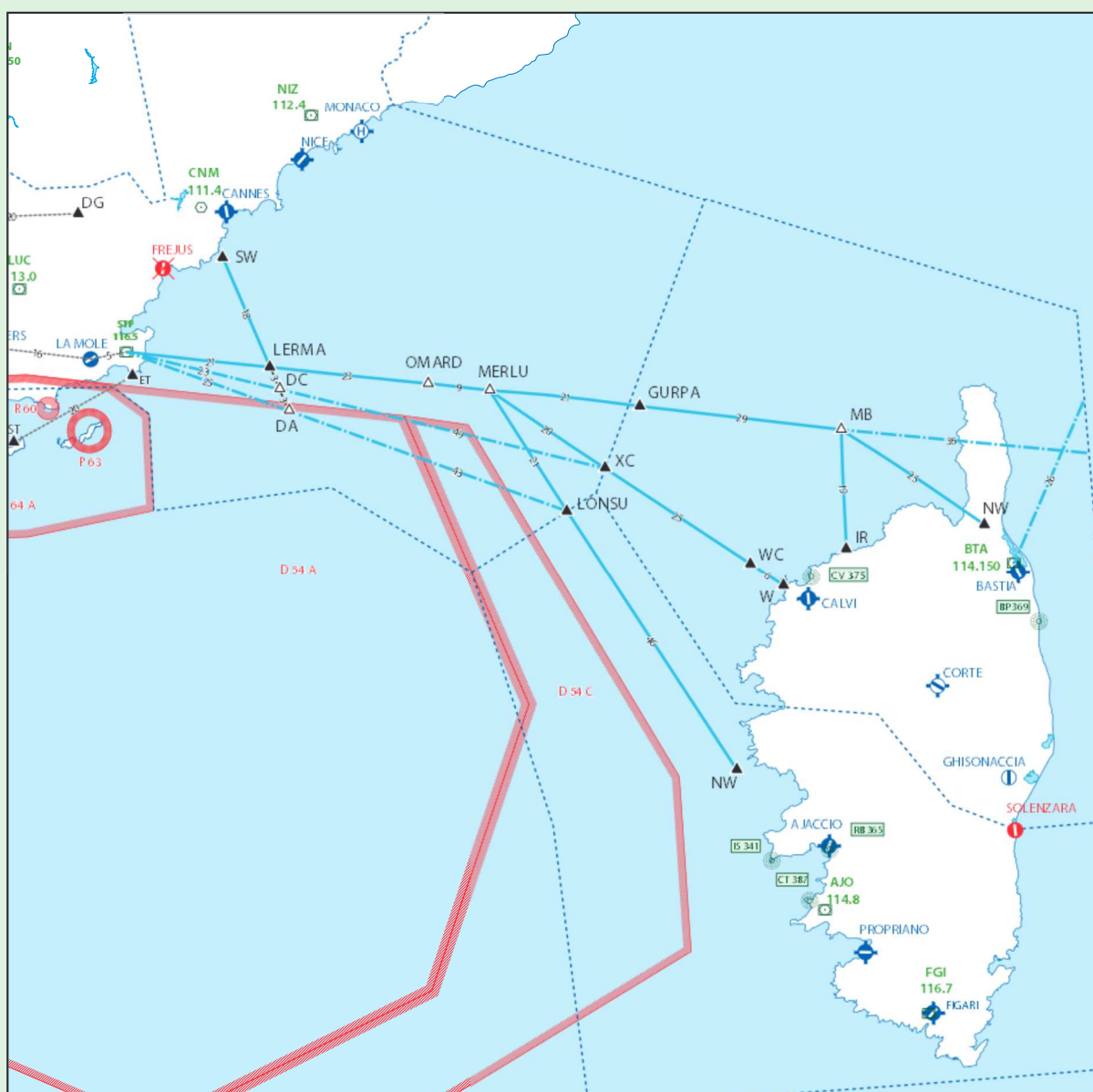




Continent–Corsica Sea Crossing

During the summer vacation, you may wish to take a trip to Corsica. The classical « Continent–Corsica » sea crossing as exciting as it can be, contains nevertheless a certain number of difficulties. It is better to be aware of the potential difficulties regarding the airspaces crossed on the continent, the sea crossing itself or the arrival on Corsican airfields. The purpose is not to discourage you, but to point out the difficulties that you may encounter... It is better to be well prepared!



Note that the sea crossing is rather long...



AIRSPACE

Be aware of the complexity!

The Mediterranean region is dense in airports with all types of civil and military airspace and it is better to be familiar with the situation in order to avoid any unexpected intrusions. The overlapping of airspaces makes it complicated to join defined routes to Corsica.

The "Nice Côte d'Azur" 1/250.000 aeronautical chart provides a complete overview of these airspaces.

The "complément aux cartes aéronautiques" and the NOTAMs supply all additional information needed to enter the crossing routes. To help you in the management of your flight and to obtain information on activity in this zone, it is recommended to contact "consultative" frequency of Marseille-Info on 120.550 MHz or the proper Flight Information Service (Provence-Info on 124.350 MHz, Nice-Info on 124.425/120.850 MHz) even when flying in Class C airspace.

R 138 (Canjuers): military firing range from ground to FL540. It is easy to spot from the air due to its characteristic "flatness" in a region with marked relief and because of its outer wall.

When this zone is in active use, it absolutely must be bypassed, preferably by the West.

R 50 (La Peyrière): small military firing range from ground to 3.500ft AMSL. Located south of Fayence in the vicinity of the Cannes WD point, it is quite recent and in Class G airspace. Caution: mandatory bypass.

R 95 (Le Luc): wide airspaces with variable vertical limits (from ground to FL65) where recommended routes are published and tracks may be imposed by ATC.

Be aware of the 403 zone (parachute dropping) independent of the R95s where the upper limit is FL130.

Attention: intense parachute activity during weekends and holidays.

LFTZ (La Mole): La Mole aerodrome is in Class G airspace and has numerous VFR and IFR aircraft with very different capabilities (light aircraft, turboprop aircraft and jets, helicopters). Be careful in the La Mole area.

R232 (La Mole Saint-Tropez): zone located above the La Mole aerodrome and the Saint-Tropez peninsula (from 2100ft to 3500ft). Transponder is obligatory in this area. Dense traffic can be observed in this area on several frequencies (La Mole traffic, Nice arrivals and departures, entry points to the sea crossing routes to Corsica, ...).

Coastline transit "Marseille<-->ET": the recommended route is in the immediate vicinity of prohibited zones (P62, P63) or restricted zones (R60, national parks). Remain alert!

Nice TMA: several distinct airspaces: C, D and E. The vertical limits vary from ground to FL195.

Radio contact, ATC clearance and transponder are compulsory before penetrating C and D airspaces. ATC could possibly ask you to wait, to keep a heading, or to fly at an IFR flight level to avoid conflict with other IFR traffic.



Cross Now!

During the crossing, you must follow defined routes: "STP or SW from Cannes-LERMA-OMARD-MERLU" then:

- "GURPA-MB-NW" to Bastia,
- "XC-WC-W" to Calvi,
- "LONSU-NW" to Ajaccio.

Shortcuts are available via DC or DA on authorization from Nice ATC according to activity in the D54 zone.

Mandatory actions (SERA+PART NCO):

- filing of flight plan,
- life jackets on board,
- permanent radio contact with the FIS concerned,
- mandatory reporting points (LERMA, GURPA, XC, LONSU, MB, WC, NW, W).

Points to consider before departure:

According to regulations, carrying a lifeboat is at the discretion of the Captain, taking into consideration:

- distance to landing places,
- water temperature and conditions.



Best practices

Recent instrument training with an instructor.

The particular piloting conditions over the sea, the absence of landmarks and the possible presence of sea mist can lead to a loss of horizon reference comparable to a flight with no visibility. You would have to use the controls and for this situation, a preliminary "flight with no visibility" training with an instructor is strongly advised.

Make sure, through the pre-flight briefing with passengers, that the **evacuation procedure, and life jacket and life boat use are well-known**.

Detailed flight preparation and management.

If using only VOR, remember that your range and precision do not guarantee a precise track. In this case, dead reckoning navigation is preferable. If you are equipped with a GNSS, do not forget to check the data entered into your software. In case of difficulties or a doubt on your estimated position, do not hesitate to ask for assistance from the Flight Information Service. They will be able to give you information and suggestions to help you get back on your route.

Prefer a high level. In case of engine failure, a high altitude will allow crew members more time to prepare for ditching. Make sure you know the capabilities of your aircraft (optimal L/D ratio speed). Remain aware of the shortest way to the coastline.

Carefully take into account wind strength (for fuel reserve).

The region is known for strong winds: prepare fuel endurance for U-turn or rerouting on arrival. Corsica airfields are known for wind and sea mist.

For aircraft with a carburetor, **be prepared for carburetor icing**. Above water, the air can be especially damp and the carburetor risks icing even at mild temperatures.

Widen your vision towards the sea's surface to note boats in the vicinity of your route.



Arrival in Corsica

Corsica is beautiful but mountainous, so pay close attention to the terrain. Do not relax after the sea crossing believing that your problems are over because being tired, you can still encounter real difficulties.

CALVI

It's a region well known for its high mountains and difficult wind conditions. Enclosed between mountains, the situation can be delicate when landing on RWY36 or for a go around on RWY18. Furthermore, weather conditions are often worse on arrival than during the crossing because of the sea mist.

Remain alert!

Being a touristic airfield means a lot of traffic. First of all, keep in mind that there is no VOR on the ground. The axis of the W-Calvi arrival faces the axis of departure trajectories (some commercial flights). These crossings are made "visually" in Class E airspace, between 2000ft and FL95, so remain alert!

RWY 36 can seem distorted visually for pilots unfamiliar with the airfield (there is a 2% runway slope and a displaced threshold).

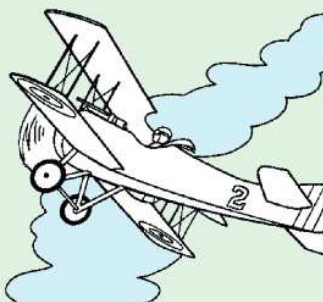
The absence of taxiways and the proximity of the parking apron to the runway could lead to numerous runway incursions---Watch out for what the other aircraft are doing.

Finally, expect a possible holding delay (particularly the week - end) if the traffic is dense.

Rerouting?

For all these reasons, plan enough fuel for a possible rerouting for Bastia, Ajaccio or even Figari.

You must carefully calculate your arrival time as night landings are forbidden at Calvi. To avoid the problems inherent with the possibility of holding delays or rerouting and also with sunset times, plan to arrive at Calvi before Sunset -30 min.



BASTIA

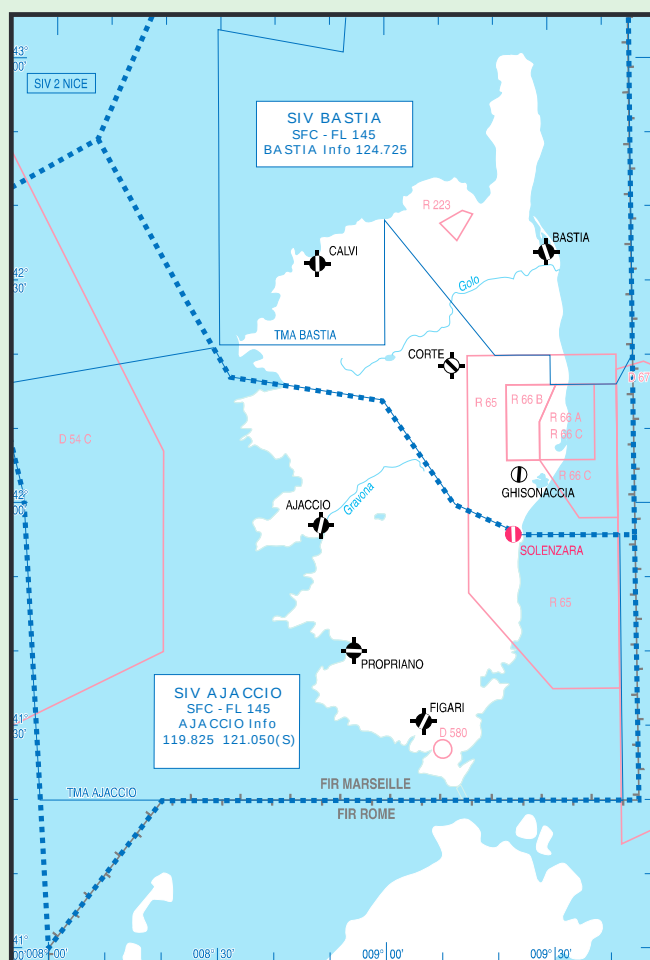
Located on a plain at the eastern part of the island, Bastia is an easy place to fly once you're over the mountains! Be aware that aerological conditions can be rough or stormy through the mountains passes at NW and W points.

Note that paragliders regularly fly west and southwest of NW and over the slopes around S, and that - in general - traffic is heavier on weekends.

For more information on Bastia and Calvi:

<http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/collaborative-aerodrome-safety-hotspots-cash>

Flight information sectors:



AJACCIO

In Ajaccio, the proximity of the IFR arrival and departure trajectories, as well as the absence of radar coverage in the bay of the nearby valleys and the possible loss in frequency, obliges one to strictly maintain the trajectory and transit routes plus the associated altitudes.

Overflying NW point must be at 2000ft AMSL max. Consequently, ask Ajaccio control for clearance if you wish to continue your flight at a higher altitude.



To Summarize

File a flight plan.

- Make radio contact with concerned FIS (Flight Information Sector) Nice, Bastia or Ajaccio.
- Do not enter Class C or D airspace without contact.
- Make reporting messages over specific points
- Make positioning reporting message at FIS boundary.
- A life jacket for all passengers must be on board.
- The follow-up of routes is compulsory. However a direct track can be accepted by the ATC under radar surveillance.
- In daytime VFR, transponder is not compulsory (but is compulsory in night time VFR).

READY, SET, GO !



All these details should not dissuade you from taking a trip to Corsica. The beauty of the landscape and the omnipresence of the sea and the mountains will leave with you an unforgettable souvenir. If you can refrain from improvising, the fact to have overcome these difficulties will render your experience more interesting and enjoyable.