descend to traffic pattern altitude when we were 1.5 miles away and still at 5,500. Sorry for the popped ears family! After touchdown, we taxied to the transient parking where we were greeted by Grandma, Grandpa, and Uncle. I think everybody thoroughly enjoyed the flight down.





After spending four full days in San Diego with our family, it was time to begin the return leg of the flight. With a bit of fog in the early morning on Sunday, we decided to push back our departure until 11:00AM. Again, Grandma, Grandpa, and Uncle drove us to the airport and helped load up the bags while I was doing my preflight checks. After saying our goodbyes, it was time to get back in the air. After departing to the West, it was time to turn towards the East and avoid the overlying Class B airspace. After contacting departure, we were cleared through the Class B airspace and back on course. We initially climbed to 4,500 until we were 30 miles away from the grapevine and surrounding mountains. We then climbed to 6,500 and even requested 7,500 when we were getting a little close to the mountains! Much to my surprise, ATC in the SoCal region were all extremely polite and accommodating to little N9556K! As long as you know what you are doing, the SoCal Class B airspaces are nothing to be afraid of! With the air temperature warmer, we had a lot of moderate turbulence crossing the mountains. I think we were all very relieved to have landed safely at Bakersfield. Once again, we took our 20 minute pit stop refueling and using the restroom.

Now all we had was the home stretch back to Concord. Despite extremely poor visibility because of the fires, the flight was uneventful.



Back on the ground at Concord with the family in one piece! In the end, we all loved the flight and I would not be afraid to do it again next summer!







