

Block Island (BID)—June 12, 2006

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Block Island, RI, is about 15 miles east of Montauk, Long Island, about 135 nautical miles from N12. It is about 8 miles long and five or six miles wide. The airport at Block Island has a \$10 landing fee and one 2500 ft. runway which helps to keep the Citation riff-raff out!.

There is no fuel at the airport. AirNav.com says that after all the tie-downs are full, you must push planes to the grass, but there were plenty of tie-downs that Monday morning in June. The attendants were very friendly at the airport and enthusiastic about visitors coming to the island.

It is gorgeous. The words “pristine,” “picturesque,” and “visually striking” hardly do it justice. As you fly in from the south, you get an incomparable view of the west side of the island and the Mohegan Bluffs. The airport is in the center of the island, under a mile walk downhill to the center of town. The island is very hilly, with winding narrow roads and few shoulders. We rented a slow scooter (\$55 for 2 hrs but worth every penny). In that time, we toured the island from north to south—went to both lighthouses, walked to the bluffs and down to the beach and predominantly saw rustic but perfectly maintained farmhouses in an island setting.



Biking and hiking are very popular because many of the roads are closed to motorized traffic, but there are hills. There are horses for rent, too.

Large, high-speed ferries disgorge many tourists, though, and we can easily believe that the island gets very crowded on summer weekends. You could easily make an overnight out of this trip. We ate lunch at the Mohegan Bar and Grill—didn't do research on where to eat and just walked in there because of its proximity to a t-shirt store.



The New England clam chowder was great, but I got the impression that the Mohegan had a reputation for its brews. AirNav.com has reviews of other places, but when you're from the Jersey shore, seafood is not that impressive. My favorite t-shirt was a simple one with Block Island written on it and the longitude and latitude under the title. It had a disclaimer sticker that said "not to be used for navigational purposes."

Yes, there were Mohican Indians on the island. The Mohegan Bluffs got the name from an Indian battle that took place in 1590. A war party of fifty Mohican Indians traveled from Long Island in their war canoes, came ashore and launched a raid against the native Manissean Indians. The Mantisseans repelled the attack, backed the Mohicans to the edge of the bluffs and over the cliff, forcing them to fall 160 feet to the water and rocks below. Standing there, you visualize the battle and the history of the island. Even then, no one liked tourists from New York!!

It was the first time that I had to deal with NY approach, and that was intimidating for me. They do speak really fast, and it's amazing to listen to the rapid-fire directions to so many planes. I scratched my ear once and missed a call (seriously) but they repeated it immediately and I responded then. They were polite to me but I did hear other pilots being "chastised".



Just pay attention and you should be fine. You should plan your flight to be routed right over Kennedy (JFK) which is amazing to fly over.

ATC then sent us to East Hampton. I would recommend a NY area terminal chart in addition to your sectional. On our return, we were told to deviate at the last minute from Kennedy to the Carnarsie intersection (close to the east side of the Verrazano Bridge), so there was a little bit of frantic searching after acknowledging the change. I did have to go back and ask for a vector, but eventually found the VOR on the chart.

Block Island is closer and less presumptuous than its high-falutin' neighbors, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. It's a lovely place to visit and I highly recommend it. I had a wonderful time and wanted everyone in the club to know about this great place to visit !

