

Flying in Israel

Avoid being an Iron Dome target!



Flying in TLV during a Gaza strip conflict can be interesting.

We flew in from Skopje, Macedonia to TLV, Israel - LLBG (Ben Gurion Airport) a 884NM - 3 hr flight that has taken a couple of weeks of emails and phone calls to obtain a permit to enter to Israel Tel Aviv FIR LLLL and a parking spot at Ben Gurion Airport LLBG, which is usually filled by private jets parking for leisure and business.

The previous week the airport parking was full of private Jets covering the election in Israel for the 4th time in a year - so complex is the political system that they have over 20 political parties all trying to form a government.

In Skopje we are cleared to TLV and on climb to alt FL310 once handed onto Skopje radar control they seem confused on the FL and ask to confirm the aircraft type , they had the SF50 in their system as a heavy Russian helicopter, hence the confusion on the FL we advised it is a new aircraft and they should start to see more VJ while talking with them they looked at the internet and commented how beautiful the SF50 looks. We have a nice climb in the SID with the weather hazy but relatively clear, although you can feel the aircraft swaying in a slight turbulence from the building of adverse weather over the border of Macedonia and Greece.

Israel have unique requirements for entry into their airspace and very strict procedures and clearances. To get the permit to enter the airspace, Amir had to deal with the MAMLAT organization that provides these approvals. 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), 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 airspace needs to be outside of 250 miles.

Prior to flight MAMLAT require a phone call in which special instructions are conveyed and an allocated radio frequency is provided. On this separate frequency at a point not more than 200nm but not less than 180nm of entry to Tel Aviv FIR (LLLL) a request to enter needs to be announced to Tel Aviv Arrival Special Clearance and be approved in air with that code that only the pilot would know. 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 are actually very busy considering the flight restrictions due to Covid-19, the flights coming in on the airways are mostly large private jets and some commercial flights who have 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 F35, not an advisable action.

At entry we are descending at 2000 fpm slowing to 180 knots as we are in a queue of 15 planes (Ben Gurion Airport was the busiest airport we have seen since leaving the USA) ATC request us to maintain 240 knot, they don't understand or care that the VJ has approach and landing speeds very similar to the SR22, they have never had a Vision Jet in Israel before and so they see it as just another Jet. This looks like it is going to be a very quick action packed landing. At hand off to Ben Gurion they also ask what is our maximum speed and we report that at this level just before landing 200 knots, they ask if we can expedite as there are a few flights right in front and on our tail, much faster big boys!

The descent is very fast from FL310 to 5000 feet then 3600 feet for procedures to RWY30 GPS RNAV W approach. At 3600 feet coming from the Mediterranean Sea and within sight of land we traverse through a cloud layer, encountering icing as we break below the cloud we are again asked if we can expedite, we respond negative so the ATC ask if we are willing to take a straight ILS approach to RWY 12 which we accept and are then vectored 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 only just encountering the icing conditions at such a low altitude and within just a few NM the flaps would only engage ATO maximum 50%, making the final and line up very fast paced, a little bumpy over the land but otherwise a good smooth quick landing. Our handlers are waiting with excitement to see the first Vision Jet that has visited Israel. The FBO building is just a short 15 minutes from the aircraft parking area that has some very nice modern Jets parked. Fattal FBO has its own custom and passport control services and modern lounge fully packed with drinks, fine scotch and delicious food plus limousine services that can take passengers to their accommodation.

We had a lot to do in Israel to continue with our world travels, we require a few Visas to Countries we want to visit and pass through on our way back to the USA. With all the Covid vaccines completed here the Country is open and functioning and our first Visa to apply for is USA. A visit to the new Jerusalem US Embassy was such a wonderful positive experience, the Embassy sits in a beautiful location with views over the Valley of Jerusalem. The issuing officers were fascinated about 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 being issued visas at this time. Until we received a letter of invitation from the Ministry of Transport in the Russian Federation, with this invite it qualified for a

special case and was issued in 10 days. 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 only between 31 to 71 miles, planning an internal flight to the northern part of the country and then all the way to the most southern town of Eilat and trying to incorporate a ILS practice landing and back to Tel Aviv Ben Gurion Airport (LLBG) is tricky.

Just an hour before the flight the southern Gaza Strip started to heat up and ATC didn't approve permission to fly any where South of Airway N11. Amir jokingly asked if the denial is because we might be considered a target for the Iron Dome? The answer from ATC was "Yes!" This was no longer a joke.

The procedure in LLBG requires push back from the ramp to a start up (which in itself is a strange feeling in the Vision Jet) a quick departure clearances at maximum take off power, highest possible rate of climb and sharp left and right turns to avoid restricted areas up to 3000 feet. By this time the VJ is already at the coast line and needs to conduct

a sharp right turn towards the North, climbing to 9000 feet. Amir heads straight towards Kiryat Tivon his home town in the North, passing next to the RMD VOR that is Ramat David the Northern Israeli main air force base. Overhead Kiryat Tivon a sharp 180 turn back towards ADLOD way point and then crossing next to the famous SALAM way point a mandatory point of passage through Amman Jordan and Israel. Seven years ago we passed SALAM on our way to Australia in an SR22T. We continued on to the Dead Sea and Jerusalem, throughout the flight we are closely monitored for any conflict developments that might require us to divert to Haifa, ATC are polite, accommodating and efficient, remarkable professionals who deal with some of the most interesting and at times, unpleasant situations, in airspace operations of the world. A few circles to await landing clearance for RNP W RWY 30 at LLBG and the FBO has drinks, food and a special VIP lounge waiting for us, the whole flight took only one hour and covered half of the country.

The flying experience in Israel is highly recommended for any size aviation as there are many smaller easy strips to do \$100 hamburgers and the general aviation community is busy and enthusiastic, most being ex Air Force their experience is 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 aviators bucket list due to safety concerns but the opposite is true, it is a very safe, highly social, thriving cosmopolitan, high tech land filled with warm and welcoming people and amazing food and coffee cultures.



Beach life in Nahariyya - North coast



The best!! Catching up with Calvin



Bahai Gardens Ein Sara near Nahariyya



Old fortress Yehi'am



Empty Church of Holy Sepulchre-Jerusalem



The Kotel wall-Jerusalem- Memorial day for soldiers