

Sedona's Local Pilots advice;

Sedona AZ. has a beautiful uncontrolled airport with great views and some unique features.

Hi, I'm Jim Hergert and I live in Sedona and I have 3K total flying hours. I've made 100's of landings here in both an A36 and my 10 yr. old Lancair 4P in which I have 600 hours. Since I have been flying into KSEZ for over 25 yrs and meet regularly with other local pilots I write this from experience.

First of all no one should be concerned when flying into the Sedona Airport, but a little local wisdom won't hurt and may make your experience a great one. Many training flights come here from the flight schools, Waco tour plan, and jets up to G V's, Challenger 900's, Lear's and many Citations use it regularly.

The airport is a little unusual in that it is at 4800 ft. MSL, with over 5,100 feet long runway, it sits on top of a mesa....think of it as a very large aircraft carrier surrounded by mountains. After about 10 million years of erosion we are left with a Table rock mountain/hill with a flat surface to land on. The Red Rocks around Sedona are created from another layer at about 7K ft. called the Colorado Plateau that ends around Sedona exposing the layers of Red Rock making this the only national park that we can own and live in. (It's really not a Nat. Park but that describes it best). Sorry, back to the airport. This hard surface is not perfectly level having a 90 ft. difference in altitude from one end of the runway to the other. So runway 21 is downhill and 03 is uphill. The locals prefer to land uphill on RW 03 even with a tailwind up to 5 kts. And many of us will land with up to 10 kts. of tailwind. Now the most important thing is to NOT STOP FLYING UNTIL YOU ARE STOPPED, I want to emphasize this because the winds are the biggest difference compared to flat land airports, sometimes all windsocks are pointing in different directions. When landing uphill you should land about 1000 ft. from the end of the runway and you will have plenty of runway left. With a tailwind you can expect an updraft when on short final so be prepared. With a strong headwind you can expect a DOWNdraft on short final so landing long helps. Landing short of the aircraft carrier is ugly. Runway 21 is the downhill RW (most wind is from the south) and if you try to land on the end of the runway and encounter a strong downdraft (wind over 15kts) you will need to be on the throttle hard and fast. Again, landing short of the aircraft carrier is ugly. Landing a little long is OK. Add to that the Altitude of 4800 MSL and hot temps, one can have Density Altitudes of 7K to 9K (which is why it's announced on the AWOS). So your perspective of speed will be different and expect to use lots of ground roll on landing. The runway/airport rests about 500 ft above the surrounding terrain so don't look at that on final or the beauty around for that matter, just fly the numbers, Again RW21 is the headwind RW with a Downdraft on short final, and the RW is going downhill. I have seen many airplanes try to do a "squeaker landing" by flaring after a long landing in Hi Density altitude and the RW is going away from the wheels. This applies to light wing loading AC, like A36 - 210s etc., In the L4P I fly it onto the runway as soon as I can and when the nose wheel is on the ground apply full hard brakes to reduce speed by 60 kts,,,then let them cool so you have brakes and steering. I have never gone to the end of the RW and the last turn off is comfortable going downhill...but it does require significant braking in the L4-P. Uphill RW3 shortens the ground roll more than 1000 ft. compared to RW 21. Remember, RW3 is the desirable RW unless there is a significant tailwind.

Arriving in the morning is always better air, less turbulence and vertical air, so most of us plan on that. If you are arriving in the afternoon be prepared for bumpy air, meaning tighten your seat belts!! I have hit my head very hard on the door frame in the L4 and lost my headset, and I thought my seat belt was tight.

- Your alternate airports are;
- Flagstaff KFLG only 18.5 nm North, with 8800 ft runway, and they have rental cars, emergency equipment, and Airline service. It is about a 45 min drive to Sedona.
- Or Cottonwood P52 only 14.5 nm West SW, they have cheap gas, rental cars come from in town (allow time), Runway is 4200 ft but flat so you can land on the end. You have about a 30 min drive to Sedona.
- Or Prescott KPRC Love Field only 33.2 nm SW. They have two runways one 7600 ft. on relatively flat area. It is more than one hour drive. No Airlines but big flight schools (traffic).

Arriving from the West NW, you can navigate around/thru Las Vegas airspace and fly over Hoover Damn, it's new Bridge then continue next to some parts of the Grand Canyon (watch the airspace special chart for restrictions, Altitudes), then Flagstaff Mountains, etc.

Arriving from the NE, one can fly over Monument Valley around Kayenta airport OV7, which is most beautiful in the morning shadow hours, and the Painted Desert on the way. You may want to plan a scenic flight there from Sedona one morning. There is also a VFR corridor over/ thru the Grand Canyon (you need the Special airspace chart to follow).

Also, from the EAST, a bit south of the above track, is the Meteor Crater, just west of Winslow, AZ. KINW. It is great to fly over the Crater circling around to the right so passengers can see and take pictures. This is the largest crater in North America and the very best preserved in the World. Also a ground trip from Sedona is possible, I guess about a 2 hr. drive. It is about 35 nm east of Sedona.

I hope this helps you plan your visit to Sedona. If I can be of any help here is my contact information;

Jim Hergert, N6XE

<http://sedonaairport.org/>, lots of great Photos, Map here.

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I have attached a picture of a landing on RW03 at Sedona from my L4P. Look at the PAPI 4 light approach path indicator on the left by the first turn off, which KSEZ has on both runways. You can

see I use one red light and 3 white for my safe high/long landings but only for reference, Don't take your eyes off the runway and airspeed indicator on short final.

