

## TRAVELOGUE

» Places to Fly and Explore

Arriving in Tel Aviv. »



# Flying the Jet in Israel

## Avoid being an Iron Dome target!

by Amir and Tamra Hyster



**AMIR AND TAMRA HYSTER** are active aviation travelers, flying themselves throughout the world and writing about their experiences. The Vision Jet is their fourth Cirrus aircraft, a progressive move from their previous SR22N, SR22TN and SR22T that they previously flew on their world adventures. Visit their website for more stories and information: [www.VisionJetTravel.com](http://www.VisionJetTravel.com)

### Flying in Tel Aviv during a Gaza Strip conflict can be ... *interesting*.

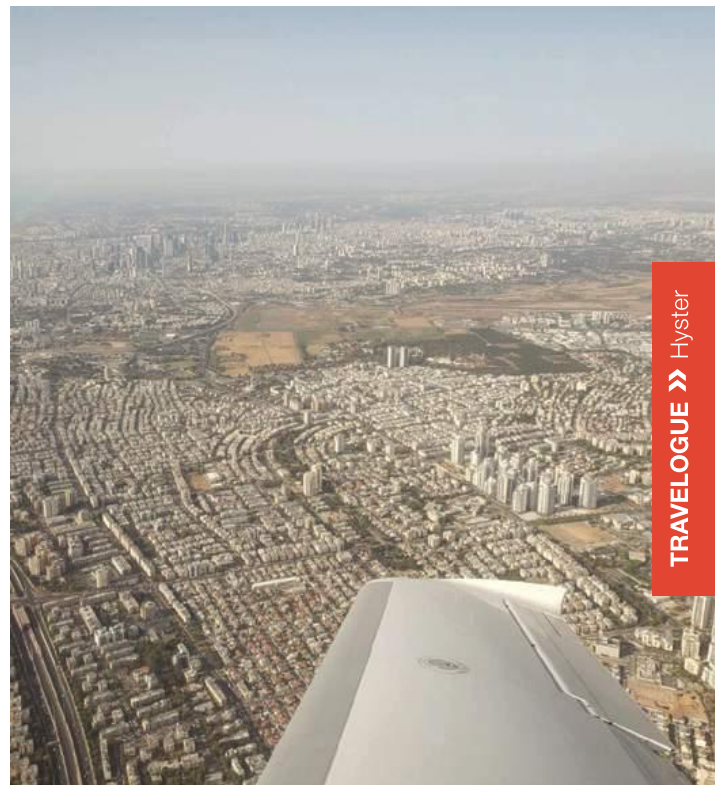
We flew in from Skopje, North Macedonia, to Tel Aviv, Israel's Ben Gurion Airport (LLBG). It was an 884 nautical mile, three-hour flight that took a couple of weeks of emails and phone calls in order to obtain a permit to enter Israel Tel Aviv FIR (LLLL) and reserve a parking spot at LLBG. The previous week the airport

parking was full of private jets covering the fourth election of the year in Israel. So complex is the political system that they have over 20 political parties all trying to form a government.

In Skopje, we were cleared to Tel Aviv and climbed to an altitude of FL310. Once handed to Skopje radar control, they seemed confused about the flight level and asked us to confirm the aircraft type.



*“Flying in Tel Aviv during a Gaza Strip conflict can be ... interesting.”*



**Tel Aviv Joy Flight**

**Tel Aviv Flight Path** (Courtesy of Flight Radar)





⏏ *Harvest time in the  
North Galili Sea.*

*“Israel has unique requirements for entry into its airspace and very strict procedures and clearances.”*

They had the SF50 in their system as a heavy Russian helicopter, hence the confusion on the flight level! We advised them it is a new aircraft, and they should start to see more Vision Jets in the future. While talking with them, they looked at the internet and commented on how beautiful the SF50 looked. We had a nice climb in the SID with the weather hazy but relatively clear, although we could feel the aircraft swaying in slight turbulence from

the building of adverse weather over the border of North Macedonia and Greece.

Israel has unique requirements for entry into its airspace and very strict procedures and clearances. To get the permit to enter the airspace, Amir had to deal with the MAMLAT organization – a joint venture between the Mossad Security Service (equivalent to the CIA), AMAN (Israeli Military Intelligence), and Shin Bet, the Israeli Internal Security Agency

(equivalent to the FBI) – that provides these approvals. With the help of the local team of Universal Aviation Accredited QAS Executive Aviation, the process was relatively simple.

When the permit is provided, a special password code is issued to the pilot only, and an additional three questions and answers known only to the pilot and MAMLAT. Without this code, it is impossible to fly into the airspace, and avoidance of the airspace needs to be outside of 250 miles.

Prior to flight, MAMLAT requires a phone call in which special instructions are conveyed, and an allocated radio frequency is provided. On this separate frequency at a point between 180 NM and 200 NM before entry to Tel Aviv, a request to enter needs to be announced to Tel Aviv Arrival Special Clearance and be approved in air with that special code that only the pilot knows.

There are other requirements that we will not disclose; needless to say, the approval to fly into this airspace is an interesting process. The airways were very busy considering the flight restrictions due to COVID at the time. The flights were primarily large private jets and commercial flights with entry codes as a part of their airlines. No one enters without their code and air clearance; an attempt to do so will invoke an unplanned formation flight with a few very well-equipped F-35 fighter jets!

At entry, we were descending at 2,000 fpm slowing to 180 knots as we were in a queue of 15 airplanes (LLBG was the busiest airport we had seen since leaving the U.S.). ATC requested us to maintain 240 knots; they didn't understand or care that the SF50 has approach and landing speeds very similar to the SR22. They had never had a Vision Jet in Israel before, so they see it as just another

jet. This looked like it was going to be a very quick, action-packed landing. At handoff to LBBG, they also asked what our maximum speed was. We reported that at that level, just before landing, 200 knots. They asked if we could speed up as there were a few flights right in front us and on our tail – much faster big boys!

The descent was very fast from FL310 to 5,000 feet, then 3,600 feet for procedures to RWY30 GPS RNAV W approach. At 3,600 feet, coming from the Mediterranean Sea and within sight of land, we traversed through a cloud layer encountering ice. As we broke below the cloud, we were asked again if we could speed up and Amir responded “negative.” ATC asked if we were willing to take a straight ILS approach to RWY 12, which we accepted and then vectored a right turn along the famous Mediterranean beach line past Tel Aviv city for a left turn intercepting the LOC over the east side of the city heading to the runway.

Having just encountered the icing conditions at such a low altitude and within just a few nautical miles, the flaps would only engage at a maximum 50%, making the final and line up very fast-paced, a little bumpy over land but otherwise a good smooth, quick landing.

Our handlers were waiting with excitement to see the first Vision Jet that had visited Israel. The FBO was 15 minutes from the aircraft parking area, which had some nice modern jets parked there. Fattal FBO had its own customs and passport control services and a modern lounge fully packed with drinks, fine scotch and delicious food, plus limousine services that took passengers to their accommodations.

We had a lot to do in Israel to continue with our world travels. We required a few visas to countries we wanted to visit and pass through on our way back to the U.S. With all the COVID vaccines completed

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⏮️ *Sunset in the North of Israel.*

***“A visit to the new Jerusalem U.S. Embassy was such a wonderful and positive experience. It sits in a beautiful location with views over the Valley of Jerusalem.”***

there, the country was open and functioning and our first visa to apply for was the U.S. A visit to the new Jerusalem U.S. Embassy was such a wonderful and positive experience. It sits in a beautiful location with views over the Valley of Jerusalem. The issuing officers were fascinated by our story, and it was the first time they had issued a B visa for an Australian in Israel.

Next was the Russian Embassy which was more difficult as no Australians were issued visas at that time. Until





we received a letter of invitation from the Ministry of Transport in the Russian Federation, then we qualified for a special case which was issued 10 days later. Both embassies were so helpful and went out of their way to assist.

Israel is a small country – the entire length is 260 miles and the width is between 31 to 71 miles. It was tricky planning an internal flight to the northern part of the country and then to the most southern town of Eilat, while trying to incorporate an ILS practice landing and back to Tel Aviv to LLBG.

The southern Gaza Strip started to heat up an hour before the flight and ATC didn't approve permission to fly anywhere south of Airway N11. Amir jokingly asked if the denial was because we might be considered a target for the Iron Dome. The answer from ATC was "Yes!" It was no longer a joking matter.

The procedure in LLBG required push-back from the ramp to a startup (which is a strange feeling in the Vision Jet), a quick departure clearance at maximum takeoff power, the highest possible rate

of climb, and sharp left and right turns to avoid restricted areas up to 3,000 feet. By that time, the jet was already at the coastline and needed to conduct a sharp right turn toward the north, climbing to 9,000 feet. Amir headed straight toward Kiryat Tivon, his hometown in the north, passing next to the RMD VOR that is Ramat David, the Northern Israeli main air force base. Over Kiryat Tivon, a sharp 180-degree turn back toward the ADL0D waypoint and then crossing next to the famous SALAM waypoint, a mandatory

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Bahai Gardens



*“There is so much history  
and so many things to  
see and do in Israel.”*



FBO Fattal - Ben Gurion Airport





Street food stall.

passage point through Amman, Jordan, and Israel. Seven years ago, we passed SALAM on our way to Australia in an SR22T. We continued to the Dead Sea and Jerusalem. Throughout the flight, we were closely monitored for any conflict developments that might require us to divert to Haifa. ATC was polite, accommodating and efficient professionals who deal with some of the most interesting and, at times, unpleasant situations in airspace operations of the world. We took a few circles to await landing clearance for RNP W RWY 30 at LLBG; the whole flight took only one hour and covered half of the country.

Next on our horizon, we plan to continue to Georgia, some "Stans" and Russia. The flying experience in Israel is highly recommended for any size aircraft as there are many smaller easy strips to find \$100 hamburgers. The general aviation community is busy and enthusiastic, most being ex-Air Force; their experiences are valuable if you can get a chance to have a good chat. There is so much history and so many things to see and do in Israel. It often gets left off the aviator's bucket list due to safety concerns, but we found it to be safe. We experienced a thriving, high-tech destination filled with warm and welcoming people and amazing food and coffee cultures.⊕



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