

## Simon says\*: "Fly to Guernsey!"

Simon, 29, has held a private pilot's license for several years now. He is an active member of the Brest Finistère Aero Club and, weather-permitting, takes every opportunity he can get to hop on to the Channel Islands. Making the most of his FCL 055 rating, he has flown to Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney and even the Isles of Scilly. Most recently he flew to Guernsey and agreed to share with us some of the highlights of his trip as well as some insider tips on how to best prepare, manage, and succeed a flight abroad.

### IEP: When did you last fly to Guernsey and how did you prepare your flight?

**Simon:** Mid-July, during the hottest week of the year! I basically used the Guernsey airport website and Channel Island Airspace website to create a checklist for my flight. The main thing to know is that a flight plan and a General Aviation Report (GAR) are necessary and must be filed online. The latter is essentially for customs and immigration purposes. In addition, any flight to the Channel Islands might require prior permission. If such is the case, you will need to file a PPR form and obtain a reservation number which you will then mention on your flight plan.

### IEP: This was obviously post-Brexit, what new formalities were required?

**Simon:** I had to notify French customs of my intention to fly abroad. Upon landing in Guernsey, I had to show my passport and clear customs. Thankfully, the *marshaller* explained all the process and pointed us in the right direction.

### IEP: Oh a marshaller, so you mean handling is mandatory?

**Simon:** Yes, it's very strange for a little airplane to be guided by a marshaller but you quickly get used to it and even feel slightly special. *Handling fees* are about 25€ and it's good to have someone assist you once on the ground so that you can quickly pay your landing fees (about 12€) and begin exploring the island.

### IEP: In terms of ATC, what particular instructions did you find to be different and maybe typical of this specific airspace?

**Simon:** Guernsey can issue instructions with certain restrictions. For example, they can give you a point "not below 3000 feet QNH" on arrival. For departures, the instructions will be "not above 2000 feet QNH". I find these messages very pragmatic and easy to follow. Another difference is that you must request *start-up* and a *departure clearance*, just like a commercial airliner! They can also give you *radar vectoring* for spacing with IFR traffic on arrival or departure, this is especially true in Jersey.

### IEP: What advice would you give to someone planning a trip to these islands for the first time?

**Simon:** Do your homework. Take time to read and understand the information on the different websites available, make a checklist for yourself, and learn all the entry/exit points by heart. Study the recommended routes as well, don't let yourself be *caught off guard* by a strange/unfamiliar name. And don't do it alone, ask a pilot friend to come along. It will be very useful to have someone to help out with radio communications. A second pair of ears can *come in handy*.

### IEP: What extra precautions must you take when flying across the Channel?

**Simon:** *Lifejackets* must be worn during

the entire duration of the flight. A *dinghy* is required when flying 50NM off the coast. Your aircraft must also be fitted with an ELB (Emergency Locator Transmitter) or a PLB (Personal Locator Beacon). In the future, I'd like to do a special *ditching* training course.

### IEP: To finish, what three things would you recommend for a 1-day visit?

**Simon:** Definitely, Victor Hugo's house! The forts, the harbor, and the beaches in the north are my favorite. But why stay only one day? Last time I stayed for a couple of days, went camping, and easily managed to *hitchhike* my way around the island. I met lots of friendly people, it was an adventure from beginning to end!

## Practical Guernsey

**Bus service:** there is a regular bus service into the city from the airport. You can hop on different buses for a scenic tour of the island.

### Special events:

**Guernsey Air Rally** - Next year's event is scheduled for 9, 10, 11 June 2023.

**Harbour Carnival** - Takes place in the month of June and includes a man-powered flying machine contest.

### Tourist information:

<https://www.visitguernsey.com/>

## Useful links

Guernsey Airport information:

<https://www.airport.gg/private-aviation/general-aviation>

Channel Island Airspace information:

<http://www.cicz.co.uk/>

Essential for flight planning and all you need to know about routes and entry points for each of the Channel Islands.

To file a GAR :

<https://www.submit-general-aviation-report.service.gov.uk/welcome/index>

For up-to-date charts and NOTAMS:

<https://nats-uk.ead-it.com/cms-nats/opencms/en/Publications/AIP/>

## \* Vocabulary

• <b>Simon says</b>	Jacques a dit (à dit)
• <b>To hop on to</b>	Faire un petit saut
• <b>Insider tips</b>	Conseils de connaisseur
• <b>To clear customs</b>	Passer les contrôles douaniers
• <b>Marshaller</b>	Placeur
• <b>Handling fees</b>	Redevances aéroportuaires
• <b>Start-up</b>	Mise en route

• <b>Departure clearance</b>	Clairance de départ
• <b>Radar vectoring</b>	Guidage radar
• <b>To be caught off guard</b>	Etre surpris par quelque chose
• <b>To come in handy</b>	S'avérer utile
• <b>Lifejacket</b>	Gilet de sauvetage
• <b>Dinghy</b>	Canot de sauvetage
• <b>Ditching</b>	Amerrissage
• <b>To hitchhike</b>	Faire du stop