

Pre-Flight Preparation

Here are some suggestions and tips to ensure that you have the most enjoyable and productive flight possible:

1. **If you are the planner for this flight, know your waypoints.** For flight planning contacts: be sure to discuss flight route with your pilot and give them coordinates for the areas you would like to fly over. Your pilot may not be familiar with the area and will be focused on flying and safety.
2. **Plan out your photography needs.** Aerial photography can be very different than on the ground. Only a few of our volunteer pilots' planes have camera windows. Be aware that there could be scratches, fog, or reflections when taking photos through a window. A polarizing filter may help with atmospheric haze. Wearing dark colors may help minimize window reflection issues. Please be careful not to let camera lenses touch windows as they may damage the glass.
3. **Geotagging images** can be a useful tool to remember where you shot your photos. Methods for tagging locations to your photos vary across devices, so test your system in advance and be sure that batteries are charged. Keep in mind that cell signals at altitude are often weak, so GPS features on mobile devices may be unreliable.
4. **Be prepared for your flight to be postponed or cancelled due to weather.** Safety is the primary concern for our pilots and SouthWings. Pilots will monitor the weather and make the final call.
5. **Dress in layers.** Temperatures can change as you gain altitude. In clear conditions, you can expect the temperature to drop 5°F for every 1,000' of altitude gain. Please avoid scarves, loose fabrics, or anything else that could get in the way of the pilot or other passengers in windy, cramped spaces. Sunglasses are recommended as well (unless you're trying to spot an oil sheen on the water).
6. **Use the restroom before each flight.** There are no restrooms in our volunteer pilots' aircraft. Some small airports may also close after business hours, making restrooms on the ground inaccessible in the early morning before you take off or in the late afternoon after you return from your flight.
7. **Avoid consuming a large meal prior to flight.** People may be more prone to air sickness if they have eaten a heavy meal. We suggest eating something light, like crackers or a piece of fruit.
8. **If you are prone to motion sickness:**
 - Let your pilot know before the flight. And, if you feel ill during the flight, be sure to let your pilot know as they can often make adjustments to help you feel better.
 - Some people find ginger candy or Sea-Bands acupressure helpful. Or, discuss anti-nausea medication options with your doctor (e.g. Dramamine or Bonine).
 - Have the airplane vents turned towards you for better air circulation.
 - Look at the horizon, not at points nearby or directly below.
 - If you are taking photos or shooting video, take breaks from looking through the viewfinder.
9. **Be prepared to feel a few bumps.** In a small aircraft, you tend to feel turbulence more than on a large commercial plane. Do not be concerned if this occurs, this is completely normal.
10. **Have fun!** We hope that you have an enjoyable flight with one of our experienced, dedicated volunteer pilots. We hope to inspire each passenger to further raise awareness about protecting our vital ecosystems and to enjoy one of the many great ways aviation can benefit our communities.

After your flight, please send us your comments and links to photos, articles, films, social media, etc. that you create based on your flight experience. We look forward to hearing what you learn on the flight!