

We strongly recommend that you have back-country experience before flying into Minam River Lodge (7OR0). The terrain in the canyon is rugged, and we have tree obstacles on all sides of the airstrip as well as a wild and scenic river that you cross on short final in either direction. If you are comfortable with back-country flying, the Lodge is a fun destination for many pilots who enjoy coming in for a stay or even just a great breakfast.

The initial approach to the Lodge is from the north. If you are coming from the west side of the mountains, plan to enter the canyon 8-10 miles to the north so that you don't have to climb up the tallest part of the ridge and descend rapidly to the Lodge, which is at 3,600 feet. Entering the canyon further north like this will give you plenty of time for a leisurely descent to the strip as you fly south, up the river. Make sure to keep following the Minam River rather than the Little Minam, which joins the river from the canyon to the west. Announce your position and intentions to Minam River traffic on 122.9, and generally plan to stay to the right if another aircraft is exiting the canyon.

As you approach the area, the first thing you will see is the airstrip at Red's Horse Ranch (6OR9) to the south. The Minam strip will come into view in the foreground as you get a little closer. The two strips are both oriented north-south, approximately in line with each other, separated by a bend in the Minam River. Here is a view of both strips from 2-3 miles out:



Overfly the Lodge airstrip to check out the windsock, which is located across the airstrip from the greenhouse and garden. Also make sure the strip is clear of wildlife or Lodge guests who may be walking across it down to the river. Then continue over Red's, which also has a windsock at mid-field you can use for confirmation of your preferred landing direction.

If the wind favors a landing to the north, make sure to get far enough past Red's to make a comfortable 180-degree turn where the canyon is relatively open. Then descend toward the near end of the Red's strip. As you get closer, you will see that you will overfly the Red's strip on final, descending across the river and then landing to the north at Minam. The Minam strip has a moderate dogleg to the right at this end, so plan to bank right a bit on landing and be prepared for a possible sink as you cross the river. Watch your speed on final, and plan to go around if you can't land in the first quarter of the strip, or just past the dogleg. Here is a (high) view of the Red's strip with the Minam strip in the background:





The strip is published on the sectional as 2,000' X 40', but it actually is 2,400' tip to tip. It can be bumpy from gophers and sometimes has some bare patches with gravel or small rocks. Drainage ditches run parallel to the runway on either side, so stay on the mowed or clearly visible areas.

If the wind favors a landing to the south, which is considered the calm-wind runway, fly far enough north to turn around comfortably. Then proceed back to the south for a relatively long, straight-in final, again being prepared for a possible sink as you cross the river. Here is how it looks on final for a landing to the south (this shot is high but gives a good view of the strip):



After landing, taxi to mid-field and secure your plane in the grassy area to the east side of the strip near the hangar. We do not supply tie-downs, so bring your own or wheel chocks. Use care in walking across the runway. The path to the Lodge leads up to the west past the greenhouse, where your cup of coffee or cold beer will be waiting, depending on the time of day.

When departing, err on the side of caution with your density altitude calculations. In summer months, it is best to fly out of (or into) Minam in the morning, when the air is cool. Taxi back

along the runway, making a radio call for any traffic that may be arriving. If departing to the north, making your taxiing turn in a clockwise direction before take-off will help line you up on the left side of the runway, minimizing the dog-leg. Once you clear the trees, staying on the right side of the canyon is safest in case of approaching traffic and also can give you a little more lift.

Remember that landing at Red's is always an option, too, and is considered slightly easier. If landing at Red's, landing is to the south and taking off to the north is preferred due to terrain. You can walk over to the Minam Lodge by going through the gate on the west side of the runway and following the trail less than one mile to the north.

We have not had any serious accidents at Minam, but we have had a few fender-benders. The common denominator in these mishaps is lack of backcountry flying experience. One pilot landed long and fast to the north, resulting in a sudden stoppage in the brushy trees at the north end. Another tail-dragger pilot landed to the south with a tailwind and lost control on roll-out, bumping into a tree near the hangar at mid-field. Nobody has been injured, and we want to keep it that way. If you have any doubts about your ability to navigate the strip safely, it's easy to fly into Enterprise Municipal Airport (8S4) or Joseph State Airport (KJSY), both about 20 miles to the northeast, and hop over to the Lodge with local charter operator Joe Spence (call Spence Air Service or we can arrange flights for you).

If you would like to check the conditions on the ground before you leave your home field to fly in, just give us a call at the Lodge, (541) 508-1373. We are happy to give you a weather report if we are available to take your call, and we usually try to monitor 122.9 when we are in the Lodge as well.

Fly safe! We look forward to seeing you at the Lodge.