Silk Road Adventure

From China to Italy

The Great Silk Road is probably the most important of all the trade routes in the world, which connected the Mediterranean region by land, via Central Asia, with East Asia. Seen as a whole, it is a network of trade routes - or, at that time, caravan routes - on which not only trade goods but also knowledge was exchanged. Not only merchants, scholars and armies used its network, but also ideas, religions and whole cultural circles merged and spread on the routes from East to West and vice versa: for example, Nestorianism and Buddhism came to China and gunpowder to Europe.

Experience here a journey from the Middle Kingdom, along the Great Wall, through the Taklamakan Desert, over the Pamir Mountains and through such little traveled countries as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan, to the Bosporus and finally to Rome and Venice.

A pleasant flight, with many discoveries and always happy landings wish you Nordheim Missions and Koschi.

Flight tips:

The weather is freely selectable. Live weather is preset

Use the GPS and ATC. The GPS is only for rough orientation.

Follow the instructions in the Navlog to really enjoy the trip.

Pay attention to fuel. If necessary, land at an airport near the route to refuel.

No. of Legs:	34
Total distance:	6513 nm

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LEGS

LEG 1: ZHLY - ZLSN

Departure: Luoyang Airport (ZHLY)
Destination: Xi'An Xiguan Airport (ZLSN)
Distance: 164,6 nm

SANM-Sanmenxia

Distance:	59,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	59,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	105,0 nm
True Course:	273°
Magnetic Course:	278°

Where to start? If you want to travel the entire network of Silk Roads, it would be a route that would take you around the world about twice. You could start in Beijing, Shanghai, or even in southern India or northern Japan. I decided to start in Luoyang. Here two secondary routes of the Silk Road from Beijing and Shanghai meet and lead further west.

Luoyang is one of the four great ancient capitals of China, which held the capital function under several dynasties, over 7 centuries. From an important trading hub of the Great Silk Road, it has developed into an important industrial city. The city was originally built by Zhougong, a famous Chinese statesman at the beginning of the Zhou Dynasty, in the 11th century BC and was then called Chengzhou. It is said that Confucius studied in Luoyang and Laozi, the legendary Chinese philosopher, also worked here.

Before you start, be sure to check out some pictures of this wonderful city on the Internet.

So start at Luoyang airport and follow the G30 highway, which runs from east to west just north of the airport, westward. After 60 nautical miles, you'll reach the city of Sanmenxia.

The city's name means "The Gorge of Three Gates" and derives from two islands that divide the Yellow River into three parts. According to Chinese mythology, Yǔ the Great used a divine axe to cut the ridge three times, creating the Sanmenxia Gorges to prevent massive flooding. The three gates were then called the "Gate of Men," "Gate of the Gods," and "Gate of the Devil."

(Yǔ was the mythical first emperor of the legendary Xia Dynasty and the successor of the five mythical primordial emperors of China, more than 4000 years ago, considered the founders of Chinese civilization).

With the construction of the Sanmenxia Dam, on the Yellow River, about 8 miles from the city, in the late 1950s, the ancient passes were flooded.

Archaeological findings near Sanmenxia between 1956 and 1991 revealed mass graves and bronze wares of the rulers of the Western Guo State. In addition, Sanmenxia is also home to the archaeological site "Shihao Section of the Ancient Silk Road", an excavated path that is part of the World Heritage Site "Silk Roads: the Route Network of the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor".

QIND-Qindongzhen

Distance:	45,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	105,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	59,6 nm
True Course:	256°
Magnetic Course:	261°

After you have seen the city and the dam, follow the G30 highway which now runs along the south bank of the Yellow River. At the village of Qindongzhen, at the mouth of the Wei He River, the highway leaves the river and continues west, while the Yellow River, coming from the north, bends to the east.

Two more tips on the side:

You can read the distance and course to the next waypoint, each above this text, in the navlog.

If you really want to enjoy the trip and not just get from A to B, use the GPS only when you are stuck.

LINW-Linwei

Distance:	40,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	145,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	19,2 nm
True Course:	260°
Magnetic Course:	264°

Follow the G30 further through the large valley to the next major town, Linwei.

The high peak to your left is Huà Shān; one of the five sacred mountains in Shaanxi Province. The mountain range is famous for its steep, scenic cliffs and dangerous climbs to the summits.

ZLSN-Xi'An Xiguan Airport

Distance:	19,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	164,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	250°
Magnetic Course:	254°
Elevation:	1275 feet
Fuel:	yes

Let the G30 continue to guide you. On the right, between the river and the road, the small Xi'An Xiguan Airport soon comes into view. Have a happy landing here.

The name Silk Road goes back to the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen, who first used the term in 1877, popularizing it. He undertook seven expeditions to China from 1868 to 1872. The southern sections of the Silk Road, from Khotan (Xinjiang) to eastern China, were first used for jade, not silk, in 5000 B.C. and are still used for that purpose. The term "Jade Road" would have been more appropriate than "Silk Road" if the silk trade had not been much larger and geographically broader.

LEG 2: ZLSN - ZLGY

Departure: Xi'An Xiguan Airport (ZLSN)
Destination: Guyuan Liupanshan Airport (ZLGY)
Distance: 211,7 nm

XIAN-Xi'An

Distance:	12,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	12,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	198,8 nm
True Course:	234°
Magnetic Course:	238°

After you take off again, fly in the direction of runway 23. After a few miles, you will find yourself above the city of Xi'An.

The name of the city means "Western Peace". Both Xi'An and Luoyang are considered starting points for the main route of the Great Silk Road. Scholars still disagree about which of the two cities is more important.

Xi'An has an almost completely preserved city wall and other sights from ancient times and antiquity. The city is the seat of the University of Northwest China and the starting point for visits to the Terracotta Army, located 36 kilometers northeast of the city.

Xi'An was the first capital of the Chinese Empire under the Qin Dynasty and was the capital of an imperial house repeatedly over the course of 1120 years, usually under the name Chang'an, which means "Long Peace." The Chang'an of the Han period was located about 5 kilometers northwest of present-day Xi'An and had a population of about 240,000 at the turn of the century. Around 1800, the city was devastated in connection with the "Red Eyebrows" rebellion, after which the capital was moved to Luoyang.

BAOJI-Baoji

Distance:	83,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	96,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	115,5 nm
True Course:	274°
Magnetic Course:	278°

After you have finished your sightseeing flight over the city, take a westerly course and reach the Wei He River, which is already visible from the outskirts of the city. North of the river you will also find the G30, which has already shown you the way. Now follow the river and the highway to Baoji.

Baoji has long been a transportation hub and was on the ancient Silk Road from Xi'An to Parthia. Since the opening of the railroad line to Chengdu, in 1957, it has been a hub for cargo handling in northwest China. Of further economic importance are railroad workshops, cotton, paper and tobacco processing industries.

Baoji is home to several cultural sites classified as monuments of China. For example, the Jintai Municipality is home to the Beishouling Neolithic site, the tomb of Li Maozhen (from the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period), the Ming and Qing period Jintai Temple, and the Zhou Ruins of Ru Village. In Chencang Municipality is the Qiaozhen site from the Neolithic and Zhou Dynasty periods.

GUAY-Guyuan

Distance:	108,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	205,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	6,6 nm
True Course:	335°
Magnetic Course:	339°

Once you are in the center of town, turn north and look for a reservoir in the valley. A second, elongated reservoir soon follows in a northwesterly direction. East of the reservoir is highway G85, which joins route G344 just before Donghuazhen town. It will now guide you all the way to Guyuan.

Both roads are not continuous, as some of them go through tunnels. In earlier times, there must have been some pretty rough passes to negotiate here.

Guyuan, known as Xihaigu at the time of the Silk Road or Jade Road, occupies the southernmost part of the region and borders Gansu Province to the east, south and due west. It is also home to the Sumeru Grottoes, which are among the ten most famous grottoes in China.

During the period of the contending empires, Guyuan belonged to the territory of the Qin State, later the Qin Dynasty. The original name of the city originated in the Ming Dynasty (1452). Due to the importance of its street in history, Guyuan was a garrison where Chinese soldiers were trained and

prepared to fight with northwestern minorities. In the Tang Dynasty, most merchants from Central Asia had to pass through this city to get to the capital Chang'An.

According to the biography of the first founder of the Yuan Dynasty, Genghis Khan died in 1227 on Liupan Mountain, in Guyuan, after a two-decade long war, with the Xixia Dynasty.

ZLGY-Guyuan Liupanshan Airport

Distance:	6,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	211,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	329°
Magnetic Course:	333°
Elevation:	5687 feet
Fuel:	yes

Fly north out of the city and have a safe landing at Guyuan Liupanshan Airport.

The airport was put into operation in 2010 and serves only domestic flights.

LEG 3: ZLGY - ZLLL

Departure: Guyuan Liupanshan Airport (ZLGY)

Destination: Zhongchuan (ZLLL)

Distance: 149,9 nm

ZULI-Zuli River

Distance:	58,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	58,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	91,2 nm
True Course:	264°
Magnetic Course:	267°

After takeoff, orient yourself to the south. Directly in front of runway 36, route S60 runs from east to west. Follow it to the west, into the hills.

Once you reach the hills, Route S60 is joined by G309. S60 ends after a few miles. You should now follow the G309 until you reach the Zuli River.

GUAN-Guanchuan River

Distance:	15,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	74,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	75,2 nm
True Course:	283°
Magnetic Course:	286°

After a bridge over the Zuli River, route G309 continues to wind through the hilly landscape. Follow it until you reach the Guanchuan River.

JINY-Jinyazhen

Distance:	29,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	103,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	46,0 nm
True Course:	269°
Magnetic Course:	272°

Continue along the G309 until you reach a valley and the village of Jinyazhen.

The trade and road network reached its greatest importance between 115 BC and the 13th century AD. With the gradual loss of Roman territory in Asia and the rise of Arabia in the Levant, the Silk Road became increasingly unsafe and little traveled. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the route was revived under the Mongols. Among others, at the time the Venetian Marco Polo used it to travel to Cathay (China). According to widespread belief, the route was one of the main routes through which plague bacteria reached Europe from Asia in the mid-14th century, spreading the "Black Death".

RG30-Route G30

Distance:	4,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	108,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	41,4 nm
True Course:	223°
Magnetic Course:	226°

Route G309 crosses the valley to the southwest, passes between two mountains and soon meets the G30 highway.

LANZ-Lanzhou

Distance:	13,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	121,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	28,0 nm
True Course:	299°
Magnetic Course:	302°

Turn northwest, follow the G30 and a short time later you can see the city of Lanzhou. There you will also meet the Yellow River again.

At least since the first millennium B.C., the city was an important connection point of the historical Silk Road and also an important place for crossing the Yellow River. It was a kind of border crossing between the Chinese heartland in the southeast and the warring tribes in the north and west. To protect the city, the Great Wall of China was extended to the city of Yumen. At that time, Lanzhou was known as Jincheng (Golden City).

After the fall of the Han Dynasty, Lanzhou became the capital of several successor states. In the 4th century it briefly became the capital of the independent state of Liang. The city received its present name in 1656 under the Qing Dynasty (1616-1911). From 1666, Lanzhou became the capital of the newly established independent province of Gansu.

It was not until 1909 that the first fixed bridge across the Yellow River was completed, the Zhongshan Bridge. In the 1920s and 1930s, Lanzhou became a center of Soviet influence in northwestern China.

Despite many historic buildings, most of the inhabited houses consist of prefabricated buildings. Lanzhou was voted the dirtiest city on earth by the World Resources Institute in 1998. Even today, Lanzhou is one of the ten most polluted cities on earth, as it is still heated almost exclusively with brown coal.

ZLLL-Zhongchuan

Distance:	28,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	149,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	343°
Magnetic Course:	346°
Elevation:	6355 feet
Fuel:	yes

Once you have flown over the city, turn north, sight Zhongchuan Airport and have a safe and soft landing there. The airport is located on the S13 highway, which runs north to the west of the city.

The international airport opened in 1970 and serves as a major air hub for Gansu Province and western China. Lanzhou Airport is a focal point for Hainan Airlines.

LEG 4: ZLLL - JIC

Departure: Zhongchuan (ZLLL)
Destination: Jinchuan Airport (JIC)
Distance: 136,3 nm

WUWEI-Wuwei

Distance:	96,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	96,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	39,5 nm
True Course:	331°
Magnetic Course:	334°

Take off and turn to the west after the start. Behind a hilly landscape you can see a valley crossed by the Zhuhanlang River. The river is accompanied by route G312 and G30. Follow the roads in northern directions until you reach the city of Wuwei.

Its central location between the three western capitals of Lanzhou, Xining and Yinchuan makes Wuwei an important business and transportation hub for the region. Due to its location along the Hexi Corridor, historically the only route from central China to western China and the rest of central Asia, many major railroads and national highways pass through Wuwei.

The Hexi Corridor runs between the Qilian Shan Mountains and the Gobi Desert, and Dunhuang and Lanzhou. As part of the Silk Road in ancient China, it is the most important passage to Xinjiang and Central Asia.

In ancient times, Wuwei was called Liangzhou. About 5,000 years ago, people began to settle here. The city was a key link for the Silk Road. A number of important archaeological finds have been uncovered in Wuwei, including ancient copper carts with stone animals. The motifs and types of objects in the Wuwei tombs, as well as their composition of earthenware, lacquer and bronze, are

typical examples of the Han Chinese burial style found throughout China. Other tombs found along the Hexi Corridor show the influence of Xiongnu and other minorities.

Plenty of sunlight and fertile soil make agriculture one of Wuwei's largest industries. Other important industries include textiles, metallurgy, and building materials. Melons, vegetables, wine, and livestock are important agricultural products. Organic farming is a trend, with more land being set aside for "green agriculture" each year.

JIC-Jinchuan Airport

Distance:	39,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	136,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	340°
Magnetic Course:	343°
Elevation:	4731 feet
Fuel:	yes

Leave the Silk Road briefly to take a break and possibly replenish fuel supplies. Route G3017 leads north-northwest out of the city. Follow it until you reach Zhongchuan Airport. Have a happy landing there.

The airport was opened August 29, 2011. It is the sixth civilian airport in Gansu and the first to be built since 1982. It is used exclusively for domestic passenger and cargo transportation.

LEG 5: JIC - ZDOO

Departure: Jinchuan Airport (JIC)
Destination: Zhangye Ganzhou Airport (ZDOO)
Distance: 94,5 nm

YONG-Yongchang

Distance:	24,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	24,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	69,8 nm
True Course:	226°
Magnetic Course:	229°

After you are back in the air, you can see the city of Jinchang to the west of the airport. From the city, two roads lead south, running side by side. Follow the right road to the city of Yongchang.

ZDOO-Zhangye Ganzhou Airport

Distance:	69,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	94,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	299°
Magnetic Course:	301°
Elevation:	5195 feet
Fuel:	yes

Once you have reached Yongchang, you will meet route G30. Follow it in a northwesterly direction. This is probably also the course of the historic Silk Road. Stay about 2 miles south of the road on the last stretch, then you will be able to spot the airport in time. I wish you a good and safe landing.

Zhangye Ganzhou Airport or Zhangye Southeast Air Base is a military and civilian airport serving the city of Zhangye in Gansu Province,. Construction began in May 2010 to convert the air base, at an estimated cost of 313 million yuan (US$47 million), into a dual-use airport. The airport opened on November 1, 2011.

LEG 6: ZDOO - ZLJQ

Departure: Zhangye Ganzhou Airport (ZDOO)
Destination: Jiayuguan Airport (ZLJQ)
Distance: 126,7 nm

ZHAN-Zhangye

Distance:	12,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	12,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	114,1 nm
True Course:	308°
Magnetic Course:	310°

A short time later, in the extension of runway 29, you will meet a road that will lead you in a northwesterly direction directly to Zhangye.

The city was formerly known as Ganzhou, named after the sweet water of the oasis. Another theory is that "Gan" comes from Ganjun Hill near the city. The name of the province came from a contraction of Ganzhou and Suzhou (present-day Jiuquan). The name appears in Marco Polo's Travels under the name Campichu.

The administrative district of Zhangye was founded in 111 B.C. by the Western Han and was headquartered on the site of present-day Wuwei.

Zhangye is located in the middle of the Hexi Corridor. The area is on the border of China proper, protecting it from the nomads to the northwest and allowing its armies access to the Tarim Basin. During the Han Dynasty, Chinese armies were often engaged in this area against the Xiongnu, a tribal confederation of equestrian nomads. The city was also an important post on the Silk Road. Before it was overrun by the Mongols, it was ruled by the Western Xia and before that by the Uyghurs, at least since the early 10th century.

The Mongol Yuan emperor Kublai Khan is said to have been born in the Dafo Temple, in Zhangye, where the longest reclining wooden Buddha in China now stands. Marco Polo's diary states that he spent a year in the city during his trip to China.

QIHUI-Qingshui Hutongshi Interchange

Distance:	69,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	82,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	44,3 nm
True Course:	293°
Magnetic Course:	295°

Leave the city in a westerly direction. You will immediately meet the Hei He River. On your left, a main road crosses the river, the G30 route. Follow this route until you reach a large junction with the G213, which already runs alongside the G30 in the last quarter of the route.

JIAY-Jiayuguan

Distance:	34,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	116,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	10,3 nm
True Course:	310°
Magnetic Course:	311°

Continuing along the G30, you will reach the city of Jiayuguan.

In the Ming period (14th century), a fortress called Jiayuguan was built here. This was located in the far west of China at that time. The fortress is connected with the Great Wall of China. The city is named after the nearby Jiayu Pass, the largest and most intact pass on the Great Wall of China.

The city of Jiayuguan itself has no past dating back, but is a major industrial city in the region. It was founded as recently as 1958, after the establishment of Jiuquan Steel Company, the largest steel company in Gansu. Mining and mineral processing are the main industries of the city.

ZLJQ-Jiayuguan Airport

Distance:	10,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	126,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	316°
Magnetic Course:	317°
Elevation:	5102 feet
Fuel:	yes

Continue flying to the northwest. North of the city's industrial district, you can spot Jiayuguan Airport. A good landing and time for a breather.

First built in 1938 for military purposes, the airport was rebuilt at its current location in 1953 and was formerly called Jiuquan Airport.

LEG 7: ZLJQ - ZLDH

Departure: Jiayuguan Airport (ZLJQ)
Destination: Dunhuang (ZLDH)
Distance: 182,8 nm

HEISB-Heishanhu Bridge

Distance:	9,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	9,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	172,9 nm
True Course:	247°
Magnetic Course:	248°

Once you are back in the air, turn southwest to get back to the G30 route. After a short flight over the city, you'll meet the Heishanhu bridge of the G30.

JIAAN-Jiaan

Distance:	79,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	89,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	93,1 nm
True Course:	307°
Magnetic Course:	308°

Follow the G30 northwest until you reach the village of Jiaan, located on the Shule River.

XIHU-Xihu Town

Distance:	43,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	133,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	49,3 nm
True Course:	266°
Magnetic Course:	266°

Route G30 was already accompanied by the Shule River. Road and river now lead you to the city of Xihu, in Guazhou County, formerly Anxi. Anxi is often mistakenly referred to as a city and an important Silk Road junction, but it has been an area, not a city, since ancient times.

Various sources indicate that there must have been a branch to two more northerly routes around here and also in the next city of Dunhuang. In very dry years, when the oases had dried up, the route went north around the Taklamakan desert. From here it went via Hami and Turfan, to Kashgar, where also the other routes ending from Dunhuang. To this day, this desert region is one of the driest areas in the world.

ZLDH-Dunhuang

Distance:	49,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	182,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	245°
Magnetic Course:	245°
Elevation:	3681 feet
Fuel:	yes

Turn here now a little more south and follow the route G3011 further to Dunhuang airport. Have a safe landing.

The town is just past the airport and is referred to as Yueyaquanzhen on some maps, but this is an urban area of Dunhuang.

Dunhuang is an ancient oasis city in the northwest of western China's Gansu province. During the time when the Silk Road was used, Dunhuang was one of the most popular resting places on the route. Dunhuang is located at the western end of the Hexi Corridor, in the middle of desert areas. To the south of Dunhuang's territory lies the Qilian Shan Mountains, to the north the Mazong Shan Mountains, and to the west and east the Gobi Desert. Not far from the city, heading west, the Silk Road splits into its northern and southern branches, bypassing the Taklamakan Desert.

We will continue to follow the original, southern branch of the Silk Road. The first, northern branch already started at Xihu. This second northern branch also leads via Louian and Korla to Kashgar, where all 3 routes meet.

In 366 the construction of the Mogao Grottoes was started and continued until the 14th century. The Mogao Grottoes are a system of several hundred cave temples and one of the most magnificent sights of this area. Here Buddhist monks, in the period from the 4th to the 12th century, carved about 1000 caves in the, on average 17 meters high, sandstone rocks and decorated them with Buddhist motifs (Buddha statues, sculptures and murals). 492 of these caves are still preserved today and some are open to visitors.

LEG 8: ZLDH - ZWCM

Departure: Dunhuang (ZLDH)
Destination: Qiemo Airport (ZWCM)
Distance: 485,2 nm

S303-Route S303

Distance:	26,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	26,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	458,4 nm
True Course:	242°
Magnetic Course:	242°

When the sky has you back, fly over the city of Dunhuang and look for a road leading southwest out of the city. Soon you'll come to a road junction where route S303 joins the road you've already been following.

Another little tip: the flight is very long. The simulator saves after each waypoint. So you can abort the flight after each waypoint. When you start again, the flight will continue at the last waypoint you flew over.

YUMEN-Yumenguan

Distance:	31,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	57,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	427,3 nm
True Course:	321°
Magnetic Course:	321°

The road initially heads west-southwest, but soon turns north. There you can also see a reservoir. While you fly over a few more small oases, follow the road until you reach Yumenguan Pass, which has since fallen into disrepair and thus no longer exists for road traffic. But luckily you are on a plane and can continue to follow the original and approximate course of the Silk Road.

The Yumenguan or Jade Gate Pass, also known as Jade Gate or Jade Pass, is the name of an 1130 meter high mountain pass west of Dunhuang. In ancient times, the Silk Road passed over it. It connected Central Asia and China and marks the border between the Hexi Corridor or Gansu Corridor, to the east, and Xinjiang with the Tarim Basin and Dsungarei, to the west. It was China's last and westernmost checkpoint on the Silk Road.

The dilapidated Yumenguan Pass and signal fire towers along the Great Wall have been on the list of monuments of the People's Republic of China since 1988 and became part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014, titled "Silk Roads: the Road Network of the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor". This corridor stretches from China to Kazakhstan.

S235-Route S235

Distance:	140,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	198,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	286,4 nm
True Course:	270°
Magnetic Course:	270°

Follow route S303 as far as you can see it. Once you can't see a road, fly due west or use the GPS to get to the next waypoint, Route S235.

Other than that, you'll see nothing but dark colored desert for the next 140 nautical miles. Still, I found this flight very exciting because I was able to see a lot of beautiful and interesting geoformations along the way.

However, there is one problem. At some point the desert stops and you fly over a huge body of water that doesn't belong there. There is something wrong with the simulator here. Maybe it will be fixed at some point. Until then you have to rely on your GPS.

Before you get to the Luobupo salt lake, there is an industrial site that produces sulfates from the salt lake; China's largest sulfate producer SDIC Luobupo Potash Co. Ltd. Look for route S235, which is east of the salt lake.

(Sorry, can't see it. It's all water).

G315-Route G315

Distance:	89,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	288,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	197,2 nm
True Course:	223°
Magnetic Course:	222°

Follow Route S235 in a southwesterly direction until you meet Route G315, which runs from east to west.

MILAN-Milan

Distance:	26,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	314,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	170,7 nm
True Course:	269°
Magnetic Course:	268°

The route G315 leads to the west. Follow it until the village of Milan, which is a bit off, north of the road.

TIGAN-Tieganlikexiang

Distance:	36,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	350,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	134,3 nm
True Course:	252°
Magnetic Course:	250°

Continue following the road. At Milan, Route G315 turns southwest and soon turns west again. Follow it until you reach the village of Tieganlikexiang.

WAXI-Washixiaxiang

Distance:	41,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	392,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	92,4 nm
True Course:	242°
Magnetic Course:	241°

Continue along the G315 road until you reach the village of Washixiaxiang.

ZWCM-Qiemo Airport

Distance:	92,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	485,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	250°
Magnetic Course:	248°
Elevation:	4082 feet
Fuel:	yes

You've already had a very long flight. It's still 90 nautical miles to the next landing site, where you can rest a bit. Follow G 315, which is accompanied by the Qiemo River (also called Qarqan). Where the road turns west and leaves the river, follow the river for a short distance and you can see the airport. Have a safe landing at Qiemo airport.

The airport is an expansion of a smaller airport on the same site and opened in 2016. China Southern Airlines offers flights from here to Ürümqi via Korla.

The oasis town of Qiemo or Cherchen is the capital of Qiemo County, Autonomous Prefecture of Mongolia's Bayingolin County, in China's Xinjiang Province. It is located on the Qiemo River and at the foot of the Qilian Mountains, on the southern and original Silk Road. In ancient times, the city and the kingdom it controlled were known as Shanshan.

The settlement of the Qiemo area dates back to the Bronze Age. The city is located on the ancient Jade or Silk Road, which traded with the earliest Chinese dynasties. Bronze Age petroglyphs have been found south of the city, along another ancient trade route into present-day Tibet. Mummies dating to 1,000 B.C. have been discovered at the Zaghunluq site, less than six kilometers southwest of the city center. One particularly well-preserved mummy is known as Cherchen Man.

Qiemo existed as an independent kingdom of Calmadana during the former Han Dynasty (123 B.C. to 23 A.D.).

LEG 9: ZWCM - ZWTN

Departure: Qiemo Airport (ZWCM)
Destination: Hotan (ZWTN)
Distance: 292,0 nm

WUQI-Wuqi Lukedun

Distance:	6,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	6,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	285,6 nm
True Course:	304°
Magnetic Course:	302°

The river flows directly east past the airport. After takeoff, orient yourself to the north. After a bridge over the river, route G315 leads west. Follow it until the next road junction, at the village of Wuqi Lukedun.

ANER-Andi'er

Distance:	85,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	91,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	200,6 nm
True Course:	245°
Magnetic Course:	243°

Stay above the G315 road, which will take you first on a westerly and then on a more southwesterly course. The next landmark is the ruined city of Andi'er.

The site includes an ancient pagoda and a former Buddhist monastery. It existed since the time of the Han Dynasty.

British explorer Aurel Stein visited the site in 1901 and 1906 and discovered various documents. It is believed that Endere (now Andi'er) was an important military post. Coins discovered there indicate that the Chinese controlled the area as early as the Han Dynasty but fell to the Tibetans during the Tang Dynasty. However, the fortress was abandoned in the ninth century when the Endere River changed its course.

Stein discovered a number of buildings dedicated to Buddhist worship, including a shrine filled with scraps of cloth and fragments of Buddhist manuscripts in Chinese, Tibetan, and Sanskrit, suggesting that it had attracted believers of different religions from near and far.

QIA-Qia An

Distance:	53,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	145,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	146,8 nm
True Course:	244°
Magnetic Course:	242°

Continue to follow the G315 road to the southwest. You will reach the junction of a road at Qia An, which leads north.

NIYA-Niya

Distance:	9,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	154,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	137,5 nm
True Course:	211°
Magnetic Course:	209°

Turn south and follow the course of G315 to Niya.

About 100 kilometers north of the present city, a ruined city has also been discovered, which points to the original, historical Niya. So we are currently too far south of the actual Silk Road.

The Niya ruins are an archaeological site located on the southern edge of the Tarim Basin. The ancient site was known in its native language as Caḍota and in Chinese, during the Han Dynasty, as Jingjue. Numerous ancient archaeological artifacts have been uncovered at the site.

Niya was once an important trading center in an oasis, on the southern branch of the Silk Road, in the southern Taklamakan Desert. In ancient times, camel caravans passed through here, transporting goods from China to Central Asia.

In 1900, Aurel Stein set out on an expedition to western China and the Taklamakan Desert. In Niya, he excavated several dwellings and found 100 wooden tablets inscribed in 105. These tablets bore clay seals, official orders, and letters written in Kharoshthi, an early Indian script, dating them to the Kushan Empire or to Gandharan refugees influenced by Indian bureaucratic traditions. Other finds include Han Dynasty coins and documents, Roman coins, an ancient mousetrap, a walking stick, part of a guitar, a functional bow, a carved stool, an ornate carpet, and other textile fragments, as well as many other household items such as wooden furniture with ornate carvings, pottery, Chinese basketry, and lacquerware.

The mystery of why this once thriving city, home to perhaps 3,000 people, was buried in the desert sands remains unsolved to this day.

HOTAN-Hotan

Distance:	132,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	286,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	5,1 nm
True Course:	272°
Magnetic Course:	270°

Continue to follow the G315 in a westerly direction. After flying over more settlements and villages, you will arrive at the city of Hotan.

Hotan, with its 400,000 inhabitants, is located in the Tarim Basin. It lies immediately north of the Kunlun Mountains, which are crossed by the Sanju, Hindutash and Ilchi passes. The city, which lies

southeast of Yarkant County and is inhabited almost exclusively by Uyghurs, is a small agricultural center. As an important stop on the southern branch of the historic Silk Road, Hotan has always depended on the two rivers, Karakash and the White Jade River, for the water needed to survive on the southwestern edge of the vast Taklamakan Desert.

German pilot Carl August von Gablenz was forced to make an emergency landing near Hotan while exploring the air route to the Far East in a Lufthansa Junkers Ju-52 D-ANOY in August 1937. The soldiers of the National Revolutionary Army, which had invaded Xinjiang under Ma Zhongying, 1933, controlled the area of the so-called Dunganistan at that time. The troops held Gablenz and his crew in Hotan for four weeks. He reported in detail on this flight, which he made together with Flight Captain Robert Untucht and Chief Radio Operator Karl Kirchhoff, in his book "D-ANOY bezwingt den Pamir," published in 1937. The spectacular flight over 2,650 kilometers, which involved conquering the Wakhan pass heights of more than 5,300 meters, was a pioneering feat that received worldwide attention. When the pilots, who had already been thought lost, landed in Berlin-Tempelhof on October 3, 1937, they were celebrated like heroes.

ZWTN-Hotan

Distance:	5,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	292,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	220°
Magnetic Course:	217°
Elevation:	4642 feet
Fuel:	yes

After flying over the city, set course for the spacious airport of Hotan, southwest of the city. Have a soft and safe landing here.

The airport was built for domestic traffic and offers flights to almost all parts of China.

LEG 10: ZWTN - ZWSH

Departure: Hotan (ZWTN)
Destination: Kashi (ZWSH)
Distance: 261,5 nm

GUMA-Guma

Distance:	82,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	82,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	179,2 nm
True Course:	293°
Magnetic Course:	290°

Now rise again into the desert air of China, turn south after takeoff and reach route G3012. Follow it in a northwesterly direction until you reach the city of Guma.

Guma, also known as Pishan, is an ancient oasis town on the main caravan route between Khotan (Hotan) and Karghalik. In Han times, it was the route leading to Arachosia (Kandahar) through Hunza. It was also an important junction for caravans heading south via the Karakoram route, i.e. to India or through the Pamirs, to Jalalabad or Badakhshan.

Today, Pishan is a small, rather poor town with about 2,000 inhabitants. The main crop is cotton. Most of the inhabitants are Uyghurs and there are some Tajiks.

KARG-Karghalik

Distance:	45,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	127,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	134,1 nm
True Course:	295°
Magnetic Course:	292°

Continue along the G3012 until you reach Karghalik.

Karghalik or Yecheng is the name of both the oasis and the town. The fertile terraces of loess soil of the oasis are irrigated by the Tiznaf River and several smaller streams. They are joined in the north by a belt of cultivated land extending about 40 kilometers from the city of Yecheng to the Yarkand River.

In the later Han period, the city was also known as Piaosha, which literally means "drifting sand." It was known for the production of baicao (white grass), which yielded a very poisonous substance used on arrowheads - probably from an aconitum plant.

The Chinese pilgrim monk Song Yun passed through the kingdom of Zhujuban on his way from Khotan in 519. He described that a lot of grain was produced here, which was made into cakes. The inhabitants did not allow the slaughter of animals and ate only those that had died a natural death. Many of them lived in the mountains. They resembled the Khotan people in their language and customs, while their writing was like that of the Brahmins of India.

Xuanzang, another pilgrim monk who traveled through the country in 644, described it as very fertile, with abundant grapes, pears and plums. The writing was like that of Khotan but the spoken language was different. Although he says the people were sincere Buddhists, they had little culture or education and he found them rude and deceitful. Many monasteries were in ruins and the 100 or so remaining monks belonged to the Mahayana school.

YARK-Yarkant

Distance:	32,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	160,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	101,5 nm
True Course:	347°
Magnetic Course:	343°

Turn a little to the north here and continue to follow the course of route G3012. Cross the Yarkant River to reach the city of Yarkant.

The capital of Yarkant County is the city of Yarkant, formerly known as Shache. The county was founded by the descendants of Genghis Khan and is considered Mongolian in Central Asia. Its present name, Khanate of Yarkand, was so named in 1514 by Sultan Said Khan - a descendant of Tughluk Timur (1347-1363), a ruler of the Eastern Chagatai Khanate - after they extended their empire to here

and the population converted from Tibetan Buddhism to Islam. The rulers of the county exercised control over Turpan, Hami, and the Tarim Basin, south of the Tianshan Mountains, and over much of what the Chinese called the "Western Regions."

G3012-Route G3012

Distance:	14,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	174,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	86,7 nm
True Course:	259°
Magnetic Course:	255°

Route G3012 is tangent to the city on its south side. Once you have flown over the city, turn southwest to rejoin G3012.

YENGI-Yengisar

Distance:	48,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	223,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	38,0 nm
True Course:	314°
Magnetic Course:	310°

Now follow the G3012 northwest to the town of Yengisar.

Yengisar is the county seat of the county of the same name, a town best known among native Uyghurs for its handmade knives. The finely tuned art of knife making used to be passed down from generation to generation in Yengisar, but is slowly dying due to China's strict response to deadly clashes in the Xinjiang region.

ZWSH-Kashi

Distance:	38,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	261,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	348°
Magnetic Course:	344°
Elevation:	4510 feet
Fuel:	yes

Route G3012 turns a little to the north here. Follow it to Kaxgar and then land at the city's airport, which is located on the northern outskirts. After the next takeoff, it goes high up. Therefore, treat yourself to a break.

It is the capital of the Kaxgar administrative district, located in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Sinkiang), the People's Republic of China. It is located on the westernmost edge of the Tarim Basin, at an altitude of 1,300 meters. It is an oasis city in the inland delta of the Kysylsuu River and forms an important Silk Road junction between the Hexi Corridor and the Wachsh Amudarya.

The city was first mentioned in Chinese sources around the turn of the century and, according to the work Han Shu, belonged to the 48 principalities of the West. It was under Chinese suzerainty with short interruptions. However, Chinese suzerainty weakened in the 2nd century. In the 3rd century, Kaxgar was among the six centers of power in the west and is also mentioned in the Sassanid inscriptions of King Shapur I, who included Kaxgar among his outermost possessions after conquering Kushana. In the 6th century, Kaxgar belonged to the Hephthalites before coming under the rule of the first khaganate of the Kök Turks.

In the 7th century, the area again belonged to the Chinese Empire. In 1220, the Mongols subjugated the region. Marco Polo visited Kaxgar (he named the city Cascar) around 1273 and noted a high number of followers of Nestorianism. During the Islamic Yarkant Khanate, there was a conflict between Kaxgar and Yarkant, as a result of which Kaxgar's downtown was destroyed in 1514. The destroyer of Kaxgar, the Dughlat Mirzā Abu Bakr, had a new city built, which is now known as the Old City of Kaxgar. After 1514, Yarkant became new center of the region.

In 1758 the area was conquered by the Chinese of the Qing Dynasty and in 1884 the city became part of Xinjiang province. In the mid-19th century, Kaxgar was an important site in the so-called "Great Game" between the colonial powers of Russia and Great Britain. The Russians had conquered the neighboring territories and khanates of the region. Kaxgar itself remained part of China even after the proclamation of the People's Republic of China.

Kaxgar is considered the most culturally and historically important Islamic city in Central Asia. Nevertheless, the Chinese government is currently carrying out an extensive modernization of the city, in the course of which, however, the historic old town is being almost completely destroyed. In addition, the city suffers from significant environmental problems, especially air pollution.

LEG 11: ZWSH - UAOH

Departure: Kashi (ZWSH)
Destination: Osh West Airport (UAOH)
Distance: 202,4 nm

ULUG-Ulugqat

Distance:	35,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	35,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	166,4 nm
True Course:	286°
Magnetic Course:	282°

I hope you caught a favorable wind and good visibility. When I did my test flight it was blue skies and little wind but the whole area around the city was surrounded by a huge haze which made an ILS landing necessary with only 1 mile visibility. If it's the same for you, use the GPS to get to the next waypoint instead of the directions.

Take off from the airport and then fly to the western edge of the airport area. Directly at runway 08, the well-known route G3012 leads north. Follow it for a short distance until you reach the junction with route G3013. Turn left here in a westerly direction and follow route G3013. It will lead you to the Kunlun Mountains of the Pamir Mountains, to the district town of Ulugqat, the capital of the district of the same name.

The climate in these mountains is harsh and dry. The inhabitants are mostly cattle breeders and keep yaks and fat-tailed sheep. The wildlife of the Pamirs is naturally composed of high mountain species. Among the most famous, but also the rarest animals of the mountain range are the snow leopard and the Marco Polo argali.

ULUQ-Ulugqat Township

Distance:	41,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	77,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	124,5 nm
True Course:	280°
Magnetic Course:	276°

The municipalities of Ulugqat district run through the entire valley. Follow the G3013 for a bit. Soon this route turns into route S309, which has accompanied G3013 from the beginning of the valley. Keep the S309 pass in sight and follow it to the next community of Ulugqat.

You are now flying along the Irkeshtam Pass. The Chinese explorer and imperial envoy Zhang Qian is said to have been the first to cross the pass when he visited the Ferghana Valley (now Alay Valley) in 128 BC, on behalf of Emperor Wu, to gain allies against the Xiongnu. The Xiongnu were a multi-ethnic confederation of early Asian Huns who spread into Central Asia and southern Siberia and became powerful opponents of the Chinese dynasties.

Right here, over this pass more than 3,000 meters high, the caravans of the Silk Road struggled along to reach the lands beyond the mountains and to trade. Today this road is asphalted. I don't want to imagine what it must have looked like back then.

KIRG-Border China - Kyrgyzstan

Distance:	22,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	100,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	102,2 nm
True Course:	251°
Magnetic Course:	246°

Continue to follow the pass road or the Kirzlesu River, which will soon come into view. Both lead you out of China, into the Alay Valley, into Kyrgyzstan.

The territory of today's Kyrgyzstan has been populated by various tribes since the 8th century. From 1219 it belonged to the Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan. After his death, Chagatai, a son of Genghis Khan, inherited the power. The territory remained Mongolian for a long time. At the beginning of the 19th century, the entire territory of modern Kyrgyzstan became part of the Islamic Khanate of Kokand.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Russian Empire gradually conquered the country. Russian and later Soviet dominance of Kyrgyzstan lasted from 1876 until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. On August 31, 1991, Kyrgyzstan declared its independence. The first president was Askar Akayev, who had been president of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic since 1990 and was thus elected president of independent Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz is now the first national language, although a large part of the population still speaks Russian.

SARY-Sarytasch

Distance:	31,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	131,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	71,2 nm
True Course:	273°
Magnetic Course:	269°

The same road you followed to the border with Kyrgyzstan is now called A371, on other maps EM-05 or E60. In any case, it leads west to the town of Sarytash. There it meets the Pamir Highway. Follow it through the valley.

The place name Sarytash means "yellow stone". The town is located at the foot of the Alai Mountains and was founded as a city only in 1950. Before that it was a settlement with several houses scattered in the area. It is located at a road junction and is mainly important as a base for road maintenance and clearing. It is also a garrison for Kyrgyz border troops who monitor a section of the border through which drugs are smuggled in from the south and then continue on to Russia and Europe.

GULT-Gültschö

Distance:	36,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	167,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	34,8 nm
True Course:	15°
Magnetic Course:	10°

Now follow the Pamir Highway M 41 in northern direction until you reach the mountain town of Gültschö.

You have crossed the one big mountain range, now the Alai Mountains are in front of you. There, where today the Pamir Highway runs along, there was the 3,600 meter high Taldyk Pass, with many dangers for the caravans of that time. Snow avalanches and boulders may have been just as dangerous as the robbers who lurked in the adjacent gorges for fat prey.

OSCH-Osch

Distance:	32,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	199,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	2,8 nm
True Course:	293°
Magnetic Course:	288°

After you reach Gültshoe, the road makes a sharp turn to the south and then continues in a large arc to the northeast to the city of Osh. The 2,402-meter-high Chyrchyk Pass separates Valchö from Osh, the last really high pass on this trip. Then you will reach the Ferghana Valley, a densely populated depression between the Tian Shan and the Alai Mountains. The Pamir Highway will lead you directly into the town.

According to tradition, the town is 3,000 years old. Osh is the second largest city in the country and today has a population of about 290,000, and of course it played an important role along the Silk Road. Those who had made it this far from China could lull themselves into safety for the time being and recover from the unspeakable hardships. Those who wanted to get to China could hire porters here, trade fresh beasts of burden, recruit soldiers for their own protection, or replenish food supplies. There was a flourishing market, the largest open market in Central Asia, which attracted people from all parts of the country, hostels, taverns, prostitutes, caravanserais and much more.

Eye-catching is the large mountain on the eastern edge of the city center, Suleiman Mountain. Babur, the descendant of Timur and founder of the Indian Mogul dynasty, was born in nearby Andijon, in what is now the Uzbek part of the Ferghana Valley, and set out from there to conquer India. He is said to have sat for a long time on Mount Suleiman, in Osh, contemplating his fate before concluding that the Ferghana Valley was too confining for his ambition and dreams. And so he set out to conquer India.

Suleiman Mountain is an important place for Muslim pilgrims, funerals and a popular destination for excursions. It became the first Kyrgyz site to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List on June 29, 2009.

Some researchers see in Suleiman Mountain the "Stone Tower", which the ancient historian Claudius Ptolemy, in his Geographia, called the center of the Silk Road, which was the overland trade route between Asia and Europe at that time.

Considering the distance traveled from our starting point, Sanmenxia, and the distance still ahead to the Bosporus, this is indeed roughly the center of the Silk Road traveled during the time of Claudius Ptolemy. Rome and Venice not included, because they were maritime "extensions" of the Silk Road.

UAOH-Osh West Airport

Distance:	2,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	202,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	295°
Magnetic Course:	290°
Elevation:	3129 feet
Fuel:	yes

Fly from the city center past Suleiman Mountain to reach the small Osh West sports airfield. Have a happy landing here. Time for a break.

LEG 12: UAOH - UTDL

Departure: Osh West Airport (UAOH)

Destination: Khudzhand (UTDL)

Distance: 152,7 nm

KYUZ-Border Kyrgyzstan - Uzbekistan

Distance:	2,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	2,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	150,5 nm
True Course:	11°
Magnetic Course:	6°

Just 2 miles north of the airfield you already hit the border with Uzbekistan.

(For such a short flight there is a lot of text. But you can read it before takeoff or even later).

Uzbekistan is, besides Liechtenstein, the only landlocked country in the world surrounded only by landlocked countries.

At first the Persians ruled the country, then Alexander the Great came and the country came under Greek influence. In late antiquity, the country was fragmented and controlled by various equestrian peoples, such as the Iranian Huns. However, the Silk Road, which ran through what is now Uzbekistan since ancient times, left its mark.

At the beginning of the 8th century, as a result of the Arab conquest of Qutaiba ibn Muslim, Islam was able to establish itself and thus the area finally belonged to the Islamic world. The following centuries were dominated by the Samanids in Bukhara (819 to 1005).

In 1220 the Mongols invaded Uzbekistan. This period is considered to be very volatile. The Mongol heirs ruled until the beginning of the 16th century. Only after that began the time of the Uzbeks proper,

a Turkic people originally from Siberia. The time of the Uzbek khanates, with the caravan trade still increasing until 1600, is considered to be a heyday of culture and science. In the 17th century, the country experienced exceptional stability under the dynasty of the Janids (1599-1785, also descendants of Genghis Khan). The Janid dynasty is considered to have a strong Muslim influence and encouraged the construction of a large number of mosques and religious schools, called Madras.

In the 19th century, Russia finally gained colonial rule over Uzbekistan. Under Russian rule, the territories in Central Asia were combined to form the Turkestan General Government. The capital became Tashkent, today's capital of Uzbekistan. In 1925, the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the two People's Republics of Khorezmia and Bukhara became the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic. The latter received the membership status of the Soviet Union in 1925.

On June 20, 1991, the country declared its independence from the USSR. President became Islom Karimov, who had already been the first party secretary in Uzbekistan since 1989 and was elected as the first president of Uzbekistan at the presidential election in Uzbekistan in 1991. He held his office as President of Uzbekistan until his death in 2016.

Uzbekistan is the world's third largest cotton exporter, a major producer of natural gas, gold, and copper, and a local producer of chemical products and machinery. In the former Soviet Union, Uzbekistan was one of the poorer areas. Per capita purchasing power has increased more than fourfold since 1991.

ANDI-Andijan

Distance:	22,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	24,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	128,4 nm
True Course:	302°
Magnetic Course:	297°

Once you have crossed the border with Uzbekistan, follow the A373 route to Andijan.

The foundation of the city of Andijan (Andijon or Andishon) dates back to the 9th century. The city developed into an important trade hub during the Silk Road period. In the second half of the 14th century it belonged to the Timurid Empire (Turko-Mongol rule); in 1375 Timur appointed a governor here. In the 15th century it was declared the provincial capital of the province of the same name. In the 18th and 19th centuries it was part of the Khanate of Kokand. In 1876 Russian forces captured the city. The Andijon uprising against the rule of Tsar Nicholas II was bloodily put down in 1898.

Today Andijon is an industrial center of electronics, textile, food industry. Cotton is grown in the surrounding area, and oil and natural gas are extracted.

KOKA-Kokand

Distance:	65,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	89,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	63,5 nm
True Course:	258°
Magnetic Course:	253°

The A373 leads west out of the city. As you follow it, you will pass over several towns, most of which were caravanserais, rest areas or trading posts on the Silk Road. The road leads you to the next waypoint of the journey, the city of Kokand.

The name Kokand, or Qo‘qon, means "good city" and is one of the oldest cities in Uzbekistan. Kokand has existed under the name Khavakand since at least the 10th century BC and was frequently mentioned in travelogues on the caravan route, between South Asia and East Asia. The Chinese Han dynasty conquered the city in the 1st century BC. Later, the Arabs conquered the region. The Mongols destroyed Kokand in the 13th century.

The present city has its real origin from 1732 as a fortress, on the site of an older fortress, called Eski-Kurgan. In 1740 it became the capital of one of the Uzbek kingdoms, the Khanate of Kokand, which extended as far west as Kyzylorda and as far northeast as Bishkek. Kokand was also the most important religious center of the Fergana Valley, with more than 300 ! Mosques.

Imperial forces of the Russian Empire, under Mikhail Skobelev, captured the city in 1883, which then became part of Russian Turkistan. After the tsar was overthrown in 1917 and the communist era began, the city was burned down by the Bolsheviks in 1918, after which an anti-Bolshevik provisional government was established there, but it ruled for only 72 days.

Sights worth seeing include the palace of Xudayar Khan, built between 1863 and 1873, as well as the Juma Mosque, built between 1809 and 1812, the Amin Beg madrasa of 1830, the Dachma-i Shohon necropolis, the Modari Mausoleum and the Hamza Museum.

The city is an industrial center where fertilizers, chemicals, machinery, textiles and food are produced. It is an important transportation hub with its airport, main railway station and long-distance bus station. Kokand is also an educational center with institutes, colleges and high schools.

USTA-Border Uzbekistan - Tatjikistan

Distance:	25,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	114,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	38,4 nm
True Course:	246°
Magnetic Course:	241°

It continues along the old Silk Road. The road you are following now is called A376 and leads west out of the city to the border with Tajikistan. You can find it easily because it is accompanied by a railroad line. The area here is densely populated and one village replaces another.

The area of today's Tajikistan was already populated since the Pleistocene. A significant evidence is found with the sites in the loess soil, at Obi-Mazar, in the south of the country, covering a period from 600,000 to 100,000 years ago.

The transition from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age and from nomadism to a settled farming culture is exemplified in Tajikistan by the Early Iron Age settlement of Sarasm, which existed from about 3500 BC to 2000 BC. During this period, Sarasm developed into one of the largest centers for the processing of tin and copper in Central Asia and for long-distance trade in metals, as far as Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley.

From the 6th century BC, the territory of Tajikistan was alternately under the rule of the Persians and the Saks, and from about 330 BC it belonged to the empire of Alexander the Great. Islam reached the region in the 8th century. During the Middle Ages, Tajikistan belonged to the Persian Empire. Tajikistan became a colony of Russia in 1868. In 1929, it was elevated to the status of Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic.

In 1991, Tajikistan declared itself independent. The state immediately became mired in the Tajik Civil War between Islamic fundamentalists and the government of Emomali Rahmonov. The civil war ended with the fundamentalists joining the government. Since then, the country has been under authoritarian rule.

The main industries in the country are mining, metal processing and agriculture. Tajikistan's economy is heavily dependent on remittances from the nearly 1 million expatriate Tajiks living and working in Russia. It is estimated that their remittances account for nearly 50% of economic output. Foreign remittances allow Tajikistan to partially offset its large trade deficit. Nevertheless, Tajikistan is one of the poorest countries in the world and was also the poorest of the former Soviet republics.

NONI-Konibodom

Distance:	4,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	118,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	34,0 nm
True Course:	195°
Magnetic Course:	190°

Let the A376 lead you to the city of Konibodom, which you can already see from the border.

The city is inhabited by Tajiks, Uzbeks, Russians and Kyrgyz. Konibodom was mentioned in documents for the first time in 1463. The name means "city of almonds" and refers to the almond trees that used to grow in the area.

Worth seeing is a unique brick minaret and two madrasas (religious schools). Around 1914, there were still eight madrasas in Konibodom and the surrounding villages, mostly dating from the 17th to 19th centuries. During the Soviet period, until 1927, four of the eight madrasas as well as many mosques were destroyed and the buildings that were not destroyed were misused. Only the oldest of them, the 16th century Mir Rajab Dochdo (Mirradjab Dodho) madrasa, was largely preserved in its structural condition.

The economy is focused on cotton processing, textile industry, livestock and food production. Crude oil production and gas exploration resumed in 2011, near Konibodom and Isfara, and is operated by the Swiss company Manas Petroleum.

UTDL-Khudzhand

Distance:	34,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	152,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	262°
Magnetic Course:	257°
Elevation:	1425 feet
Fuel:	yes

The A376 passes right through the city center and leaves the city on the southern outskirts, in a large arc, heading southwest and will bring you almost to the eastern area of the Khujand airport, your next landing site.

As you follow the A376, you will pass the large Kairakkum Reservoir, also called the "Tajik Sea." The dam at the west end provides much-needed electricity (the country suffers from shortages of electric power), but can no longer be used to its full capacity due to drought and irrigation of agricultural land. The lake has already lost a third of its volume.

The city of Khujand is located northeast of the airport and is characterized by the Silk Road.

Alexander the Great founded a first settlement under the name Alexandria Eschate (the farthest Alexandria) in May 329 B.C., although there is no clear evidence that it was located in the present-day city area. The city went through an eventful history of affiliation. For a long time it was part of the Persian Empire, was conquered by the Arabs under Qutaiba ibn Muslim in the 8th century, and then belonged to the Umayyad and Abbasid caliph empires. Later, Khujanda was under the rule of the Iranian Samanids and especially the Turkic Qarakhanids, before falling to the Khorezm Shahs in the 13th century and being destroyed by the Mongols shortly thereafter.

In the course of the Russian conquest of Central Asia, the region was annexed to Russia as early as 1866. After the October Revolution, some 14,000 city residents died in the Khujand Massacre by the Bolsheviks in February 1918, because of an attempt to prevent indigenous participation in government. In the course of the transformation of the Russian state toward the USSR, the city initially fell to Uzbekistan in 1924. Five years later, Khujand became part of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic.

Today, the city is primarily a center of textile production, with silk processing standing out.

A big problem is the transport connection of the city. It is surrounded on three sides by Uzbekistan, and to the south, towards Dushanbe, rise the Turkestan and Seravshan mountains. The 3,500 meter high passes are often impassable in winter. The region is then cut off from the rest of the country. The operation of the pass road has been entrusted to a private company; its use is very expensive. The state-run local transport networks went bankrupt after the collapse of the USSR. Local traffic is now handled by privately operated mini-buses, marshrutkas.

LEG 13: UTDL - UTSS

Departure: Khudzhand (UTDL)
Destination: Samarkand (UTSS)
Distance: 132,2 nm

TAUS-Border Tatjikistan - Uzbekistan

Distance:	17,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	17,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	114,3 nm
True Course:	266°
Magnetic Course:	261°

Now that you have risen again into the sky of Tajikistan, fly to the west. Below you, you should soon be able to see route A376 again, to your right the Syrdarja River and to the north, behind the river, the last foothills of the Turkestan Range. It is not exactly documented whether the Silk Road followed the A376 route or went directly along the Syrdarja River. No matter if you follow the river or the road - after only a few miles the A376 crosses the river and you are back in Uzbekistan. Just beyond is the town of Bekobod.

This town is one of the youngest in the country and was founded only in 1945. Bekobod was the site of POW camp 288, Begowat, for German POWs of WW2. It was opened with Stalingrad prisoners and existed only until the end of the war. A number is not known but there must have been tens of thousands so that later this city could be built.

Even younger is the town of Shirin, just behind Bekobod. It was built in 1972 for the workers who built the Farkhad Dam on the Syrdarja River.

JIZZ-Jizzax

Distance:	67,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	85,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	47,0 nm
True Course:	267°
Magnetic Course:	262°

The territory of Tajikistan extends into Uzbekistan like a long index finger. Route A376 first runs along the border and leaves it at the village of Ulyanovo. Stay above route A376, on the southern edge of the Golodnaya steppe, until you reach the town of Jizzax.

The name Jizzax (or Jizzakh) is derived from the Sogdian word for "small fortress". After the Arab conquest of Sogdia, Jizzakh served as a market town between the nomadic raiders and the sedentary farmers but also the caravans of the Silk Road. The Arabs built a series of Rabats (blockhouses) in Jizzakh, which housed Ghazis (fighters for the cause of God) to protect the population. By the 19th century, these blockhouses had become an important fortress for the Emirate of Bukhara. Russian General Mikhail Chernyaev, the "Lion of Tashkent", failed in his first attempt to take Jizzakh, but was successful in his second attempt, losing only 6 men and leaving the defenders with 6000 dead. Most of the old city was destroyed, the remaining inhabitants were expelled and Russian settlers were settled.

Modern Jizzakh is quiet, tree-lined, European, with almost nothing left from the old days. The city has two universities with a total of about 7,000 students and is home to a soccer team, Sogdiana Jizzakh, which plays in the Uzbek Super League.

UTSS-Samarkand

Distance:	47,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	132,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	238°
Magnetic Course:	232°
Elevation:	2198 feet
Fuel:	yes

If you are above the center of Jizzax, turn south and fly toward the end of the foothills of the Turkestan Mountains. There you will find route 4P38, accompanied by the Sangor River and a railroad line. This road leads over the pass of Jilanuti (Timur's Gate) and shortly after connects with route M39, which will take you to the Zeravshan Valley. Follow it until you reach Samarkand airport. Have a happy landing here and enjoy this beautiful city. There are plenty of pictures of it on the Internet.

In Samarkand, a northern side route of the Silk Road meets the main route, which starts from Xihu (Anxi region), bypasses the Tien-Shan mountains to the north and then goes to Samarkand via

Tashkent. The main route of the ancient Silk Road ends here and you will now follow the secondary route west, towards the Mediterranean and Turkey.

Samarkand (Sogdian for "stone city") is provincial capital of the province of the same name, with about 350,000 inhabitants.

Afrasiab, forerunner of Samarkand, was founded as an oasis city about 750 B.C., in the fertile plain of Serafshan. In the Achaemenid Empire it was the capital of the province of Sogdia. It became prosperous due to trade with the northern and eastern regions and its location on the Silk Road. In 329 B.C., the city known to the ancient Greeks as Marakanda was conquered by Alexander the Great. Changing rulers, such as the Kushans or the Seleucids, characterized the following centuries. In 712 A.D. it fell to the Arabs, who confirmed the city's ruler Ghurak in office; he was to rise again against the Arabs in 731, but some time later they brought the city back under their control. Samarkand subsequently became an intellectual center of the Islamic East. From the 9th century it came under the rule of the Samanids, Seljuks and Khorezm Shahs, among others; in 1220 it was conquered and destroyed by Genghis Khan's troops. In 1230, a quarter of the previous inhabitants (about 100,000 people) still lived there, most of them impoverished. Under Qaidu Khan and the administrator Masud Beg, the city recovered, by the end of the 13th century.

In the 14th century the city was rebuilt under the name of "Samarkand" but not on the old site, but about 1 kilometer southwest of the old settlement hill. The Turco-Mongol ruler Timur made Samarkand the capital of his great empire in 1369, settled 150,000 people here, namely silk weavers and armorers, and built the city into one of the most beautiful and important metropolises of its time. About 1407 to 1448 Ulugh Beg ruled, promoting the sciences and especially astronomy; governing was not his main concern.

In the second quarter of the 16th century, the capital was moved to Bukhara, Samarkand became a provincial city, and years of decline began. In the 16th century, the city had up to 100,000 inhabitants, most of whom lived from handicrafts.

Around 1700, power slipped away from the Khanate of Bukhara. Starting in 1710, the Keneges allied with the Kitai-Kipchaks and proclaimed a counter-khan in Samarkand. In the following years, and especially around 1723, large groups of Kazakhs fled from the Jungars to Bukhara and Samarkand. They allied with various Uzbek factions and many clashes ensued. Samarkand was badly devastated in 1730.

In July/September 1740, the Persians under Nader Shah conquered the Khanate and occupied Samarkand as well.

In 1868 the city officially came under Russian rule. It became the provincial capital of the Turkestan General Government. In 1925 it became the first capital of the newly created Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, but lost this function to Tashkent in 1930. Since 1991, the city has belonged to the independent Republic of Uzbekistan, of which it is the fourth largest city. It is also the administrative center of the region of the same name.

The city is the most important industrial center in Uzbekistan. The automotive industry is located in Samarkand under state management. The joint ventures SamAuto and MAN AUTO-Uzbekistan exist here. A classic branch of industry is carpet manufacturing.

The city center was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2001 under the title Samarkand - Crossroads of Cultures, partly because the architecture and cityscape are masterpieces of Islamic cultural creativity and the art, architecture and urban structure illustrate the most important periods of Central Asian cultural and political history.

This city is so full of significant sights that no attempt will be made to list them here.

LEG 14: UTSS - UTSB

Departure: Samarkand (UTSS)

Destination: Bukhara (UTSB)

Distance: 125,7 nm

NAVO-Navoiy

Distance:	80,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	80,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	45,1 nm
True Course:	290°
Magnetic Course:	285°

Take off from the runway and orient yourself to the north. Immediately north of the airport flows the Serafshan River. In the maze of roads you will not immediately recognize the M37 route. Therefore, stay a little north of the river, heading west-northwest, until you find the M37. Then follow it in the same direction.

Probably the old Silk Road followed the course of the river and not the modern developed highway. So it doesn't matter if you follow the road or the river. Both will bring you to the next bigger town, Navoiy.

UTSB-Bukhara

Distance:	45,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	125,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	240°
Magnetic Course:	235°
Elevation:	744 feet
Fuel:	yes

Route M37 now leaves the Serafshan River, but will cross it two more times later. The exact course of the Silk Road can no longer be located here. The only certainty is that it led from here to Bukhara. Now follow the course of the M37 until you reach Bukhara airport. Have a good landing there.

Bukhara is still one of the most important commercial and industrial centers of Central Asia. Most of the city's inhabitants are Tajiks and speak Tajik, the Central Asian form of Persian, as their mother tongue.

The oasis where Bukhara is located is situated in the historical landscape of Sogdia, which was initially part of the Persian Achaemenid Empire. From when the settlement of Bukhara developed and when the city was founded is unknown. The oldest pottery found in the city area dates back to the Hellenistic period, when the region was part of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom that emerged after the campaigns of Alexander the Great.

In the 7th century it belonged to the Arab empires, then to the Turkic-influenced Karakhanids and Great Seljuks. In 1220 Bukhara was conquered and largely destroyed by Genghis Khan's troops. Under his successor Ögedei Khan, the rebuilt city, repopulated by the fled inhabitants, was able to recover economically, although there is little evidence of Mongol building activity. During the further Mongol period Bukhara reached its low point and under the Timurids, in the 14th century, the city was only a provincial center in the shadow of Samarkand, located west of Bukhara.

When the Uzbek dynasty began, the city grew, became the most important in all of Central Asia, and under Abdullah II (Abdullah Khan) received numerous monuments that still define the cityscape today. However, the city was also a main slave market. The slave trade continued to take place after the middle of the 19th century. In the 18th century, the Persian Emirate of Bukhara was founded and the city again lost most of its importance. The Emirate continued to exist within the Russian Empire from 1868 to 1920. After the Red Army captured Bukhara and destroyed about 75% of the city because of resistance to the socialist system, it was incorporated into the USSR.

The historical center of Bukhara with its architectural monuments, including numerous mosques and madrasas, has been listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site since 1993. Today the city is once again a center for trade, science, culture and religion.

LEG 15: UTSB - UTAM

Departure: Bukhara (UTSB)
Destination: Mary (UTAM)
Distance: 180,6 nm

UZTU-Border Uzbekistan - Turkmenistan

Distance:	48,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	48,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	131,9 nm
True Course:	227°
Magnetic Course:	222°

Take to the air again, fly from the airport over the city center of Bukhara and turn west there. The M37 leads southwest out of the city, which you now follow to the border with Turkmenistan.

The first settlements in this country date back to the 7th millennium BC. Around 600 BC Turkmenistan was conquered by the Achaemenids and became part of their great empire. Alexander the Great conquered the area in the 4th century BC on his way to India. 150 years later, the Parthian Empire established its capital in Nisa, an area around present-day Aşgabat. In late antiquity, parts of the area were under the rule of the Sassanid Empire and the Iranian Huns. In the early 8th century, the Arabs took the region, bringing the population into contact with Islam and Middle Eastern culture. Around this time, the Silk Road developed into an important trade route between Asia and Europe.

In the 12th century, Genghis Khan, on his move to Europe, gained control of the regions east of the Caspian Sea. For the next seven centuries, the Turkmen lived under different rulers and fought tribal wars among themselves. Little is known about Turkmen history before the occupation by Russia, in the 19th century. The proclamation of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, as one of the republics of the Soviet Union, took place in 1925. The former chairman of the Communist Party, Saparmyrat

Nyýazow, led the state, after its independence in 1991, until his death in December 2006, as head of state and government, with the help of the military and a very strong secret service, extremely rigorously and established an omnipresent personality cult. The country is still ruled by an authoritarian regime.

Economically, Turkmenistan cooperates with numerous countries that have an interest in Turkmenistan's rich natural gas and oil deposits, including Russia, Turkey, Germany and the United States. Agriculturally, Turkmenistan is mainly used for the cultivation of cotton, which is predominantly the case in the north and south, where irrigated land is also available. Thanks to its raw materials, Turkmenistan is one of the most rapidly developing successor states of the Soviet Union and now has a comparatively high per capita income, unlike the other former Soviet republics.

TURK-Türkmenabat

Distance:	16,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	64,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	115,8 nm
True Course:	212°
Magnetic Course:	207°

After passing the border, continue along the A37, across the Amu Darya River, on the banks of which you can see the city of Türkmenabat.

Türkmenabat was the junction of three routes of the Great Silk Road, which led to Bukhara, Merw and via Khiva, to Kazakhstan, to the Caspian Sea. The history of Türkmenabat, now a modern industrial city, spans over 2,000 years. In ancient times it was known as Āmul (to be distinguished from the Iranian city of Amol). The river Amu Darya is said to mean River of Āmul, named after this ancient city.

The modern city was founded in 1886, when Russian Cossacks settled in Uralka, in today's eastern part of Türkmenabat, and called their settlement New-Chardjuy. The settlement there had arisen to complete the construction of the Trans-Caspian Railway.

Until 1999 Türkmenabat bore the old name: Çärjew (Turkmen) and Chardschou (Russian), respectively. Then the city was renamed Türkmenabat by the Turkmen dictator Saparmyrat Nyýazov, known for his personality cult. In the city there were more than 500 statues and large portrait paintings of the former president of Turkmenistan.

It is the second largest city of Turkmenistan with about 200,000 inhabitants, has the main port on the Amu Darya River and an international airport. It is the most important industrial center of the country. Products of the country, such as cotton and sheepskins, are processed here. There are also industries for products of daily use. The only Turkmen manufacturer of phosphorus fertilizers, the S.A. Nyyazov chemical plant, is located in Türkmenabat. There are technical schools and a university in the city.

ERKA-Erk-Kala

Distance:	101,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	166,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	14,4 nm
True Course:	219°
Magnetic Course:	214°

Passing the international airport of Türkmenabad, you will head south-southwest, following the M37 route. After a long flight over parched steppe areas, you will arrive at the excavation site of the ancient city of Merw, Erk-Kala, a fortress that provided shelter, water and provisions for the caravans of the Silk Road. It dates back to the time of the first Persian Empire.

The ancient settlement of Erk-Kala, which later became the citadel of Parthian Merw, occupied an area of about 16 hectares, was surrounded by a mud-brick wall up to 60 meters thick, and had monumental buildings in the center standing on high foundations. New excavations have shown that the oldest cultural layers of this settlement date back to at least the 6th century BC.

During the conquests of Alexander the Great, Merw was also conquered, renamed Alexandria he Margiane (Alexandria in Margiana) and developed into a Greek fortified settlement. By the Seleucid king Antiochos I the site was destroyed but rebuilt under the name of Antioch in Parthia, elsewhere, but Erk-Kala was abandoned. This city, known today as Gyaur-Kala, was ruled in the following centuries by the Parthians, then until the end of antiquity, by the Sassanids.

Despite the centuries that have passed since its construction, the fortress walls of Erk-Kala have maintained their height and strength to this day. This makes it stand out from other fortresses. The height of the walls with the clearly carved out towers is currently 25 to 29 meters.

The ruins of the city have been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

UTAM-Mary

Distance:	14,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	180,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	258°
Magnetic Course:	253°
Elevation:	727 feet
Fuel:	yes

After a short jump you will reach the city of Mery, with its airport, the next landing point of this trip.

During the Islamic expansion, the city of Merw fell to the Muslim Arabs who conquered the Sassanid Persian Empire, after which the city flourished. During the conquest under the Mongol Tolui Khan, son of Genghis Khan, in 1221, the flourishing metropolis was destroyed and the population almost completely murdered. According to some historians, more than 1 million people were killed during the siege, several hundred thousand of them refugees who had fled to the city. This makes the siege one

of the bloodiest conquests in world history. Before that, Merw was an important center of the Khorezm Shahs. Only a partial reconstruction took place, the ruins of which, located south of Sultan-Kala, are known as Abdullah-Khan-Kala.

From 1883 Merw was under Russian rule. In 1884, a Russian military and administrative center was established about 30 kilometers to the west, which was also named Merw. Since 1937, the Turkmen name Mary has been official. From 1925, the area became part of the Soviet Republic of Turkmenistan, which gained independence with the breakup of the Soviet Union.

An elaborate system of canals branching off the Murghab River irrigates the oasis. The land is known throughout the East for its fertility. All cereals and many fruits grow in great abundance, such as wheat, millet, barley and melons but also rice and cotton. Cotton seeds from archaeological layers dating back to the 5th century are the first indication that cotton textiles were already an important economic component of the Sassanid city. Silkworms were bred and traded, and the silk was processed. The Turkmen own a famous breed of horses (Turkoman horse) and keep camels, sheep, cattle, donkeys and mules. The inhabitants work in the silver and armaments industry. One discovery during excavations in the 1990s was a 9th-century workshop that produced crucible steel, which involves melting cast iron and wrought iron together.

LEG 16: UTAM - OIMM

Departure: Mary (UTAM)

Destination: Shahid Hashemi Nejad Intl (OIMM)

Distance: 163,0 nm

HANHO-Hanhowuz

Distance:	39,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	39,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	123,2 nm
True Course:	233°
Magnetic Course:	228°

After taking to the Turkmen skies again, fly to the center of the city of Mary, formerly called Merw, and look for a main road leading southwest out of the city. This is again route M37, which you follow to the village of Hanhowuz.

Well before you get to the village, you can see the Hanhowuz Reservoir, on the dam wall of which you will find the village. The Hanhowuz reservoir is part of the Kara-Kum canal system and was built to control the unpredictable Tejen River. It plays an important role in agriculture in the region and is named after the legendary Khan Oguz Han. Aral barbel, asp, and catfish are found in the water body and are also managed.

The water leaving the canal flows west to irrigate the Tedjen Oasis. On both sides of this section of the canal, many farmlands can be seen.

TUIR-Border Turkmenistan - Iran

Distance:	41,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	81,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	81,7 nm
True Course:	183°
Magnetic Course:	179°

In Hanhowuz you leave the route M37, turn south and follow the small side road that goes west of the dam first to the south, then turns to the southeast, then to the south and then to the border with Iran, through the Turkmen steppe. The place you reach is called Sarhas on the Turkmen side and Sarakh on the Iranian side. Due to the demarcation of the border, two cities have emerged from it.

Sarhas was once an important resting place along the Silk Road and in its heyday, in the 11th century, had many libraries and a famous school of architects.

Iran is virtually the successor state of the former Persian Empire.

After the Elam Empire was formed between 3200 and 2800 B.C., the Iranian Medes first united the area into one state around 625 B.C., assuming cultural and political leadership in the region. The Achaemenid dynasty, founded by Cyrus the Great, ruled the largest empire in history to that time from the 6th to the 4th centuries BC. It was destroyed in 330 BC by the troops of Alexander the Great. After Alexander, his successors divided the empire among themselves until they were replaced by the Parthians in the Iranian region, around the middle of the 3rd century BC. These were followed from about 224 A.D. by the Sassanid Empire, which until the 7th century, along with the Byzantine Empire, was one of the most powerful empires in the world. After the Islamic expansion spread to Persia, in the course of which Zoroastrianism was replaced by Islam, Persian scholars became the bearers of a golden age, until the so-called Mongol storm, in the 13th century, set the country far back in its development and fragmented the country.

The Safavids unified the country and made the Twelver Shiite creed the state religion in 1501. Persia's influence shrank under the Kajar dynasty, founded in 1794. Russia and Great Britain forced the Persians to make territorial and economic concessions. In 1906, a constitutional revolution occurred, resulting in Persia's first parliament and a constitution that provided for separation of powers. It adopted constitutional monarchy as its form of government.

Iran is a theocratic republic led by Shiite clerics, at the top of which the religious leader concentrates power. He is controlled only by the Council of Experts. In the hybrid form of state consisting of autocracy and democracy, he can undermine democratic elements at any time through the ultraconservative bodies that are subordinate to him.

The Iranian economy is characterized by strong state influence, the high importance of oil and gas exports, and international sanctions due to Iran's nuclear program. The greatest challenge for the government is to provide sufficient jobs for the large number of young people. Iran's most important economic sectors include the oil and gas industry, petrochemical industry, automotive industry, agriculture, metal industry and the production of cement and building materials.

MAZA-Mazdavand

Distance:	38,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	119,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	43,6 nm
True Course:	234°
Magnetic Course:	230°

Now follow Route 22 in a southwesterly direction. On a broken ridge lies the town of Mazdavand. On the railroad line, which partially runs next to the road, runs the Silk Road Express.

Mazdavand has an important strategic position and was considered the gateway of Sarakh for the caravans heading to Central Asia. As you fly in the opposite direction, it is the "exit" or gateway for you to the former central Persia.

Route 22, which winds over the ridge, heads southwest, then west, and in the last quarter, northwest. Look for Shahid Hashemi Nejad International Airport on the left, southeast of the city of Mashhad, and have a happy landing there.

OIMM-Shahid Hashemi Nejad Intl

Distance:	43,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	163,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	276°
Magnetic Course:	272°
Elevation:	3247 feet
Fuel:	yes

Mashhad is a political and religious center visited by more than 20 million tourists and pilgrims annually, and is Iran's second largest city. The city is considered one of the seven holy sites of Shiite Islam. The holy shrine of the eighth Shiite Imam Reza, as a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad and the only burial place of a Shiite Imam, is located there on Iranian soil. The name of the city results from the tomb and means "place of the martyr".

It was founded in the beginning of the 9th century. Besides its religious importance, as a sanctuary of Shiite Islam, the city also had great political significance in the past, when the Persian ruler Nader Shah, who ruled from 1736 to 1747, made the city his capital. The city benefited from its location on the Silk Road. Thus, it was a trading point on the route between the West and the East. The transport links through the Silk Road helped the city development, as well as for pilgrims to become attractive.

The city is located in an agricultural region; its main products are wool and the carpets made from it.

At least 1,500 years before the city of Mashhad was founded, there is only a few miles, to the northwest, the city of Tus, which was considered the largest of the whole area and was also located on the Silk Road but was destroyed several times.

LEG 17: OIMM - OIMJ

Departure: Shahid Hashemi Nejad Intl (OIMM)
Destination: Shahroud (OIMJ)
Distance: 235,0 nm

R44-Route 44

Distance:	15,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	15,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	219,9 nm
True Course:	192°
Magnetic Course:	187°

After you have raised the nose of your plane into the oriental sky, make one more loop over this beautiful city. Then turn south and fly west past the airport. Three main roads lead south out of the city. Follow Route 44, the Imam Reza Highway, which goes through the mountains on the far right. This will take you to a major highway interchange.

NISH-Nischapur

Distance:	40,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	55,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	179,5 nm
True Course:	290°
Magnetic Course:	286°

The highway curves west there and later turns northwest. Follow it to the town of Nizhapur, along the Kohandezh Mountains. At 3,300 meters, Kūh-e Sīāh Khvānī is the highest mountain in the region, where winter sports are also practiced.

During the Sassanid period (224-651), the city on the Silk Road played an important role in the transfer of knowledge between East and West. The universities of the Sassanid Empire (especially in Nisibis and Nizhapur) were devoted to medicine, law and philosophy. Greco-Roman knowledge was adopted and, conversely, knowledge also reached the West via the Sassanid Empire. The missionary activity of the Manichaeans and Nestorians in China also started here.

Nizhapur also played a key role in defending the Persian northeastern frontier against nomadic invaders from the late antique Central Asian region. In the course of Islamic expansion, the city fell to the caliphate in 650.

The city is a traditional center of ceramics and carpet production.

SABZ-Sabzevar

Distance:	54,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	110,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	124,8 nm
True Course:	269°
Magnetic Course:	265°

The road turns southwest here and leads you directly to the next city on the Silk Road, Sabzevar.

The history of Sabzevar or Sarberiz dates back to the 1st millennium BC. Among the ancient remains is the fire temple of Asarbarsin, which is still visible.

After the Mongol invasion of Iran, the city was the first part of Iran to approach its freedom under the leadership of the Sarbedaran movement.

In the 14th century, Timur (an Islamic military leader of a Turko-Mongol tribal federation based in Samarkand and conqueror) invaded Iran and completely destroyed the city. Contemporary sources mention that 90,000 people were murdered by Timur. After killing all the men in the city, he had their heads cut off and built 3 pyramids from the heads in today's market place, in Sarberiz, which means "head off!".

Sabzewar is the commercial center for an agricultural region where grapes are grown. There is a small industry for food processing, copperware and electric motors. Fresh, dried and preserved fruits and vegetables are exported through the old bazaar of Sabzewar.

OIMJ-Shahroud

Distance:	124,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	235,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	277°
Magnetic Course:	272°
Elevation:	4213 feet
Fuel:	yes

Route 44 now leads west, over a long stretch of mountainous desert terrain, where there is only in a few places sufficient water for agriculture. However, modern irrigation systems with cisterns and deep wells help here today. Many of the villages you will now fly over have developed from former caravanserais and other rest stops on the Silk Road.

Before Route 44 turns a little to the southwest, you will reach the airport of the city of Sharud. I hope you have a soft and safe landing there.

As you fly towards Sharud, you can see the Elburs Mountains to the north and the Great Salt Desert, Dasht-e Kawir, to the south. The Tash River, which supplies the city with drinking water, ends in the desert.

The origin of the city dates back about 8,000 years. During excavations, among other things, ovens and remains of tools were found. Shahrud was more of a village before the reign of Fath Ali Shah of the Kajar dynasty, which consisted of two castles and a small farm called Shabdari.

Shahrud, located on the Silk Road, forms about the halfway point between the capital and Mashhad.

The city is also known for unique grape varieties grown specifically in here. Thus, Shahrood is also known as the city of grapes, in addition to being a university city of an Islamic, technical and medical university.

LEG 18: OIMJ - OIIG

Departure: Shahroud (OIMJ)
Destination: Ghale Morghi (OIIG)
Distance: 206,0 nm

DAMG-Damghan

Distance:	40,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	40,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	165,9 nm
True Course:	247°
Magnetic Course:	242°

Route 44 takes you further along the Elburs Mountains and the great Kavir Desert. This way you will reach the city of Damghan.

Dāmghān is one of the oldest metropolises of the Iranian highlands. Some historians trace the construction of the city to the mythological King Hushang, the grandson of Kiumarz and founder of the Pīshdādiyān dynasty. By the 1st century AD, it was probably the capital of the province of Qumis, although its exact location remains disputed to this day. Due to its extensive history, the site has attracted many archaeologists, including Ernst Herzfeld. Many finds from around the city can be seen in the British Museum and the French Louvre.

Dāmghān is best known for its pistachios and thin-shelled almonds (Kāghazi).

QUMIS-Qumis

Distance:	19,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	59,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	146,9 nm
True Course:	231°
Magnetic Course:	226°

Now always following the Route 44, between mountains and desert to the small town of Shahr-e Qumis, also simply called Qumis.

Shahr-e Qumis, also called Shahr-i Qumis, also known by the Greek name Hekatompylos (translated: "City of a Hundred Gates"), is the name of a former capital of the Parthian Arsacid dynasty and the province of Komisene (Qumis). Along with Rhagae and Ctesiphon, it probably served as a seasonal residence for the Parthian kings.

The city developed from a caravanserai on the Silk Road.

According to the historian Appian of Alexandria, the city was founded by the Seleucid king Seleucus I Nicator, but it is more likely a re-foundation, since Alexander the Great had already conquered the city in the summer of 330 BC. Countless pottery shards can also be dated back to the early Iron Age.

SEMN-Semnan

Distance:	39,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	98,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	107,8 nm
True Course:	234°
Magnetic Course:	230°

The next city to which the Imam Raza Highway will lead you is Semnan.

On the outskirts of the city you can find old caravanserais from the active period of the historic and legendary Silk Road.

Semnan's proximity to the Kavir Desert has made people inventive to build numerous facilities to cope with the arid climate. Thus, there are numerous old traditional irrigation systems in Semnan, called qanat. In addition, the roofs of many buildings are decorated with wind catchers, called badgirs in Persian. However, these badgirs did not catch the wind but rainwater and were connected to a drinking water cistern. These old, traditional, clever designs and systems helped Semnan grow and prosper before modern sanitation was introduced.

ARAD-Aradan

Distance:	48,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	146,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	59,9 nm
True Course:	246°
Magnetic Course:	241°

Continue along Route 44 and reach the city of Aradan. Just before the city, the highway makes a turn to the west.

Aradan is today the name of the ancient city of Choara (Khuwar). In the 2nd century, the Arsakids annexed the city in the Parthian region. According to Naturalis historia (by the Roman historian and writer Gaius Plinius Secundusauch, also known as Pliny the Elder), Choara was "the most attractive place in Parthia". The Silk Road is locally called the Khorasan Road.

Here are the ruins of a historical castle. The castle of Aradan is one of the oldest castles in Iran. The importance of the city of Aradan in different historical periods, due to the centrality of the ruling settlement of Khar (now Garmsar) and the continuation of military, political and administrative processes on the one hand, and the center of the ruler in the castle on the other, has been of great importance. Therefore, according to the conducted research and assumptions, the mentioned fortress seems to have had a political and administrative function. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the sixth president of Iran, was born in this city.

Most of the people here live from agriculture and in particular from wine growing. Techin raisins are one of the special delicacies of this city, which are specially prepared and cooked during Muharram (New Year) ceremonies and special festivals of the locals.

PAKD-Pakdasht

Distance:	42,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	188,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	17,6 nm
True Course:	289°
Magnetic Course:	284°

Another important place on the Silk Road is Pakdasht. You can reach it by following the route 44.

Pakdasht is a center of Tehran province. This city is home to a large number of Iranian ethnic groups.

With its modern and traditional greenhouses, this city is known as the flower and plant capital of Iran. As you fly towards the city, you will be able to see some of these greenhouses and also many agricultural lands. The Jajroud River, which is dammed in the north, provides sufficient drinking water and opportunities for irrigation.

OIIG-Ghale Morghi

Distance:	17,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	206,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	304°
Magnetic Course:	300°
Elevation:	3626 feet
Fuel:	yes

Only a stone's throw separates you from the largest, most important and therefore the capital of Iran, Tehran. Make a loop over the city and find the Ghale Morghi airfield, in the south of Tehran. Have a safe landing and a pleasant stay in the city.

Tehran, with a population of about 9 million (the metropolitan area is estimated at about 20 million), is an industrial and commercial city with universities, colleges, libraries and museums, and a major economic, scientific and cultural center, as well as a major transportation hub of Iran.

The first reference to Tehran - then an insignificant orchard settlement near the important city of Rey - is the honorific suffix to its name, in the name of the scholar Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Hammad at-Tehrani ar-Razi, who died in 874 or 884. The site itself, some of whose inhabitants lived in underground or semi-subterranean passages and caves, was first mentioned in Ibn Balchi's Fars-nama, a local history and geography of the province. In this work, written between 1108 and 1116, there is a reference (as there are many other times in history) to the excellent quality of the pomegranates that were grown in Tehran.

Tehran developed into a city only during the reign of the Safavids - a ruling dynasty in Persia that ruled from 1501 to 1722 and established Shiite Islam as the state religion. Thereafter, the Turkmen-origin Kajar rulers took power. Under Fath Ali (1762-1834), the second ruler of the Kajar dynasty, in Persia, numerous mosques, madrasas and palaces were built, including the famous Golestan Palace.

In 1978, in the run-up to the Islamic Revolution, riots broke out in Tehran, which eventually ended with the overthrow of the Shah, whereupon Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989) proclaimed the Islamic Republic of Iran in February 1979. As a result, the U.S. embassy was occupied and went around the world as the Tehran hostage crisis.

LEG 19: OIIG - OIHH

Departure: Ghale Morghi (OIIG)
Destination: Hamadan (OIHH)
Distance: 152,1 nm

SHUR-Shur

Distance:	23,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	23,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	128,4 nm
True Course:	240°
Magnetic Course:	235°

From Tehran, one branch of the Silk Road leads northwest through the cities of Qazvin, Rasht, Zandjan and Tabriz, to Baku, in Azerbaijan. Another route leads south, via Yazd and Bam, to the Gulf of Oman. At this point, I have chosen the older branch, which leads to the Mediterranean Sea.

In the maze of streets in Tehran, it is almost impossible to find the right road, which roughly follows the course of the old Silk Road. So, after takeoff, fly over the center of the airport once again and set a course of 235° M. Fly into the valley until you reach the Shur River. Depending on how accurate your course was, you can see 2 roads to your right or left crossing the river in the direction of flight. The right road is Route 65 and the left road is Highway 5.

SAVEH-Saveh

Distance:	39,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	62,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	89,5 nm
True Course:	230°
Magnetic Course:	225°

From the river, follow Route 65, which most closely follows the course of the Silk Road. You will now fly into the Zagros Mountains until you reach the city of Saveh.

In the 7th century BC it was a stronghold of the Medes. During the Parthian rule over Persia it was called Saavakineh and was one of the main hubs of the empire.

In the 11th century it was a residence of the Daylamites and the Seljuks. Due to the Mongol invasion, in the 13th century it was severely damaged and rebuilt under the Ilkhanids. Saveh was again sacked by the Timurids, but later grew under the Safavids. In the summer of 1725, after a battle with Tahmasp Mirza, the city was besieged and captured by the Afghans. When Tehran became the official capital of Persia, the city lost importance and many inhabitants moved to Tehran in the middle of the 19th century.

According to Marco Polo, the Magi came from the city then called "Saba" and their tomb could still be seen there in earlier times.

In Saveh, large quantities of wheat and cotton are grown. It is also famous for its pomegranates and melons. Kaveh Industrial City, the largest industrial city in Iran, is also located there and becomes visible on the left side of the road.

OIHH-Hamadan

Distance:	89,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	152,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	265°
Magnetic Course:	260°
Elevation:	5738 feet
Fuel:	yes

Turn west over the town. The road leading southwest out of the city, Route 48, soon joins Highway 6 in parallel. As soon as you see the highway, follow it until it joins Route 37. This will take you directly to Hamadan Airport, where you can successfully complete this part of the journey. Good luck!

LEG 20: OIHH - OICC

Departure: Hamadan (OIHH)

Destination: Shahid Ashrafi Esfahani (OICC)

Distance: 87,5 nm

HAMAD-Hamadan City

Distance:	4,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	4,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	83,2 nm
True Course:	200°
Magnetic Course:	195°

After takeoff, you should be able to see the city of Hamadan (not to be confused with Ramadan) already to the south of the airport. Fly towards the city and press the pause button if necessary to read the following long text in peace or read it before takeoff.

Hamedan is considered one of the oldest Iranian cities. It is possible that it was occupied by the Assyrians in 1100 BC. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus states that it was the capital of the Medes around 700 BC.

A green mountainous area can be seen around Hamedan. The city is located on the foothills of the 3,574-meter-high Alvand Mountain and is at an altitude of 1,850 meters above sea level.

Hamadan is mentioned in the biblical book of Ezra (Ezra 6:2) as the place where a scroll was found that gave the Jews permission from King Darius to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The ancient name Ecbatana is used in the text of Ezra. Since it was a mile above sea level, it was a good place to keep leather documents.

During the Parthian period, Ctesiphon was the capital of the country, and Hamadan was the summer capital and residence of the Parthian rulers. After the Parthians, the Sassanids built their summer palaces in this city. In 642, the Battle of Nahavand took place and Hamadan fell into the hands of the Muslim Arabs.

During the reign of the Buyid dynasty, the city suffered great damage. However, under the rule of the Buyid ruler Fanna Khusraw, the city regained its former glory. In the 11th century, the Seljuks moved their capital from Baghdad to Hamadan. In 1220, Hamadan was destroyed by the Mongols, during the Mongol invasions of Georgia and before the Battle of Khunan. The city of Hamadan, whose fate depended on the rise and fall of regional powers, was completely destroyed during the Timurid invasions, but later flourished again.

Afterwards, in the 18th century, Hamadan was ceded to the Ottomans but thanks to the efforts of Nader Shah, Hamadan was liberated from the invaders and as a result of a peace treaty between Iran and the Ottomans, returned to Iran.

Since ancient times, Hamadan was famous as a trade center on the Silk Road for grapes, poppies (opium), furs and carpets. Today, Hamadan has industry as well as agriculture, but the infrastructure seems less developed than it is in most of the rest of Iran.

The city made more income with the pilgrimage to its sights, for example to the supposed grave of the biblical figures Mordechai and Esther, with an old Torah scroll, with the tomb Gonbad-e Alavian, or the burial place of the Avicenna mausoleum, the great oriental scholar Avicenna (Ibn Sina), visible from afar.

R48-Route 48

Distance:	10,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	14,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	73,3 nm
True Course:	310°
Magnetic Course:	305°

After checking out the town, turn northwest and follow the main road that runs east of the mountains. It is Route 48, which soon meets Route 46.

SENA-Serahi Nahavand

Distance:	36,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	51,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	36,5 nm
True Course:	220°
Magnetic Course:	215°

Where Route 46 joins Route 48, turn slightly left and continue to follow Route 48. Many streams from the mountains and the mild climate allow for productive agriculture in the valleys and plateaus. After some time, at the village of Serahi Nahavand, Route 52 joins Route 48.

OICC-Shahid Ashrafi Esfahani

Distance:	36,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	87,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	262°
Magnetic Course:	257°
Elevation:	4300 feet
Fuel:	yes

Turn a little right at Serahi Nahavand and follow Route 48 to Kermānschāh Airport, Shahid Ashrafi Esfahani. Have a good landing there and some time to rest.

According to Iranian historian Hamdollah Mostowfi, Kermanshah, was founded in the 4th century, during the reign of Sassanid Bahram IV. The latter, as the former governor of Kerman, had received the title of Kerman Shah. The name of the city is derived from this title. Other sources such as al-Muqaddasi name King Kavadh I as the founder.

In the course of its history, Kermanshah was occupied many times by foreign troops. Thus, after the conquest of Hulwan in 640 by the Muslim Arabs, Kermanshah was also taken by the Arabs. In the 11th century, the Seljuks conquered the city. Until the 15th century, Kermanshah did not have a significant position. With the rise of the Safavids, Kermanshah became a border city between the Safavids and the Ottoman Empire. Between 1590 and 1602, the city fell to the Ottomans. From the 17th century, the Kurdish tribe of Zangana provided the city administrators. Kermanshah became the most important city of Persian Kurdistan.

In 1909, a pogrom against Jews occurred in Kermanshah. The Alliance Israélite Universelle bulletin also reported solidarity with the victims: "Muslims sent bread to the Jewish quarter, they gave our co-religionists blankets and mattresses for the night."

Kermanshah is one of Iran's western agricultural cores, producing grains, rice, vegetables, fruits and oilseeds. In addition, Kermanshah is developing into a fairly important industrial city. There are two industrial centers in the suburbs of the city with more than 256 production units. These industries include petrochemical refineries, textile manufacturing, food processing, carpet manufacturing, sugar refineries, and electrical equipment and tool manufacturing. Kermanshah Oil Refining Company (KORC) was established in 1932 by British companies and is one of the most important industries in the city. Following recent changes in Iraq, Kermanshah has become one of Iran's main import and export gateways.

LEG 21: OICC - OR1A

Departure: Shahid Ashrafi Esfahani (OICC)

Destination: Rasheed (OR1A)

Distance: 231,0 nm

HOLE-Holeylan

Distance:	40,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	40,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	191,0 nm
True Course:	187°
Magnetic Course:	182°

One of the oldest passes over the Zagros Mountains, probably used by the Silk Road caravans, is the Pass of Ilam.

After takeoff, fly into the center of the city, turn south, and look for 2 roads that run along the southern city limits to the left and right of a southbound mountain range and join behind it.

From the southeast, Route 21 connects to the major road junction. Follow this road to Holeylan.

ILAM-Ilam

Distance:	33,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	73,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	157,9 nm
True Course:	264°
Magnetic Course:	260°

At Holeylan you will meet the Seimare River and, a little south of the village, a road junction where Route 19 joins 21. Follow 21, which accompanies the river for a bit, first in a southerly direction and a little later in a westerly direction, turning south just before the pass. As you fly over the pass, you will already be able to see the town.

Although the history of the city of Ilam only goes back to the 19th century, a little south of the city, box tombs dating back to 1100-750 BC have been discovered, which belonged to the village of Deh-e Bala, which no longer exists.

IRIR-Border Iran - Iraq

Distance:	35,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	108,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	122,7 nm
True Course:	210°
Magnetic Course:	205°

South of Ilad, Route 17 leads out of the city. Follow the road until you reach the border with Iraq.

Maybe you should press the pause button at this point to read in peace. Especially the last paragraph is very important to me.

Iraq is located on the territory of ancient Mesopotamia (Arabic: "between the two rivers"). Here, from the 4th millennium BC onwards, some of the earliest advanced civilizations of mankind emerged (Sumer, Akkad, Assyria, Babylonia, Mittani, Media), which is why the region is seen by many today as the cradle of civilization.

After the Battle of Kadesia in 636, the Arab Muslims seized the area. Iraq became an important cultural center for the spread of Islam. Baghdad was founded in 762 by al-Mansur as the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate and soon became the most important city in the Islamic world. The following period is also referred to as the golden age of Islam, in which science and the arts in particular developed to a much higher level than in Europe, for example.

In 1401, Baghdad was devastated by Timur, and in 1534 the country fell to the Ottoman Empire. Iraq long remained an insignificant sideshow. However, its geostrategic position on the intersection routes between Europe, British India, Central Asia, the Caucasus and southern Arabia made it an object of

world political interest from World War I onward. During World War I, British troops and Arab insurgents invaded and occupied Baghdad together.

In 1920, Britain carved out of the former Ottoman Empire the territories around Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra and merged them into what is now Iraq. Confirmed by the League of Nations, the British Mandate of Mesopotamia was established. On August 23, 1921, Faisal, son of Sheriff Hussein of Mecca, was proclaimed king. The Kingdom of Iraq was admitted to the League of Nations on October 3, 1932.

During World War 2, there was an anti-British coup, but it was put down by the British army.

After a coup d'état, in 1958, the king was assassinated, the monarchy abolished and the Republic of Iraq proclaimed. The last British soldiers left the country on March 24, 1959.

After the Baath Party coup, 1963, diplomatic relations with the United States were severed. Once the Baath Party was in power, mass executions and arbitrary arrests followed, especially of communist and other left-leaning intellectuals. Especially after Saddam Hussein came to power following al-Bakr's resignation on July 16, 1979, there were massive human rights violations, to which many Baathists also fell victim.

After months of conflict with Iran, Hussein ordered the Iraqi army to attack the neighboring country with nine of a total of twelve divisions on September 22, 1980. After initial successes, the Iraqi army was forced to retreat further and further from 1982 onward, finally waging war in its own country from 1984 onward. This First Gulf War lasted until 1988 and cost an estimated 250,000 Iraqis their lives. In this war, the state also used chemical warfare agents several times, both against the Iranians and against its own population.

On August 2, 1990, the Iraqi army invaded and occupied Kuwait. Only through the intervention of international forces, led by the United States, was the country liberated, in February 1991, in the Second Gulf War. The U.S. leadership used the incubator lie to mobilize its policy, allies, and population. As a result of the occupation, the United Nations imposed sanctions on the country, which led to international isolation and, through the mismanagement of permitted trade goods, to the impoverishment of large segments of the population.

The suppression of the Shiite uprising,1991, produced a genocide of 60,000-100,000 (up to 300,000 according to other estimates) dead. Government forces at the time did not just end the uprising by military means. They also spread terror by arbitrarily rounding up and executing civilians in Shiite towns. The mass graves from this period were not discovered until after the fall of the regime in 2003.

On March 20, 2003, the Iraq war began with air strikes on the capital, Baghdad. In May 2003, U.S. President Bush declared major combat operations over and Iraq was divided into occupation zones with the approval of the UN Security Council. After the formation of a transitional council, administrative authority was transferred to a representative Iraqi interim government on June 28, 2004. Democratic parliamentary elections were later held.

On October 15, 2006, al-Qaeda in Iraq proclaimed an Islamic state that would encompass a total of six provinces. Death squads targeted Shiites in Iraq. Terrorist attacks waged by Sunnis and Shiites against each other, but primarily the direct and indirect consequences of the U.S. occupation, claimed between 100,000 and 1,000,000 lives by 2008, depending on the study. Most of the deaths occurred as a result of targeted violence between Sunnis and Shiites.

In the ensuing war, against IS, Iraqi forces and the Popular Mobilization Forces (alHashd ash-Shayʿbī), backed by an international alliance, succeeded in pushing back the so-called Islamic State. The battle for Mosul ended in June 2017, with the recapture of the city. In December 2017, Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi announced victory over IS.

The political situation in Iraq remains unstable to this day. The main reason is the ethno-religious differences of the three parts of the country, in the former Ottoman provinces of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra, which means Kurds and Turkmen in the north, Sunni Arabs in the center of the country and Shiites in the south.

Now that was a lot of stuff, especially as it relates to the recent history of the country. But it affects all of us. When the political situation is unstable and causes conflict, it is not only the people who are directly affected who suffer. With limited local economies left, the global economy also suffers from

shortages and inflation. Human and economic resources are used to destroy rather than to sustain and heal this world, which is more threatened than ever.

*** Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version) ***

KUT-Kut

Distance:	38,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	146,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	84,6 nm
True Course:	199°
Magnetic Course:	194°

After crossing the border at Meheran, follow the same road, which is now called Route 15. After a few miles, it connects to Route 13. Turn northwest there, cross the Nahr Mirzabad River, and follow Route 13, which shortly after turns southwest, to the town of Kut on the Tigris River.

The medieval city of Madharaya was located on the site of modern Kut. The city is located in a fertile area where cereals are traditionally grown. In addition, the city was long an important trading center for carpets on the Silk Road.

MAHU-Mahuza

Distance:	70,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	217,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	14,0 nm
True Course:	299°
Magnetic Course:	295°

It is no longer clear whether the Silk Road ran along the left or right bank of the Tigris. But the fact is that there was enough water, resting places and enough food for the pack animals, which did not have to be bought in caravanserais. So follow the river, along which there is a road on the left and on the right. Behind the 4th bridge, which crosses the Tigris, is the city of Mahuza.

In place of today's Mahuza was the ancient Seleukeia-Ctesiphon, founded by Greeks. The city existed approximately from the 4th century BC to the 8th century AD. The double metropolis was already important under the Seleucids, before it subsequently became the main residence of the Arsakids (Parthian Empire) and the Sassanids. In late antiquity, it was the center of East Syriac or Chaldean Christianity, from which the Assyrian Church of the East emerged.

SELE-Seleucia

Distance:	3,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	219,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	11,1 nm
True Course:	274°
Magnetic Course:	269°

Turn left, fly over the Tigris River and immediately you will look at the excavation site of the ancient city of Seleucia, which was also an important city on the Silk Road.

Seleucia, also known as Seleucia on the Tigris, was a major Mesopotamian city on the west bank of the Tigris. It was founded around 305 BC by Seleucus I Nicator (Macedonian general under Alexander the Great and later king of the Seleucid Empire, which he himself founded) as the first capital of the Seleucid Empire and remained an important center of trade and Hellenistic culture after the imperial capital was moved to Antioch. The city continued to flourish under Parthian rule from 141 BC. Ancient texts claim that it reached a population of 600,000. Seleucia was destroyed in 165 by the Roman general Avidius Cassius and gradually fell into oblivion in the following centuries. The site was rediscovered by archaeologists in the 1920s.

OR1A-Rasheed

Distance:	11,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	231,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	353°
Magnetic Course:	348°
Elevation:	106 feet
Fuel:	yes

Just a few miles further, the Sirwan River flows into the Tigris and you are above the city of Baghdad. North of the confluence you will find Rasheed Airfield. Have a safe landing here.

Baghdad, this fairy tale city of 1001 nights, whose name means "God's gift", with a very eventful history....

Baghdad was founded on July 30, 762 as Madīnat as-Salām, meaning "City of Peace," by the Abbasid al-Mansur as the new capital of the caliphate. It was established only a few kilometers away from the old capital of the Sassanid Empire, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, which you just flew over. Due to its conveniently chosen location, at the junction of numerous trade routes and fertile cultivation areas, and thanks to its proximity to the Tigris River, the newly founded city quickly flourished.

In 1258 it was conquered by the Mongols, under Hülegü, after a short siege. The Mongols killed the last caliph, al-Musta'sim bi-'llah, in February 1258 and, according to eyewitness accounts, committed unimaginable atrocities. Sources report a pyramid of skulls.

More importantly, however, in connection with this conquest of Baghdad and Mesopotamia, both the defending Mamelukes and the Mongols destroyed the country's highly complex irrigation systems. The consequences of this destruction were compounded, by the displacement of the local population and the consequent loss of knowledge about the operation and maintenance of the irrigation system. The drying up of the soil in Mesopotamia set in, and Baghdad, previously the second largest city in the world, sank into insignificance along with all of Mesopotamia.

After that, in 1401, Baghdad was again stormed and sacked by Timur Lenk. From the 16th century, the city alternated a few times between Ottoman and Persian rule. In the 18th century, the pashas of Baghdad, with the Mamluks, gained extensive autonomy, but still had to recognize the suzerainty of the Ottomans.

In 1831, Baghdad was again occupied by Ottoman troops and returned to central administration after a plague epidemic significantly weakened the dynasty's rule. In Baghdad, only 27,000 people had survived out of a population of 80,000.

The Ottoman constitution of 1876 proclaimed Islam as the state religion, but gave equal political rights to the Jewish and Christian populations and allowed them access to public office. By this time, Baghdad was a cosmopolitan and multinational city. Among the Muslims, the Shiites and Sunnis were represented in fairly equal numbers. Alongside them were found many Jews, who were among the wealthiest merchants and businessmen (about 1300 families with three synagogues), Christians (Armenians, Jacobites, Nestorians, Greeks, about 300 families). Persians and Indians were also strongly represented.

This peace lasted until 1941, when there were Arab nationalist motivated pogroms against the Jewish population, while the British troops present did nothing about it. The surviving Jews were then flown out to Israel.

By the way, research has shown that the stories from 1001 Nights are of Indian origin, which were then retold and written down in the style of Mesopotamian culture. It stands to reason that these stories also reached us via the Silk Road.

LEG 22: OR1A - OSHA

Departure: Rasheed (OR1A)
Destination: Hajin Airport (OSHA)
Distance: 225,0 nm

FALL-Fallujah

Distance:	35,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	35,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	189,3 nm
True Course:	277°
Magnetic Course:	273°

In Baghdad, the Silk Road again splits into secondary routes. One secondary route runs north, along the Tigris River, via Baqubah, Samarra, Erbil, and Mosul (biblical Nineveh), to Trabzon on the Black Sea. Another route runs south, via Hamza and Basra, to the Persian Gulf. You will now continue to follow the route to the west, to the Mediterranean Sea, which was considered the main route in the Orient at that time.

After you can see Baghdad again from the air, orient yourself to the west, cross the Tigris and look for the big international airport. Just north of the airport area, Route 11 heads west, leading you to the city of Fallujah, on the Euphrates River.

Fallujah is also known as the "City of Mosques" because of the large number of mosques in and around the city.

Fallujah already existed in the times of the Babylonian Empire. The Academy of Pumbedita, as the city was called in Aramaic, was the world's most important center of Jewish learning until the 11th century.

It was also an important resting place for the caravans, since in ancient times there was only desert between Fallujah and Baghdad.

RAMAD-Ramadi

Distance:	27,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	63,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	162,0 nm
True Course:	284°
Magnetic Course:	279°

Also along the Euphrates there are many settlements - towns and villages - which have developed only through the Silk Road. From now on, keep flying along the river until the Silk Road leaves the friendly, water-giving Euphrates.

The next important city on the Silk Road is Ramadi.

Ramadi is located in the Sunni triangle of Iraq. When the British explorer Francis Rawdon Chesney came through in 1836 on an expedition to test the navigability of the Euphrates in a steam-powered boat, there was already a settlement in the area. He described it as a "pretty little town" and noted that the black tents of the Bedouins could be seen on both banks of the river from Ramadi to Fallujah.

The modern city was founded in 1869 by Midhat Pasha, the Ottoman wali (governor) of Baghdad. The Ottomans sought to control the previously nomadic Dulaim tribe in the region, as part of a program to settle Bedouin tribes in Iraq through land grants, believing this would tie them more closely to the state and make them easier to control.

Ramadi was described in 1892 as "the most up-and-coming city in the whole Euphrates Valley." "It has a telegraph office and large government buildings. The bazaars are very large and well filled." Sir John Bagot Glubb (Glubb Pasha) was sent there in 1922 to maintain "a rickety floating bridge across the river (Euphrates), carried on boats, made of reeds coated with bitumen," as he put it. By this time, the Dulaim were mostly settled, although they had not yet fully adopted an urban lifestyle. Glubb described them as "arable farmers on the banks of the Euphrates who irrigated their wheat, barley, and date palms with the aid of kerids, water lifts operated by horses." A British military manual published during World War I noted that "some European travelers considered the inhabitants of Rumadiyah (Ramadi) fanatical."

HIT-Hit

Distance:	24,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	87,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	137,7 nm
True Course:	297°
Magnetic Course:	292°

The river leads you further to the city of Hīt.

The city was built on two hills near the ancient settlement of Is, which was located on the river Is of the same name, a tributary of the Euphrates. The site was known in pre-industrial history for easily tapped deposits of bitumen. As early as the 3rd millennium B.C., the raw material was mined in Mesopotamia and used to seal wickerwork and as a raw material for bricks; later, it was also used to calf ships and as a fuel. Around 2000 BC, bitumen is said to have been exported from the city as far as Egypt.

In the 4th century, the city was plundered by Romans during campaigns and then by Persians. In the Abbasid period, Hīt was then a fortified town, controlling about thirty villages in the surrounding area.

Since the death of the Islamic scholar Abdallāh ibn al-Mubārak (736-794), his tomb has been venerated in Hīt.

In addition to bitumen, sulfur also seeps to the earth's surface, giving the city a reputation for smelling bad. The Jaladiya quarry, northwest of the city, provides good quality limestone. River boats are also built and there is a saltworks, southwest of the city.

HADAM-Haditha Dam

Distance:	41,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	128,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	96,7 nm
True Course:	325°
Magnetic Course:	320°

Along the Euphrates there are many other more or less important places that could be connected with the Silk Road. It is too tedious to research all of them. Therefore, there is now a bigger jump to the dam of Haditha.

The dam, with its 660 MW hydroelectric plant, is the second largest hydroelectric generator in Iraq, after the Mosul Dam. The Haditha hydropower plant has six turbines. The reservoir is called al-Qadisiya, Buhayrat al-Qadisiya, or Lake Qadisiyah. The dam, a structure made of earth fill material, was built between 1976 and 1986 by the Yugoslav company Hidrogradnja Sarajevo.

ANAH-Anah

Distance:	20,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	149,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	75,9 nm
True Course:	300°
Magnetic Course:	295°

Fly over the reservoir and keep to the southern bank until you reach the mouth of the Euphrates River and a little further, to the city of Anah.

The history of this city dates back to the Bronze Age, as evidenced by excavations. Under Hammurapi of Babylon, the city was under Babylonian control and was included in the Sūḫu governorate. Later, the city was under Assyrian and then Ottoman rule.

Throughout early Islamic rule, it was a prosperous trading city on the Silk Road, known for its date palms and gardens. In the 14th century, the scholar Mustafi wrote of the fame of its palm groves. Medieval Arab poets celebrated Anah's wine.

In 1574 Leonhart Rauwolff, a German naturalist, botanist, physician and explorer, found the city divided into two parts. There was the Turkish part "so surrounded by the river that it can be reached only by boats" and the larger Arab part, on the other bank. Anah was currently the most important Arab city on the Euphrates, controlling a main route west of Baghdad and the area through which Palmyra, in Syria, could be reached.

IRSY-Border Iraq - Syria

Distance:	50,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	199,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	25,6 nm
True Course:	272°
Magnetic Course:	266°

As you continue to follow the Euphrates River, you can see Route 12 to the left, which will lead you to the Rasela border crossing.

The oldest archaeological findings on the territory of today's Syria are about one million years old and date back to the Paleolithic Age. From the middle of the 3rd millennium BC, Semitic-speaking peoples are believed to have lived there: Arameans, Amorites and Canaanites. Its location between Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Egypt caused changing overlordship by Akkadians, Mitanni, Hittites, Egyptians, Assyrians and Persians. After the conquest by Alexander the Great, Syria belonged to the Seleucid Empire from 301 to 64 BC. In the Roman Empire (from 64 B.C.) Syria was, along with Egypt, the richest and most influential province of the empire. Eastern Roman rule ended in the 7th century with the conquest by the Arab Umayyads.

The capital of the Islamic empire, Damascus, became the third Holy City of Islam, along with Mecca and Jerusalem. In 877, Syria fell into dependence on Egypt, which lasted, with interruptions, for more than 600 years. During this period, the Crusader states developed on Syrian soil, including the north (Aleppo and Antioch).

In 1260, the Mongols conquered the country, but suffered defeat at the hands of the Mamluks, who defended Syria with Egypt. The Mamluk rule lasted until 1516, when Syria became part of the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman Kingdom, to which it belonged until 1918. The Hashemite Prince Faisal's hopes of obtaining the planned kingdom of "Greater Syria" failed because of France, which obtained the League of Nations mandate for Syria and Lebanon and maintained its rule in Syria (present-day Syria is a creation of the French colonial period) until April 17 (National Day) 1946, when Syria gained independence and the Syrian Arab Republic was proclaimed.

Protests against Assad's government began in March 2011 and escalated into a civil war over the months. Since the war began, 400,000 people have been killed, United Nations (UN) Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimated in April 2016. Some 13 million Syrians are displaced inside or outside Syria. There are several groups fighting each other inside the country. The Free Syrian Army is supplied with weapons by the Turkish government and by the U.S. government, while the Assad regime is supplied with weapons, resources, and fighting units by the Russian government. Although the civil war in Syria has been decided for the Assad regime, the country remains far from a political

settlement of the conflict and pacification to this day. "Only one thing has remained of the old Syria, and that is Assad," comments a Turkish daily.

DUEU-Dura Europos

Distance:	24,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	223,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	1,3 nm
True Course:	330°
Magnetic Course:	325°

Continue flying along the Euphrates and keep an eye on the road route 4 running on the left side. Along the road you will be able to spot the Hajin airfield. But before landing, look to the east. Between the airfield and the Euphrates you can see the city of Dura Europos.

Dura Europos, was a Greek-Hellenistic city. It was founded in the period of the Eastern Diadochic Empire - called Seleucid Empire after its first king Seleucus I (358-281 BC) - that was established there after the death of Alexander the Great. Dura Europos was expanded into a larger site in the Greek architectural style and developed - especially in the later Parthian period - into the administrative and economic center of the region.

Some sources lead to the view that it was an important trading city on the way from Palmyra to the Euphrates and thus on the Silk Road, whose main route did not end in Samarkand but in Dura Europos. Other sources state that this view is not supported by written sources. From a purely historiographical point of view, this is correct. For everything that cannot be supported by written sources is non-existent. What is certain, however, is that the Silk Road ran along the Euphrates and touched the city in some way. How important this city should have been, remains to be seen.

The initially small city received a strongly fortified citadel. Under Antiochos I. even coins were minted here for a short time. The city experienced its heyday especially in the first and second century AD. The whole area of the city, within the walls, was now completely populated and then lost its military character. The rich citizens built or extended the numerous temples and decorated them with statues and paintings. These temple buildings prove a considerable prosperity of the inhabitants. The population was a mixture of a small Greek upper class, which in the course of time adopted Parthian customs, a Syrian majority and numerous other ethnic and linguistic groups, including many Jews. Economically, the city was closely linked to the Roman Empire. Roman coins in particular dominated over Parthian coinage. Culturally, however, the city was more Parthian in character. The city belonged to the Roman Empire at least since the emperors of the Severan dynasty, as a border fortress, was conquered and destroyed by the Sassanids around 256 and probably abandoned forever in 273.

OSHA-Hajin Airport

Distance:	1,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	225,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	227°
Magnetic Course:	222°
Elevation:	751 feet
Fuel:	no

Land now at the small Hajin airfield, which has only a short sand runway. Have a safe landing there.

LEG 23: OSHA - OS59

Departure: Hajin Airport (OSHA)

Destination: Tabqa (OS59)

Distance: 137,3 nm

DEZO-Deir es-Zor

Distance:	45,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	45,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	91,7 nm
True Course:	323°
Magnetic Course:	318°

After taking off on the short runway, follow the Euphrates to the northwest. After some time you will see Deirezzor airport on the left side of the river. A little further, on the river bank, is the city of Deir ez-Zor.

At the time of the Roman Empire, an important trading post on the Silk Road, along the Euphrates River, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sassanid Empire, was located in the current city area. Roman fortifications on this route existed 50 kilometers northwest of Halabiya and southeast of Dura Europos. After these stations were conquered by Queen Zenobia, the city belonged to Palmyra's dominion for a few years. The town was destroyed in the 13th century by the Mongols, in the course of the Mongol Storm. In Ottoman times, the town was called Deyrizor and was the headquarters of Zor Sandzak.

Today, the city is the capital of the Deir ez-Zor governorate of the same name.

Founded in 2006, al-Furat University is partially based in the city. Its faculties of agriculture, natural sciences, arts, social sciences, education, law, petrochemical engineering, and medicine are located

in the city, while other faculties are housed in neighboring districts. There are also vocational schools and other post-secondary training institutions.

The Armenian Genocide Memorial Church in Deir ez-Zor was destroyed by the "Islamic State" in 2014. Previously, it had been a major Armenian pilgrimage site, especially for the annual commemoration of the genocide of Christian Armenians. Genocide Memorial Day, on April 24, is a national day of mourning in Armenia and in the Republic of Arzakh. It is also observed as a national day of remembrance in France, in California and by the Armenian Diaspora worldwide. It commemorates the deportation of Armenian intellectuals, April 24, 1915, from the Ottoman capital of Istanbul. It was the prelude to the genocide of Christian Armenians. Governments of 30 countries worldwide refer to the massacres, from 1915 to 1923, as genocide.

ARRA-Ar-Raqqa

Distance:	67,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	113,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	24,3 nm
True Course:	303°
Magnetic Course:	298°

Continue flying along the Euphrates. The first bridge, which can be seen after about 30 nautical miles, is behind the old ruined fortress of Halabiyat and in front of the Ssyrian nuclear power plant. The next two bridges belong to the city of Ar-Raqqa.

The present city is a new foundation from the beginning of the 20th century, on the place where an Abbasid city existed in the beginning of the 8th century.

The earliest city foundation was Tuttul, whose heyday began after the middle of the 3rd millennium and lasted until the Old Babylonian Empire in the 17th century BC. In the early Hellenistic period the next city foundation took place with the Seleucid Nikephorion, around 300 BC. The place belonged to the Parthian Empire for a long time and then to the Roman Empire since 198. During the Roman period, the important commercial center was called Callinicum (Kallinikon) and in late antiquity it was a border town with the Persian Sassanid Empire, with a strong fortress. In 639, Muslim Arabs conquered the city and renamed it ar-Raqqa (river lowland).

Little is known about the Roman and later Byzantine city itself. There may have been at least two monasteries, one of which was located on the settlement mound called Tell Bi'a in Arabic, which translates as "church mound." A larger Jewish community gathered in the synagogue, whose existence is reported in the mid-12th century by Benjamin of Tudela, the most important Jewish traveler of the Middle Ages.

Somewhere between Deir ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, which is impossible to locate, there was another branch of the Silk Road to the southwest, leading to Palmyra. From Palmyra, as a junction, other secondary routes led via Damascus to Egypt and via Homs, to the port city of Tartus, located on the Middle Sea.

OS59-Tabqa

Distance:	24,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	137,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	240°
Magnetic Course:	235°
Elevation:	1095 feet
Fuel:	yes

Further upstream, you will come to the Albaath Dam, a barrage behind the Tabqa Dam that impounds Lake Assad. South of the dam runs Route 4, which you now follow for a while until you see Tabqa Airport, a military airport, on the left of the road. Have a happy landing here and check in between how much fuel is left in the tank.

LEG 24: OS59 - LTDA

Departure: Tabqa (OS59)
Destination: Hatay (LTDA)
Distance: 142,3 nm

TABQA-Tabqa Dam

Distance:	6,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	6,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	136,0 nm
True Course:	357°
Magnetic Course:	352°

It is obvious that the Silk Road from Ar-Raqqa to Aleppo first followed the river Euphrates and then went west, through the steppe, to Aleppo. Today, the path along the Euphrates is flooded by the Assad reservoir, which you will therefore fly over in a moment.

So get back in the air and head for the Tabqa Dam, which lies to the north.

The dam is used to generate electricity in a hydroelectric power plant with an installed capacity of 824 MW. In addition, the dam is used to regulate water for irrigation of fields, along the Euphrates River, downstream to the Iraqi border. The dam was built from March 1968 to 1974 with Soviet financial and technical assistance. Beginning in 1973, the river was dammed and finally inaugurated by President Hafiz al-Assad, for whom the reservoir is named, in 1993. Lake Assad is Syria's largest lake with a maximum capacity of eleven cubic kilometers.

The construction of the Tabqa Dam nearly led to a war with Iraq in 1974/75 because Iraq felt cut off from its water supply. In addition, Turkey holds back water with the Ataturk and Keban dams.

Lake Assad flooded a number of important archaeological sites, including Bronze Age Emar and the burial site of Sulaiman Shah.

BABI-Babiri Channel

Distance:	29,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	35,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	106,9 nm
True Course:	299°
Magnetic Course:	294°

Turn northwest and fly over the length of the reservoir. After some time, you will see the well-built mouth of the Babiri Canal on the left bank, with a few clearly visible pipelines belonging to a pumping station.

ALEP-Aleppo City

Distance:	44,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	79,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	62,5 nm
True Course:	278°
Magnetic Course:	273°

Turn left, follow the canal a bit and you will soon see Jirah Airport. South of the airport, route A4 runs in a westerly direction, leading you into Aleppo.

Aleppo (Arabic Ḥalab; French Alep; Kurdish Heleb; Turkish Halep; Aramaic Halab; occasionally Haleb; in ancient times temporarily Beroia) is the capital of the Aleppo governorate of the same name. In 2006 Aleppo became the first place, after Mecca, to receive the designation Capital of Islamic Culture.

At the end of the 19th century BC Aleppo appears in the sources for the first time. At that time it was the capital of the state of Jamchad, which dominated northern Syria from here on, until the 2nd half of the 17th century BC. After that, the Hittites took over, then the Arameans, and from 610 BC a period of Persian rule followed. Alexander the Great occupied Aleppo in 333 BC and Seleucus I Nicator established a Macedonian colony there in 301-281, named Beroia. This fortified colony with a square ground plan was given streets laid out at right angles, and its basic form continued to shape the cityscape of Aleppo for later times. In 100 BC Syria was conquered by the Armenian Empire and in 64 BC by the Romans.

In 540 it was under Byzantine rule, then under Arab rule, then again under Arab rule and once more under Byzantine rule. After the city successfully defended itself against the Crusaders, Aleppo fell to the Ayyubid Sultan Saladin. Aleppo remained in Ayyubid hands until, like much of northern Syria, it was conquered and devastated by the Mongols under Hülegü in 1260. From 1260 to 1516, the city was part of the Mamluk Empire. The citadel was rebuilt in 1292 but destroyed again around 1400 by Timur.

From 1517 to 1917 Aleppo became part of the Ottoman Empire. The city briefly flourished again when it came under French colonial rule after the end of World War 1. During World War 1, Aleppo was a center in the genocide of Armenians by the Young Turks. In 1947, pogroms against the city's Jews occurred, resulting in the deaths of up to 75 Jewish citizens, the city's main synagogue was destroyed, and the Codex of Aleppo, dating from the 9th century, was temporarily lost and has only been recovered in pieces to this day.

In 1986, UNESCO declared Aleppo's Old City, whose center is named after the Saudi Arabian medina, a World Heritage Site.

The city was historically important primarily as a trading center. It was located at the crossroads of two trade routes and mediated trade from India, the Euphrates and Tigris regions to Damascus in the south, which followed the foot of the mountains, rather than the impassable coastal route. In addition, an important branch of the Silk Road led west, to the capital of the then Ottoman Empire, Istanbul. Since the early Middle Ages, Aleppo has produced the handmade "Aleppo soap", based on olive oil, which is not only appreciated and well-known in the Orient.

In 2008, the city had almost 1.7 million inhabitants within its borders, and in 2010 it had about 2.5 million inhabitants including suburbs. It was thus the second largest city in Syria after Damascus.

In the course of Syria's civil war, Aleppo saw fierce fighting in 2012. In this fighting, rocket launchers, tanks, helicopters and fighter planes were used by troops loyal to the dictator's regime and by the allied Russian army. In September 2012, shelling largely destroyed the historic bazaar in a major fire. This bazaar was the world's largest covered ancient market district and part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. A tank shell severely damaged the minaret of the 700-year-old Mahmandar Mosque. The nearly 500-year-old Khusrawiyya Mosque was destroyed in 2014.

Massive Russian airstrikes on Aleppo, in February 2016, triggered a wave of refugees to Turkey. On July 27, 2016, pro-government and Russian forces, by their own account, succeeded in closing the siege ring around neighborhoods still held by freedom fighters. Some 300,000 people were trapped in urban areas of Aleppo under the control of moderate groups, according to United Nations estimates. An offer by the government and its Russian allies to leave the besieged part of the city under open escort led to massive bombardment, with internationally outlawed incendiary, phosphorous, and cluster bombs, by the Russian military on those fleeing.

TAIZ-Dar Taizzah

Distance:	14,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	94,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	48,1 nm
True Course:	289°
Magnetic Course:	284°

When you are above the center of Aleppo, turn to 280° M. Soon you will see a mountain range in the distance. Keep heading towards the highest peak and soon you should be able to see route 62 below you, which you can follow to the town of Dar Taizzah.

To Dar Taizzah, or Darat Izza, leads a well-preserved section of an old Roman road dating back to the 2nd century, and thus a section of the Silk Road that was developed by the Romans. During the era of the Ottoman Empire, Dar Taizzah was known for the cotton fabrics produced there.

The city is located at the foot of Mount Simeon, where the tomb of Sheikh Barakat, a pilgrimage site of the Yezidis, is located. He worked at the end of the 12th century and is considered, according to the belief of the Yezidis, a holy figure.

SARM-Sarmada

Distance:	7,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	101,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	40,5 nm
True Course:	230°
Magnetic Course:	224°

Above Dar Taizzah turn left and follow the road that passes through several villages to Sarmadā.

Sarmadā is one of the oldest inhabited cities in this region and due to its important location, on the Silk Road, it has enjoyed commercial and economic activity and development since its existence. Therefore, it has always been a desirable target for attacks and plundering by other peoples.

SYTU-Border Syria - Turkey

Distance:	3,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	105,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	37,3 nm
True Course:	314°
Magnetic Course:	308°

Turn sharp right over Sarmada and follow the M45 route to the Bab al-Hawa border crossing.

Turkey has been the successor state of the Ottoman Empire since the founding of the Republic in 1923. The founder of the state Mustafa Kemal Atatürk initiated a modernization of Turkey by social and legal reforms after the model of different European nation states. With about 50 million tourists a year, Turkey is the sixth most visited country in the world.

The territory of present-day Turkey has been inhabited since the Paleolithic Age. In the second half of the third millennium BC, the Hittites, who were also Indo-European, migrated alongside the Luwians. Around this time, a network of Assyrian trading colonies was established in Asia Minor.

Around 750 B.C. a Phrygian empire around Gordion and Midas City can be proved. It ended in 696 B.C., allegedly with the invasion of the Cimmerians, who probably came from southern Russia. At about the same time, with its capital at Sardis, in western Asia Minor, the empire of the Lydians came into being, while in the northeast, from the 9th to the 7th century B.C., there existed the empire of Urartu, which was in more or less constant struggle with the Assyrians.

From 334 BC Alexander the Great conquered the whole of Asia Minor. After his death, his great empire disintegrated, Hellenism began with several rival rulers of Macedonian descent. Greek

domination was ended towards the end of the 3rd century by the expansion of the Roman Empire, which gradually took power in Asia Minor and retained it until the division of the empire into Western and Eastern (Byzantium) in the 4th century. After that, until the invasion of the Arabs and later the Seljuks and Ottomans, the land belonged to Byzantium.

The name of the Turks comes from Central Asia. There existed, in what is now Mongolia, from the 6th to the 8th century, the empire of the Turks, ruled by a Kahn, who are usually called Köktürks for better distinction. The immigrants from whom Turkey got its name were the Oghuz and came from the area around Lake Aral.

ANTA-Antakya

Distance:	25,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	130,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	11,7 nm
True Course:	268°
Magnetic Course:	262°

The M45 route changes its name to D420 after the border. Follow it until you reach the city of Antakya.

Antakya, former name Antioch, was the third largest city in the world in Roman antiquity, after Rome and Alexandria, but lost more and more importance after heavy destructions in the 6th century and in the 13th century.

Near Antakya was the Bronze Age city of Alalach (now Tell Açana), an important regional trading center whose beginnings date to about 3400 BC. Here the trade routes from Aleppo, Mesopotamia and from Palestine to Anatolia and the Mediterranean crossed. The city is connected to the sea by the Orontes River. Trade with Cyprus is attested in writing and archaeologically. Later, maritime trade with Europe also began from here, with goods reaching the former Antioch via the Silk Road. One source of wealth was ivory. The area around Alalach was known for its herds of elephants in the Bronze Age. At the end of the 19th century, trade in silkworm pupae also flourished here.

In addition, Antioch played a significant role in the spread of Christianity. It was here that the "followers of the new way", as they were called by the Jews, were called "Christians" for the first time. The apostle Paul founded a Christian community in Antioch and began his 2nd missionary journey from here.

LTDA-Hatay

Distance:	11,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	142,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	36°
Magnetic Course:	31°
Elevation:	260 feet
Fuel:	yes

After flying over Antakya, turn the nose of your aircraft to the northeast and fly along the edge of the mountains, on your left wing, to nearby Hatay Airport (LTDA). Have a happy landing here.

The airport began operations in 2007 and was one of the first handicapped-accessible airports in Turkey. It is operated by the state-owned DHMI and used exclusively for domestic civil flights.

LEG 25: LTDA - LTAF

Departure: Hatay (LTDA)
Destination: Adana (LTAF)
Distance: 91,2 nm

ISKE-Iskenderun

Distance:	13,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	13,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	77,8 nm
True Course:	332°
Magnetic Course:	327°

On the approach to the airport you have already seen the mountain range of the Nur Mountains. When you took off, northeast of the airport, you can make out a pass road that leads through the mountains to the port city of İskenderun.

In the past, this city was a port for Aleppo. Today it is the commercial center of a region where grain, tobacco and citrus fruits are grown. But it is also an important industrial center and the terminus of a long oil pipeline from northern Iraq. In addition, İskenderun is one of Turkey's most important Mediterranean ports.

During the First Crusade, İskenderun was conquered by the Crusaders and incorporated into the Principality of Antioch. The Templars built Baghras Castle here, which guarded the Cilician Gate, the most important link between Cilicia, the Mediterranean Sea and the highlands of Anatolia.

OSMA-Osmaniye

Distance:	30,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	44,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	47,1 nm
True Course:	8°
Magnetic Course:	2°

Turn north and follow the base of the mountain range as it passes your right wing. Maintain your course when a spur of the mountain rises to the west. Behind the spur is the provincial capital of the province of the same name, Osmaniye.

In the area of Osmaniye, there was a town named Kınık in the 16th century. For the year 1672, Evliya Çelebi, an Ottoman writer who was on a pilgrimage to Mecca at the time, mentions the town of İsneyn as the regional market center of the Turkmen tribes. Presumably, this settlement perished during the 18th century in the internal political turmoil of the Ottoman Empire and was abandoned. In the course of a stabilization process, in 1866, near the village of Hacıosman, in the vicinity of which were the ruins of an urban settlement, a new administrative center was founded by Cevdet Pasha, an Ottoman statesman, historian and jurist, which was named Osmaniye.

Osmaniye, on the ancient Silk Road, has always been a place of strategic importance, as it lies on the route between Anatolia and the Middle East.

LTAF-Adana

Distance:	47,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	91,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	263°
Magnetic Course:	258°
Elevation:	57 feet
Fuel:	yes

North of the city, the O-52 highway route goes around the city to the west, through the fertile lowland of Çukurova. Follow it to the city and Adana airport. Have a happy landing there.

The airport is located to the west of the city and should not be confused with Incirlik Air Base.

Çukurova University, in Adana, is one of the largest universities in Turkey with about 45,000 students. There are various sources for the origin of the name Adana. Thus, it is supposedly derived from Adanos, the son of Uranos, from Greek mythology. Another possible origin is from Adanyia, an area near Kizzuwatna, in the empire of the Hittites.

The city probably dates back to a Hittite settlement. Since the 16th century B.C., Adanyia has been mentioned in historical Hittite texts. In later Akkadian texts of Syria (1400 B.C.) and Egyptian accounts (12th century B.C.), the city is mentioned under the country name of Danuna, part of what later became Cilicia.

After the end of Persian rule, Adana belonged first to the empire of Alexander the Great, then to the Seleucid Empire. Pompey settled here in 67 B.C. a part of the Cilician pirates he had defeated. Since 72 the city was part of the Roman province of Cilicia. Around 260, the Sassanids also conquered Adana.

In 1097 the Armenian prince Oshin, the progenitor of the Hethumids, coming from his castle Lambron, conquered the city. Between the 11th and 14th centuries, many Armenians migrated when their settlement area further north was conquered by the Seljuks. Under the rule of the Rubenids, the Kingdom of Lesser Armenia was established, which included Adana. Adana fell to the Turkmen tribe of Ramazanoğulları in 1378. Since 1575, the city belonged to the Ottoman Empire and later Turkey.

The most famous historical building in Adana is the stone bridge (Taşköprü) built under the Roman Emperor Hadrian over the Seyhan River, which - along with the Milvian Bridge in Rome - is considered one of the oldest bridges still in use in the world.

LEG 26: LTAF - LTAN

Departure: Adana (LTAF)
Destination: Konya AB (LTAN)
Distance: 174,0 nm

KONAK-Konaklar

Distance:	13,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	13,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	160,1 nm
True Course:	263°
Magnetic Course:	257°

After takeoff, orient yourself toward the center of the airport. Immediately north of the airport area runs a wide arterial road, the D400, to the west. Between the cities of Yenice and Tarsus, there is a large road junction at the village of Konaklar.

By the way, Tarsus is the birthplace of the Apostle of the Nations Paul, one of the apostles who worked most for the spread of Christianity. Here he made his living as a tentmaker.

ALPU-Alpu

Distance:	31,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	45,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	128,9 nm
True Course:	350°
Magnetic Course:	344°

From the road junction at Konaklar, a road leads off to the right, in a northerly direction, into the Taurus Mountains, soon joining the D750 road route and accompanied by the O-21 highway route. The road crosses a mountain pass called the Cilician Gate. Follow the D750 route until you reach the town of Alpu.

The Crusaders called the gate Porta Judae and the Arabs Darb as-Salāma. The Turkish name was derived from the village of Gülek, at the southern entrance of the gate. There is also the castle Gülek Kalesi, which controlled the entrance of the gate in the Middle Ages. Of course, it is internationally known as the entrance to the area of Cilicia.

The gate was formed by the river Gökoluk and was a path that could only be crossed by mounts but not by vehicles. The pass was partially widened over time. As a strategically important gate, on the way from Anatolia to Syria, many armies marched through here. Thus, the Ten Thousand from Xenophon's Anabasis and Alexander the Great, who marched from here to the Battle of Issos, passed through. Under the Roman Emperor Caracalla, the road was straightened and widened, as evidenced by a milestone from Podandus. Paul of Tarsus and the knights of the First Crusade also passed through this gate. In 1833, when the Egyptian viceroy Ibrahim Pasha moved against his Ottoman overlord, he also had to pass through the gate. To transport his cannons, he had to have the narrow path widened, as only one packed camel could fit through at a time.

D330-Route D330

Distance:	26,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	72,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	102,0 nm
True Course:	294°
Magnetic Course:	288°

At Alpu, the O-21 highway leaves the D750 route. Continue along the D750 until you reach a road junction that connects with the E90 and the D330.

EREG-Eregli

Distance:	17,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	89,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	84,9 nm
True Course:	241°
Magnetic Course:	235°

Route D330 leads in a southwesterly direction, to the town of Ereğli.

In Hellenistic and especially in Roman times, the city was an important place under the name of Herakleia Kybistra, from where the road leads to the Cilician Gate. It was located on an important military and trade route and was therefore sacked several times by the Arab invaders of Asia Minor.

In Byzantine times, the city belonged to Cappadocia. For a short time it belonged to the Kingdom of Small Armenia under the name of Kybistra. In August 1097, the crusader army of the First Crusade, on its way to Antioch, defeated at Heraclea the combined forces of the Danishmendids and the Emir of Cappadocia. In the 11th century, the city was occupied by the Seljuks, before being temporarily conquered by the Mongols in the 13th century. Since 1466 it belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

About twelve kilometers southeast of Ereğli is the rock relief of İvriz, the best preserved Hittite relief in Turkey.

KARA-Karapinar

Distance:	26,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	115,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	58,1 nm
True Course:	298°
Magnetic Course:	292°

The D330 leads northwest out of the city. Follow it to the next larger town of Karapınar. Just before that, you will fly over a cratered area of volcanoes that were formed about 4 million years ago and were active until about 9,000 years ago.

By 1500, the area had become unsafe, in the wake of the unrest that led to the Celali Riots shortly thereafter. The inhabitants abandoned their settlements and fled from the raiders to the edge of the Karacadağ Mountains. Travel on the road from Konya to Adana became increasingly unsafe. The inhabitants of the area complained to Sultan Selim I in 1514 and asked for protection. As a result, the latter had the place fortified and stationed a troop of soldiers for the safety of the road and the inhabitants.

Since Karapınar was located on the road from Constantinople to Mecca and on the Silk Road, a caravanserai with numerous outbuildings was built under Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, by his son, the governor of Konya and later Sultan Selim II, from 1560 to 1563. The famous architect Sinan was

commissioned with the construction. From then on, the place was called Sultâniye in honor of Suleyman, but after the foundation of Turkey it was renamed again.

KONY-Konya

Distance:	51,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	167,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	7,0 nm
True Course:	282°
Magnetic Course:	276°

Follow the D330 further to the provincial capital of the province of the same name, Konya, in the geographical center of Anatolia.

The ancient name of the city was Ikonion - in Roman times Iconium - and is attested since the 4th century BC. Possibly this name is to be connected with Ikkunavija, a city attested several times in Hittite sources, between 1500 and 1200 BC.

The cities of the Roman sub-province of Lycaonia mostly belonged to Phrygia in Greek times. The city is considered the birthplace of Saint Thecla and is mentioned in connection with Paul in the Bible. Paul and Barnabas were to be stoned there, because of their new teaching, but fled to Lystra just in time.

In the 12th century, the Seljuks conquered the region and the Rum Seljuk sub-tribe established an independent sultanate in Anatolia, whose flourishing capital was Ikonion. The Rum Seljuks brought with them an upsurge in trade. Russian furs, cobalt, silk, cotton, slaves and horses for gems, gold and silver; grain, cloth and weapons from the West for spices, sugar, musk and aloes juice from Egypt and Mesopotamia. The city received a city wall with 108 towers, which were demolished during the 19th century.

During the Third Crusade, Frederick Barbarossa fought here the Battle of Iconium against the Rum Seljuks in 1190.

After the fall of the Rum Seljuks, in 1307, the Karamanids ruled Konya. In 1442, the Ottomans under Murad II defeated the Karamanids and Konya remained part of the Ottoman Empire until the end of the First World War. Since 1923 Konya has been part of Turkey.

In Ottoman times, Konya was an important religious center. After the prohibition of the Sufi Order by Atatürk, it became a stronghold of the Islamic conservative opposition.

The city's landmark is the mausoleum of Mevlânâ Jalal ad-Din Rumi, the founder of the Mevlevi order, today a museum and place of pilgrimage for devout Muslims and followers of Sufism. In addition, Konya is home to important monuments from the Seljuk period.

LTAN-Konya AB

Distance:	7,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	174,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	30°
Magnetic Course:	25°
Elevation:	3373 feet
Fuel:	yes

Now have a safe and soft landing at the airport, north of the city.

In the MSFS, it is designated as Konya military airfield (LTAN). In reality, however, it is an airport with international status, used by both civilian and Turkish Air Forces. It was transferred to use in 2000.

LEG 27: LTAN - LTAB

Departure: Konya AB (LTAN)
Destination: Guvercinlik AB (LTAB)
Distance: 132,2 nm

CIHN-Cihanbeyli

Distance:	43,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	43,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	88,3 nm
True Course:	23°
Magnetic Course:	17°

Once you are back in the Turkish sky after takeoff, turn northeast and follow route D715, which passes directly by the eastern airport area. This way you will reach the town of Cihanbeyli.

The only river in the region that also flows through the city is the İnsuyu Çayıdır.

AKTAS-Aktas Sereflikochisar

Distance:	32,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	76,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	55,4 nm
True Course:	17°
Magnetic Course:	12°

Continue flying in a northerly direction along the D715 route. Behind the town of Kulu you will reach a road junction where the D715 joins the D750 coming from the southeast.

O-20-Circular Road O-20

Distance:	40,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	117,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	14,5 nm
True Course:	338°
Magnetic Course:	332°

Turn left and follow the D750 in northwestern directions. Just before Ankara, you will see Lake Mogan. The D750 passes its eastern shore and joins Route O-21 north of the lake, the major ring road that bypasses the Turkish capital of Ankara.

ANKA-Ankara

Distance:	8,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	126,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	5,8 nm
True Course:	20°
Magnetic Course:	14°

Maintain your course and fly over the road junction. As you fly over it, you can see the smaller Lake Eymir on your right. The E750 passes it to the west and brings you directly to the city center of Ankara.

The capital Ankara is, after Istanbul, the second largest city in the country, with about 6 million inhabitants.

Originally a flourishing Phrygian settlement on the Persian Royal Road, which ran from Sardis to Baghdad and was thus largely a part of the ancient Silk Road, the then Ancyra, in Roman times, became the capital of the Roman province of Galatia. Preserved from the Roman period are the Temple of Augustus, on the walls of which there is an inscription that has become famous as the Monumentum Ancyranum, the Roman Baths and the Column of Julian.

At the partition of the Roman Empire, after the death of Emperor Theodosius I, in 395, the city fell to the Eastern Roman Empire, later called the Byzantine Empire, and belonged to it until 1073. The Byzantines made the city the military headquarters of their administrative unit Bukellarion from 717-775. The impressive fortification walls of the citadel date from the Byzantine period, as well as the church built into the temple of Augustus, of which the apse and the small crypt are still preserved.

After the victory of the Seljuks, in the battle of Manzikert, in 1071, the Byzantine imperial administration in Anatolia temporarily dissolved completely. In the anarchic conditions thus created, Turkic tribal groups settled in Anatolia. After the Mongol invasion in 1243 and the collapse of the Seljuk state, small independent principalities, the beyliks, took control of the western Anatolian borderlands. In 1356, the Ottomans conquered Ankara and incorporated it into the Ottoman Empire, which was to determine its development from then on, until the First World War.

After the defeat of the Ottomans, in the First World War, allied forces occupied the then capital Istanbul. Resistance to the occupying forces formed in the Anatolian heartland, and after Mustafa Kemal's arrival in Ankara, in late 1919, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was proclaimed in 1920, as the Ottoman Parliament in Istanbul was under pressure from the British occupation and many of its deputies, after its dissolution by the British, were imprisoned and deported to Malta.

With the final victory, of the troops led by Kemal Ataturk, in the Turkish War of Liberation, Ankara was declared the capital, due to its location in Central Anatolia and in deliberate demarcation from the Ottoman capital Istanbul, in the run-up to the proclamation of the Republic, on October 13, 1923.

Compared to other Turkish cities, Ankara has few tourist attractions. Among the most visited places are the mausoleum of the state founder Atatürk and the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations. For the religious, domestic tourists, the Hacı Bayram Mosque is a pilgrimage site.

LTAB-Guvercinlik AB

Distance:	5,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	132,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	264°
Magnetic Course:	258°
Elevation:	2690 feet
Fuel:	yes

West of the city center there are 2 military airports. Land at the one closest to the center, Guvercinlik Military Airport and have a pleasant stay in the city.

The airport was built as early as 1933 as a civilian airport and from 1958 to 2002 it was used exclusively for military purposes. From 2002 there were again civilian domestic flights from here.

LEG 28: LTAB - LTBA

Departure: Guvercinlik AB (LTAB)
Destination: Ataturk (LTBA)
Distance: 284,1 nm

BASB-Basbereket

Distance:	18,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	18,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	265,9 nm
True Course:	302°
Magnetic Course:	296°

After rising again into the Anatolian sky, turn northwest and fly toward the southern end of the ridge that borders the plateau, running from north to south. There, sight the D140 road route and follow it to the town of Başbereket.

AYAS-Ayas

Distance:	6,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	24,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	259,8 nm
True Course:	219°
Magnetic Course:	213°

In Başbereket, route D140 turns left and continues in a southwesterly direction. Follow it until you reach the town of Ayaş.

Ayaş is an old settlement that flourished already in Ottoman times. It had already come under Ottoman rule in 1354 and is mentioned by Evliya Çelebi, an Ottoman writer and traveler, with its hostels, bathhouses, fountains, gardens and vineyards. Its location on a branch of the Silk Road, which led to Istanbul via Ankara, favored the development of culture, trade and commerce and the early formation of administrative institutions. At that time the population was more numerous than today.

During the Armenian Genocide, starting in 1915, Ayaş was a collection center and place of execution for many Armenian intellectuals deported from Istanbul.

BEYP-Beypazari

Distance:	20,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	44,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	239,3 nm
True Course:	295°
Magnetic Course:	289°

Route D140 makes a 90° turn to the right in Ayaş and continues in a northwestern direction until it reaches the town of Beypazarı. It is accompanied by various rivers for a long distance.

In ancient times, Beypazarı was known as Lagania and was renamed Anastasiopolis in honor of the Eastern Roman Emperor Anastasios I (491-518). After the Battle of Mantzikert, it fell under the rule of the Seljuks, who left some remarkable monuments here, and then came under the rule of the Ottomans. During this period, the city was a commercial center of great importance. This was partly due to its location on a branch of the Silk Road, and partly because Beypazarı was a trading center for mohair, a coveted wool from the Angora goats bred here. In the 18th century, European traders even settled temporarily in Beypazarı.

After Ankara became the capital and the main connection between Ankara and İstanbul was no longer via Eskişehir but via Bolu, Beypazarı lost its importance.

CAYI-Cayirhan

Distance:	11,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	56,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	227,8 nm
True Course:	249°
Magnetic Course:	244°

Turn left over Beypazarı and follow route D140 further in southwestern directions. After a short distance you should be able to see the Sarıyar reservoir and the town of Çayırhan on its shore.

DOGA-Dogandere

Distance:	23,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	79,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	204,8 nm
True Course:	304°
Magnetic Course:	298°

Route D140 leads out of the city to the right past a mountain, first in a northwesterly direction, then north, across the town of Nallihan and northwest again. In its further course it brings you to the village Doğandere.

DOLA-Dolayüz

Distance:	9,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	88,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	195,6 nm
True Course:	328°
Magnetic Course:	322°

In the village of Doğandere, the D655 route joins the D170. Turn right here and follow the D655 through the mountains. As you continue, you will come to the mountain village of Dolayüz.

MUDU-Mudurnu

Distance:	2,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	91,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	192,9 nm
True Course:	62°
Magnetic Course:	56°

In Dolayüz, a side road connects to route D655. Turn right and follow this road. The town of Murdurnu should already be in sight.

The town has a long history and the name Mudurnu comes from the Byzantine princess Modrene. The ruins of the Byzantine castle can still be seen above the city. In the 8th century the forces of the Byzantine usurper Artabasdos, commanded by his son Niketas, were defeated near this place by the army of the legitimate emperor Constantine V.

The city on the Silk Road traded mainly in handmade textile lace and forged goods.

Mudurnu has a number of well-preserved houses from the Ottoman Empire period. Part of the city center has been declared a historical monument reserve.

CAVUS-Cavusderesi

Distance:	7,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	99,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	185,1 nm
True Course:	294°
Magnetic Course:	288°

Above the town, make a hairpin turn to the northwest and sight Route 160, which comes from the northeast, passes the town to the north, and then heads north into the mountains. There it makes a turn around a mountain and leads you southwest, to the village of Çavuşderesi, where route D140, coming from the north, joins route 160.

GOYN-Göynük

Distance:	14,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	113,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	170,9 nm
True Course:	241°
Magnetic Course:	235°

Maintain your course and follow Route 160 as it winds through the mountains to the town of Göynük.

TARA-Tarakli

Distance:	13,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	126,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	157,5 nm
True Course:	269°
Magnetic Course:	263°

At Göynük, Route 170, coming from the south, joins Route 160. Maintain your course and follow Route 160 until you reach Taraklı.

The historical city of Taraklı is one of the important cities on the Silk Road route. Unfortunately, no evidence can be found to highlight its importance.

The town has been extensively renovated and has gained attention as a tourist destination. A local bazaar offers handicrafts such as wooden combs and wooden spoons. Nearby attractions include thermal springs, the Karagöl Plateau, and Hark Gorge and Cave.

GEYVE-Geyve

Distance:	11,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	137,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	146,2 nm
True Course:	306°
Magnetic Course:	300°

Just before the town of Taraklı, the D160 route has turned south. West of the town, route D150 continues to wind through the mountains, to Geyve. Follow it in western and northwestern directions.

The Geyve region has been inhabited since prehistoric times by Phrygians, Hittites, Lydians, Romans, Armenians, Byzantines, Turks and many other civilizations. Many historical evidences from the period of Byzantine and Roman empires were discovered in Geyve. Geyve was known as one of the early Ottoman conquests. It was conquered from the Byzantine Empire by Osman Gazi (1299-1323), the first Ottoman Sultan, in the 14th century.

The most important landmark of the city, the old bridge over the Sakarya River, north of the city, in Alifuatpasa, was built in the time of Sultan Bayezid II, of the Ottoman Empire (1481-1512). The bridge was well maintained by the Ottoman sultans, as the bridge was strategically located on the Silk Road. One of the oldest photographs of the bridge (circa 1888), by Swedish photographer Guillaume Berggren, is on display at the National Gallery of Canada.

IZNIK-Iznik

Distance:	26,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	164,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	119,8 nm
True Course:	260°
Magnetic Course:	254°

Now turn left and fly through the middle of the plain, along the river, until it enters the plain from the southwest. Maintain your course and then follow the D150 route again, which will lead you further west to İznik.

İznik is the ancient and Byzantine Nikaia, or later known as Nicaea, on the shores of Lake İznik. The city is located in the region of Bithynia. Nikaia is said to have borne the name Elikore or Ankore in early times. Antigonos I Monophthalmos, a Macedonian general, established the colony of Antigoneia there. Probably around 301 B.C., Lysimachus, a general under Alexander the Great, refounded the city and named it after his first wife Nikaia. Some time later, Nikaia was annexed to Bithynia and became Roman from 74 BC, when this kingdom became a Roman province. After further changeable historical events, it finally belonged to the Ottoman Empire and developed into a preeminent center of ceramic production (İznik ceramics). Trade in ceramics on the Silk Road brought the city considerable prosperity.

The city gained worldwide fame mainly due to the two ecumenical councils of 327 and 787.

The oldest building is the church of Hagia Sophia, from the 4th century. The seventh ecumenical council (787) was held here. Orhan I converted it into a mosque, and in it are preserved, among other things, remains of frescoes and mosaics, as well as a stepped priest's bench (synthronon) in the apse.

YENI-Yenisehir

Distance:	10,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	174,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	109,4 nm
True Course:	199°
Magnetic Course:	193°

South of the city, route D595 leads along the lake shore, then over the mountains, to the next level, to the city of Yenişehir.

TURA-Turanköy

Distance:	14,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	188,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	95,2 nm
True Course:	255°
Magnetic Course:	249°

Here the route D595 meets the already known D160. Turn right here and follow the D160 in western directions, past the military airfield Yenisehir, back into the mountains, to Turanköy.

BURSA-Bursa

Distance:	13,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	202,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	81,3 nm
True Course:	272°
Magnetic Course:	266°

Behind the mountains stretches another plain and soon behind it the large city of Bursa. From Turanköy, follow the D200 route west to get to Bursa.

Bursa, formerly Prusa, is Turkey's fourth largest city with about 3 million inhabitants and the capital of the province of Bursa.

The city was called Prusa ad Olympum in ancient times and was founded in 188 BC by King Prusias I of Bithynia.

Since 74 BC Prusa, along with all of Bithynia, was part of the Roman province of Bithynia. Around 257 the city was sacked by the Goths, after which it received a city wall. In Byzantine times, Prusa was known for its thermal baths called Basilica Therma, in today's suburb of Çekirge. Several times emperors stayed there.

Bursa was the capital of the Ottoman Empire from 1326, when the sultan's son and later Sultan Orhan I conquered the city on April 6. The city flourished in trade on the Silk Road. In 1368, the residence was moved to Edirne. After that, in 1402, Bursa was devastated by the Mongols under Timur Lenk. A large part of the Ottoman treasury fell into their hands. The city experienced a new flourishing during the reign of Mehmet I (1413 to 1421). In the summer of 1920, Greece conquered Bursa for about two years. After the defeat of the Greeks in the Greek-Turkish War, in 1922, the city fell to Turkey. The subsequent Turkish-Greek population exchange, after the Treaty of Lausanne, in 1923, hit the city hard economically.

Subsequently, Bursa became one of the most important industrial centers of Turkey.

Special sights are the tomb of Sultan Mehmed I, the Green Türbe (Yeşil Türbe), and the mosques built between 1380 and 1420, the Great Mosque (Ulu Cami), Green Mosque, Hüdavendigar Mosque and Orhan Gazi Mosque.

OSMBR-Osmangazi Bridge

Distance:	39,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	242,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	42,0 nm
True Course:	33°
Magnetic Course:	27°

From Bursa, the Silk Road ran to Constantinople, today's Istanbul. At present, it is not possible to determine which places played a role in this. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the approximate course of the route. The assumption that the route ran east of the Gulf of İzmit is obvious. However, neither İzmit, nor surrounding cities, indicate any connection with the Silk Road in their history. However, there is evidence that there was a ferry connection across the Gulf of İzmit already in ancient times. So this is a possibility to follow the Silk Road, but without being sure if this is the right way. Only the destination, Istanbul, is historically documented.

In the center of Bursa turn north. Pass the small airport of Bursa. At the foot of the mountains look for the big road junction where the two highways O-22 from the east and the O-5 from the west, meet. The O-5 route goes north through the mountains, but disappears into tunnels for a long time. In the meantime, orient yourself to the parallel E881 and then follow the highway again, up to the Osmangazi Bridge, over the Gulf of İzmit.

The Osmangazi Bridge is the fifth largest suspension bridge in the world. Its total length is 2,907 meters and its longest span is 1,550 meters. After only 3 years of construction, the bridge was handed over for use in a grand ceremony on April 21, 2016.

ISTAN-Istanbul

Distance:	28,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	271,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	13,1 nm
True Course:	314°
Magnetic Course:	308°

Once you have flown over the magnificent structure of the Osmangazi Bridge, stick to the coastline that runs in a northwesterly direction until you reach the Bosphorus, which is the natural border between Europe and Asia. The actual city center lies to the west of the Bosphorus. It is worthwhile to look at the city from above. Four famous buildings of cultural and historical value are visible in the simulator; the Çağlayan Palace of Justice, the Dolmabahçe Palace, the Hagia Sophia and the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Try to find them. If you fly over them in 500 feet or less, your passengers will applaud you.

Byzantium, Constantinople and Istanbul, respectively, have so many important eras and historical events to record that they would not have enough space here, even written in short form. For every historical event that took place here had a direct impact on the entire history of the world. To omit even a single one for reasons of space would be criminal. If you are interested in this history, please read it yourself. Otherwise, this abundance would only bore you.

LTBA-Ataturk

Distance:	13,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	284,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	238°
Magnetic Course:	232°
Elevation:	91 feet
Fuel:	yes

With the landing at the airport, the western branch of the Silk Road from the Orient to Europe ends, and with it the legs over land, except for one that will follow immediately afterwards. The long-distance destinations of Rome and Venice were reached by sea, from various ports in Syria, Palestine or Egypt. The lays ahead of you will be a little longer and lead mainly over the sea. However, there will be less to read but more to fly ;-)

When you have seen the city, fly to the most southwestern tip of the city, on the Sea of Marmara. There you will find the international airport Atatürk. Have a lucky landing to finish this leg as well.

By the way, it's also worth taking a helicopter ride from here to explore the city. Have fun with it.

LEG 29: LTBA - LTBJ

Departure: Ataturk (LTBA)
Destination: Adnan Menderes (LTBJ)
Distance: 196,8 nm

KAPR-River Mouth Capraz

Distance:	37,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	37,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	159,1 nm
True Course:	202°
Magnetic Course:	196°

The aim of this leg is to reach the port city of Izmir. The annals of Izmir testify that this city was also on the Silk Road. Which branch, however, led there, has remained hidden to me until today. However, there is evidence that merchant ships reached Rome and Venice from there and vice versa. Of course, it is also possible that the port city was a purely maritime hub of the Silk Road. From there, you will now head for Izmir and, after jumping across the Sea of Marmara, reach the city by land, but without following any part of the Silk Road.

To get across the Sea of Marmara, use the GPS. After takeoff, fly over the Sea of Marmara, over the island of Adasi, which has the shape of a fish, and continue to the mouth of the river Cabraz.

KARAC-Karacabey

Distance:	13,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	51,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	145,4 nm
True Course:	211°
Magnetic Course:	205°

Follow the river past the town of Karacabey.

The place is named after Celalettin Karacabey İbn-i Abdullah, an army commander of Murad II, the former name was Mihaliç until 1928. The ancient name was Miletopolis. The famous Mihali, popularly known as Mağlıç cheese, is unique to this region.

SULT-Sultancayiri

Distance:	21,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	73,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	123,5 nm
True Course:	205°
Magnetic Course:	199°

Follow the river in a southerly direction. On the way there are some tributaries, but they are narrower than the river itself. Already before the town of Susurluk, after which this section of the river is named, you will have discovered a road that accompanies the river on the right side, the E881.

At the village of Sultançayırı, the river makes a loop and enters the valley from the east. The E881 separates from the river here and runs in a southwesterly direction.

BALI-Balikesir

Distance:	14,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	87,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	109,3 nm
True Course:	222°
Magnetic Course:	216°

Follow the E881, in south-southwest directions, until you reach the city of Balıkesir. Just before you reach the city, at the major road junction with the D230, turn slightly left and let the Balıkesir Airport pass by on your left wing.

The area is known for vegetable and fruit cultivation. There are some popular thermal baths in the area. In the surrounding area are the ancient cities of Argyria (Agissa, Argiza), Skepsis and Ergasteria, as well as Mount Ida, from which Zeus is said to have watched the battles for Troy. The ancient Makestos Bridge is located on the route between Balıkesir and Miletopolis. In the city there is also the historic mosque of Zaganos Pasha, a military commander and grand visor who played an important role in the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, built in 1461.

IKIZ-Ikizcetepeler Reservoir

Distance:	13,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	101,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	95,8 nm
True Course:	189°
Magnetic Course:	183°

The road curves around the airport and leads you directly south out of the city. Follow it to the nearby İkizcetepeler reservoir, which soon becomes visible.

AKHI-Akhisar

Distance:	32,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	133,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	63,1 nm
True Course:	186°
Magnetic Course:	180°

A mighty road bridge leads over two side arms of the reservoir. Despite some connections to other roads, follow the E881 consistently in southern directions until you reach the next larger city of Akhisar. It is well recognizable by the fact that you fly over Akhisar Tsa Airfield (LTAA) on its northern outskirts.

Akhisar is where the popular German actor and director Aykut Kayacık was born. He is best known from the popular German crime series "Tatort" or the comedy "Otto - Der Katastrofenfilm" and many other exciting crime films, short films but also comedies.

MANI-Manisa

Distance:	25,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	159,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	37,9 nm
True Course:	227°
Magnetic Course:	222°

South of Akhisar, a mountain rises out of the plain that cannot be overlooked. Turn a little to the right here and follow the road, which also passes the mountain on the right, to the next large road junction, at the town of Manisa.

Unnoticed, the E881 turns into the D565 route. The city of Manisa is located at the foot of a mountain range. Just behind the Gediz River, and still before the city, is the road junction of the D565 with the D250.

ROUO5-Route O-5

Distance:	11,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	170,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	25,9 nm
True Course:	154°
Magnetic Course:	149°

Turn left at the road junction and follow the D250, along the mountain range, to the southeast. At the end of the mountain range, fly around it to the right to reach the wide O-5 highway route that runs through the valley to the west.

Also going around the mountain range is a railroad line, which you will encounter when you turn south at the mountain rim. It leads directly to the O-5 highway.

IZMIR-Izmir

Distance:	16,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	187,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	9,0 nm
True Course:	265°
Magnetic Course:	260°

With a wide curve, route O-5 turns in a westerly direction. Follow it and you will enter the urban area of Izmir.

Izmir, formerly known as Smyrna, is Turkey's third largest city, with a population of about 4.4 million, and the capital of the province of the same name. Located on the Aegean coast, on the Gulf of Izmir, it houses the country's second largest port, after Istanbul.

The city is one of the oldest settlements in the Mediterranean and was settled sometime between the 7th and 4th millennia BC. At the end of the 9th century BC, Aiolian Greeks established a fortified settlement here, at a site now known as Old Smyrna. In the 8th century B.C. this was taken over by Ionian Greeks from Colophon and developed into an urban settlement center. Smyrna, which is considered to be one of the places where the poet Homer worked, reached its first flowering in the 8th-7th centuries BC.

The coastal cities of Asia Minor soon joined together to form the Ionian League. Smyrna was admitted as the 13th member and thus defied capture by the Romans for a while. In 43 B.C., the city hosted Gaius Trebonius, one of Julius Caesar's assassins. The Roman consul Publius Cornelius Dolabella conquered Smyrna, had Trebonius killed and some parts of the city destroyed. When earthquakes in 178 and 180 severely damaged the city, the Greek orator Aelius Aristides obtained its reconstruction from Emperor Marcus Aurelius and received numerous honors for his efforts.

Smyrna was an important center of the Christian world. A Christian community established itself early on. This church is one of the seven churches of the Revelation of John. The church father Polycarp of Smyrna, author of a letter to the Philippians, was bishop of Smyrna in the 2nd century. Ignatius of Antioch also stayed in Smyrna and is said to have written four of Ignatius' letters there.

Smyrna was part of the Byzantine Empire from 395 and was important as a trading center and naval base. In 1076, the Seljuks, under Sultan Suleiman ibn Kutalmiş, conquered the city. The pirate and subordinate of the Seljuks, Çaka Bey, then ruled Smyrna from 1081 and conquered other territories and islands from here. When he was killed by his son-in-law and successor to Suleiman, Sultan Kılıç Arslan I, in 1092, the Byzantines under Emperor Alexios I reclaimed Smyrna. With the Treaty of Nymphaion, the Republic of Genoa received, among other things, trading privileges in the city for helping Byzantium reconquer Constantinople. Thus Smyrna came under the control of the Genoese merchant family Zaccaria. The Italian merchants from Genoa and Venice settled preferably in the Frankish quarter of Smyrna. For this reason, Rome also benefited from the trade relations of Genoa, since the merchant ships passed practically at the doorstep of Rome.

Later, under Turkish rule, which did not last, however, triggered by piracy, at the end of 1344 a crusading league, led by the papacy, attacked the city and conquered the port. The fighting continued until 1348. The upper castle, however, remained in the hands of the Turks. The latter had to submit to the Ottomans in 1390; while the port continued to be controlled by the Knights of the Order of Saint John of Rhodes.

In 1402, the Ottomans, under Sultan Bayezid I, were crushingly defeated by Timur's Mongol-Turkish troops in the Battle of Ankara. The Christian garrison, about two hundred knights, under the command of the Aragonese Knight of St. John Íñigo de Alfaro, refused to surrender. The Timurids then attacked

with siege engines, tunneled under the walls, blocked the entrance to the port, and, after resisting for fifteen days, stormed the city. The inhabitants were massacred and the city destroyed. According to the historian Dukas, Timur is said to have had the skulls of those killed inserted into the walls with mortar. The troubled times did not end until 1422 with the Ottoman Sultan Murad II. Smyrna was rebuilt, but in 1472 it was occupied by the Venetians and burned down again. From that time on, until the 20th century, the city remained an Ottoman possession.

Smyrna was the most important trading center in Asia Minor during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods. In the 16th century, the city had a predominantly Muslim population. This changed in the 17th century. In addition to the long-established Greeks and Jews who came from Spain after 1492, Armenians began to arrive in Smyrna in increasing numbers from 1605. The Armenians controlled trade in goods and products from Iran. For example, Iranian silk was sold to all of Europe through Izmir. The trade and the different peoples gave the city a special flair, of which even Mark Twain, who passed through here in 1867, was taken with.

LTBJ-Adnan Menderes

Distance:	9,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	196,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	192°
Magnetic Course:	186°
Elevation:	387 feet
Fuel:	yes

When you are above the port of Izmir, turn south. The airport is behind the southern city limits. Have a safe landing there.

LEG 30: LTBJ - LGKC

Departure: Adnan Menderes (LTBJ)
Destination: Kithira (LGKC)
Distance: 234,2 nm

PAROS-Paros Island

Distance:	116,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	116,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	117,4 nm
True Course:	232°
Magnetic Course:	226°

Prepare your GPS and check your fuel supply, because now it's time to cross the Aegean Sea. Set a direct course to the next waypoint, the island of Paros, and fly over the island of Ikaria in between.

The island of Paros is mainly known for its beaches and traditional villages. The main town of Parikia, located on a bay, is the shipping and transportation center for the Cyclades. It is also home to Panagia Ekatontapyliani, a Byzantine church complex, dating back to the 4th century. Kolimbithres beach on the north coast is divided into bathing bays by natural rock formations. Supposedly an insider's tip for vacation in the Aegean Sea.

LGKC-Kithira

Distance:	117,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	234,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	247°
Magnetic Course:	242°
Elevation:	1044 feet
Fuel:	yes

Continue to Kithira airfield, on the barren island of Kythira. Have a happy landing here and enjoy the island for stopover and rest.

The National Airport of the island of Kithira is named "Alexandros Aristotelous Onassis". Traveling to Kythira by plane is considered the most reliable method of transportation to the island, as it is less affected by the strong winds that prevent the transit of ferries, some days of the year. The airport was opened in 1972.

The island is strategically located between mainland Greece and Crete and was a hub for traders, sailors and conquerors from ancient times until the mid-19th century. As such, it has a long and varied history and has been influenced by many civilizations and cultures. This is reflected in its architecture (a mixture of traditional, Aegean and Venetian elements), as well as in its traditions and customs, which are marked by the centuries-long coexistence of Greek and Venetian cultures.

LEG 31: LGKC - LGKR

Departure: Kithira (LGKC)

Destination: Ioannis Kapodistrias International Airport (LGKR)

Distance: 255,8 nm

KEFA-Kefalonia

Distance:	162,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	162,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	93,6 nm
True Course:	314°
Magnetic Course:	309°

Everything checked for the next start? Via the large island of Peloponnese and the small island of Zákynthos, we now go to the island of Kefalonia.

The Greek island of Kefalonia is located at the exit of the Gulf of Patras. It is the largest of the Ionian Islands.

Kefalonia was already populated by Neanderthals 110,000 years ago; this is proven by stone tools.

There have been speculations since ancient times that Kefalonia coincides with the island of Same, counted among Odysseus' possessions in the Odyssey but also the Homeric Dulichion was often equated with Kefalenia. A 2018 study attempts to support the thesis that Kefalonia corresponds to Odysseus' home island, the Homeric island of Ithaca. Finds from the Mycenaean period have been preserved, including a large, richly furnished domed tomb at Tzanata, which surpasses any tomb of this phase in the Ionian Islands and northwestern Peloponnese.

A recent theory, based on meteorological, geographical and historical research, identifies it with the island of Melite, mentioned in the biblical Acts of the Apostles, as Kefalonia. According to this, the

Apostle Paul, when he was on his way to Rome, was stranded on Kefalonia, contrary to the common theory and tradition that starts from the island of Malta. In this regard, there is also a tradition on the island that is linked to the Church of St. Paul in Pessada. The theory also connects the snake cult in the churches of Kefalonia with the Pauline story.

The underground lake of the island is one of the main attractions. In ancient times, the place was a place of worship of the shepherd god Pan. Nearby is the much visited Drogarati stalactite cave.

LGKR-Ioannis Kapodistrias International Airport

Distance:	93,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	255,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	342°
Magnetic Course:	337°
Elevation:	5 feet
Fuel:	yes

Continue to Ioannis Kapodistrias International Airport on the island of Corfu, the second largest of the Ionian Islands and another stopover on the way to Rome.

The peculiarity of the airport lies in the unusual location of the runway, which is almost entirely surrounded by water and is situated between two hills. It begins in the sea with a large circular turning area, to the west is the sea bay and to the east is Lake Halikiopoulou. The traffic, on the main road EO25, located on the landside almost immediately behind the runway, must be stopped at every aircraft takeoff and landing, for safety reasons, by means of traffic lights, since the safety area is beyond the road. The airport is also very popular with aircraft photographers due to its location.

The island of Corfu is one of the most prosperous regions in Greece.

Hunter-gatherers settled the island perhaps as early as 75,000 years ago. In any case, a stone tool was discovered at Gardiki, in the southwest, near the Korission lagoon, in a layer dated before the hand axe. Neanderthals also visited the island.

In the 20th century, the island developed into a vacation destination for package and individual tourists. Most visitors come from Great Britain, although for some years the number of visitors from Europe has been declining, while more and more visitors from Russia and Asia Minor come to Corfu. The Angelokastro Castle (Angel Castle) is particularly worth seeing. It was one of the most important defensive fortifications of the island of Corfu, which is now part of Greece. Its strategic position, difficult to capture, on the northwestern tip of the island, with good possibilities of influence on the southern Adriatic Sea, established for many centuries a great importance in the destiny and development of the island.

LEG 32: LGKR - LIMD

Departure: Ioannis Kapodistrias International Airport (LGKR)

Destination: Aviosuperficie Scalea (LIMD)

Distance: 190,2 nm

SMDL-Santa Maria de Leuca

Distance:	72,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	72,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	117,6 nm
True Course:	279°
Magnetic Course:	275°

The next stopover, crossing the Ionian Sea, is already scheduled on the Italian mainland. Fly, with the help of the GPS course, to Santa Maria di Leuca, on the Italian mainland.

Santa Maria di Leuca is the seaside part of the Italian municipality of Castrignano del Capo, in the Puglia region. On its territory lies Punta Ristola, the southernmost point of Puglia, which is the intersection between the Ionian and Adriatic Seas, and thus the passage between the Gulf of Taranto and the Strait of Otranto.

It is said that the name Leuca derives from the name of the siren Leucàsia (translated = white, bright).

In 1992 the Salentine writer and poet, Carlo Stasi, created a legend about the beautiful siren Leucasia. She had fallen in love with the Messapian shepherd boy Melisso and tried to conquer him with her singing, which no one could resist. Melisso, however, rejected her courtship because he was in love with the aristocrat Aristula. The siren took her revenge by overwhelming the two lovers with the waves unleashed by her two tails and drowning them. Their bodies were transformed by the goddess Minerva, who took pity, into the two rocks at the two ends of the bay, now called Punta Ristola (from

the name Aristula) and Punta Meliso (from Melisso). As a result, Leucàsia lost her voice and killed herself. Her fossilized bones henceforth form the white cliffs of Leuca.

The apostle Peter is said to have landed here on his journey to Rome and preached. In the process, the temple of Minerva is said to have collapsed. The Virgin Mary is said to have helped some boats in distress off the coast, after which "Santa Maria" was prefixed to the name of Leuca.

LIMD-Aviosuperficie Scalea

Distance:	117,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	190,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	271°
Magnetic Course:	266°
Elevation:	33 feet
Fuel:	yes

Now cross part of the mainland, the Calabria region, of Italy and have a good landing at Aviosuperficie Scalea airport, on the Tyrrhenian Sea, the last stopover before reaching Rome.

The airfield was built in an exposed flood-prone location and opened in 2001. The Lao River damaged the airfield several times, which is why it was temporarily out of use. The runway is oversized for general aviation, but the airfield is too small for commercial aircraft.

The following activities take place there: public transport, helicopter rescue, flight school, tourism, aerial work, civil defense, parachuting, gliding and natural hazard prevention. Although small, there are handling, parking and refueling services for aircraft. Numerous amphibious aircraft use the airfield as a ground operations base.

LEG 33: LIMD - LIRF

Departure: Aviosuperficie Scalea (LIMD)

Destination: Fiumicino (LIRF)

Distance: 213,0 nm

CAME-Camerota

Distance:	25,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	25,1 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	187,9 nm
True Course:	302°
Magnetic Course:	298°

This leg will be both beautiful and quite relaxing. From here on you can fly purely VFR again and use the autopilot to maintain course and altitude as you fly along the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

After takeoff, set a northwesterly course. Use the coastline and the headlands jutting into the sea as a guide. Fly over the Gulf of Policastro. This will take you to the municipality of Camerota. Behind it rises the 750 meter high peak of Timpa Pistillo.

LICO-Licosa

Distance:	25,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	50,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	162,5 nm
True Course:	306°
Magnetic Course:	302°

The last headland on this stretch of coast, with a small island in front of it, is Licosa. The large bay you can see after that is the Gulf of Salerno.

CAPRI-Capri

Distance:	33,9 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	84,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	128,6 nm
True Course:	305°
Magnetic Course:	301°

Cross the Gulf of Salerno and head for the strait between the island of Capri and Punta Campanella.

It is said that Odysseus built the temple of Athena on the rock of Punta Campanella, but this cannot be proven, firstly because it is still not known whether Odysseus is an invention of the poet Homer and secondly because it is unlikely that Odysseus' odysseys reached this coast.

On the other hand, on the former pirate island of Capri there is the famous Blue Grotto. In ancient times, this place was the private swimming pool for the Emperor Tiberius, who had his retirement residence on Capri. Pliny the Elder described the grotto and several statues placed there, which are now exhibited in the Casa Rossa Museum.

ISCH-Ischia

Distance:	17,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	102,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	110,8 nm
True Course:	305°
Magnetic Course:	302°

If you cross the Gulf of Naples now, you can see to your right the volcano Vesuvius, the only active volcano, on the European mainland. Vesuvius erupted for the last time in mid-March 1944. It is still active and remains dangerous for the region.

Continuing northwestward to 3 islands. From left to right are the islands of Ischia, Vivara, also called "Neptune's Kingdom" and Procida.

The island of Ischia in particular is a vacationer's paradise, with beautiful beaches and hot thermal springs bubbling everywhere on the southern beach. In addition, the island has some Roman ruins from the turn of time, in a wild and romantic setting.

CIRCE-Cape Circeo

Distance:	50,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	152,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	60,3 nm
True Course:	305°
Magnetic Course:	301°

Fly over the middle of the islands and maintain your course until the next headland of Cape Circeo is visible. The adjacent 541 meter high Mount Circeo should soon be visible after a short flight time over the sea.

ROMA-Rome

Distance:	47,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	200,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	12,6 nm
True Course:	328°
Magnetic Course:	324°

From Cape Circeo follow the coastline to the mouth of the Tiber River. Once you reach the Tiber, follow it to the "Eternal City" of Rome. To the north, along the Tiber, you can see the international airport Fiumicino, where you will land later.

Rome is definitely one of the most famous cities in the world and the most important for Catholic Christianity. In the smallest state in the world, the Vatican, the popes have resided since ancient times. The same is true for Rome, as it was for Istanbul before; its history is so diverse and epochal that there is not enough space for it here.

As for the Silk Road, there were no direct trade relations of the Roman Empire with China. The exchange of goods on land and by sea (trade with India), which was generally handled by numerous intermediaries - above all Parthians and Sassanids - was primarily concerned with Chinese silk, Roman glass and other quality materials. A direct contact with the Silk Road existed, as already mentioned, through merchants from Genoa, Venice and Rome who settled in Izmir (by sea) and through the conquest of Byzantium (by land). This assumption is confirmed by Roman gold coins found in China, from the 5th century.

LIRF-Fiumicino

Distance:	12,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	213,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	244°
Magnetic Course:	241°
Elevation:	8 feet
Fuel:	yes

You should now definitely take a closer look at the city of Rome. Here, too, many famous buildings can be seen from the air. After that, turn back to the Tiber, follow it to Fiumicino airport, have a happy landing there and a nice stay in the Eternal City.

LEG 34: LIRF - LIPV

Departure: Fiumicino (LIRF)
Destination: San Nicolo (LIPV)
Distance: 263,8 nm

CIMA-Cinitanova Marche

Distance:	112,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	112,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	151,5 nm
True Course:	36°
Magnetic Course:	32°

Let's go for the last leg! Once again, use the GPS course to go from the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea, across the Italian mainland, over the Sibillini Mountains, with the peak of Mount Vettore, in the central Appennine mountain range, to the coast of the Adrian Sea. The next waypoint is in the town of Cinitanova Marche.

ANCO-Ancona

Distance:	21,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	133,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	130,5 nm
True Course:	334°
Magnetic Course:	330°

Once you have reached the east coast of Italy, you can fly VFR again. Just follow the coast to the next headland, near Ancona.

The city is known for beaches such as Spiaggia del Passetto and the hilltop Cathedral of San Ciriaco. Among the sights in the city center is the Fontana del Calamo, a fountain with mythical masks made of bronze. At one end of the harbor is the ancient Arch of Trajan and at the other, on an artificial island, is the Lazzaretto, a pentagonal building that served as a quarantine warehouse in the 18th century.

RIMI-Rimini

Distance:	48,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	181,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	82,0 nm
True Course:	304°
Magnetic Course:	300°

Continue along the coast, with its many beaches, fishing villages, large and small towns, until you reach the city of Rimini.

Once the city served as a bulwark against the Gauls settling in the Po Valley, which prevented the Roman Empire from spreading northward. Today it is one of the most popular seaside resorts in Italy. The town is especially known for its nightclubs on the beach but also for the medieval castle of Sismondo, which is now used for cultural events.

LIPV-San Nicolo

Distance:	82,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	263,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	354°
Magnetic Course:	351°
Elevation:	10 feet
Fuel:	yes

As you continue along the coast, you will pass many important places and sights that cannot be mentioned here. After you have flown over the mouth of the Po River, you will fly over a large lagoon, which is assigned to the Po Delta. A little further north is the mouth of the river Adige. Directly behind the mouth of the Adige you can already make out the large lagoon of Venice. The long, outer islands lead you directly to the small airfield of San Nicolo. But before you land, you should definitely plan a sightseeing flight over this unique city.

Venice was the capital of the Republic of Venice until 1797 and one of the most important trading cities in Europe until the 16th century, handling most of the trade between Western Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. The city benefited from trade in luxury goods and spices from China, India and the Orient but also salt and wheat. Although you have already reached the end of the official Silk Road in Istanbul, it could well be argued that the European strand of the Silk Road begins here. For north of the Alps, the Nuremberg Exchange was an important trading center for goods from Venice. It served as a link to other European economic centers such as Lyon and Antwerp, and the nobility of the time obtained their silk wardrobe mainly from Venice.

From the 17th century onward, Venice's importance diminished as a result of the shift of world trade to the Atlantic. Until well into the 1970s, industrial policy took precedence, turning the lagoon into a cesspool, subject to increasingly frequent devastating floods, such as in 1966, due to the widened passages to the Adriatic Sea and the destruction of the ecological balance. At the same time, the population in the old city dropped drastically. The government then subsidized the restoration of residential buildings, developed projects to protect against floods, had all the canals cleaned and made efforts to move European institutions to Venice. The cost of this is threatening to bring the city to the brink of insolvency, against the backdrop of the current global economic crisis. Today the city still lives mainly from trade but also from tourism and the artistic craft of glass making.

You've made it and, after traveling over 6,500 nautical miles in the simulator, you've landed in Venice. Congratulations!

If you enjoyed this trip, leave a few stars in the marketplace for us. We are also always open to criticism. All the best for your future endeavors wish Nordheim Missions and Koschi.