



**AMERICAN AIRSHOW REVIEW**

**THE BEGINNERS GUIDE TO**

# AIRSHOWS

**YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO MAKING THE  
MOST OF YOUR FIRST AIRSHOW EXPERIENCE.**

**BY CHAZ TEETS | AMERICAN AIRSHOW REVIEW**



**FIRST EDITION**

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# WHAT TO EXPECT

- Airshows are part entertainment, part history lesson. Announcers will teach you facts about the performers as they're flying!
- Expect large crowds & loud noises; the senses will be triggered at an airshow!
- Entering and Exiting WILL take time! Bring your patience!!!
- Most airshows will include military demos, aerobatic acts, warbirds (WWII Aircraft), Parachute Teams, and sometimes a jet powered ground vehicle!



# WHAT TO BRING (AND WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME)

## BRING -

- SUNSCREEN, SUNGLASSES, HAT
- SEALED BOTTLED WATER/EMPTY CLEAR WATER BOTTLE
- FOLDABLE CHAIR OR BLANKET
- EARPLUGS (ESP FOR CHILDREN)
- CAMERA, FULLY CHARGED CELL PHONE
- PHOTO IDENTIFICATION (MAINLY FOR MILITARY BASE AIRSHOWS)
- PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION (IF NEEDED)
- CASH & CREDIT CARD (SOME ARE CASH-ONLY, SOME ARE CASHLESS)
- TICKET FOR ADMISSION (IF APPLICABLE)

## LEAVE AT HOME -

- WEAPONS OF ANY KIND
- PETS (HOT ASPHALT WILL INJURE ANIMALS)
- DRONES, KITES, R/C VEHICLES
- ALCOHOL & DRUGS
- TENTS, LARGE UMBRELLAS, CANOPIES, ETC
- NOISEMAKERS (MEGAPHONES, FIREWORKS)
- FLAMMABLE ITEMS (GRILLS, LIGHTERS, ETC)
- LASER POINTERS
- COOLERS

PLEASE NOTE THIS LIST IS NOT ALL INCLUSIVE  
& ALL AIRSHOWS HAVE DIFFERENT RULES

# ARRIVAL

- **ARRIVE EARLY!** The longer you wait to arrive at the airshow, the longer you will wait to get in.
- You can expect to walk in, or be shuttled in via shuttle buses to a main entrance.
- Expect to stand in line. **BRING YOUR PATIENCE!!!**
- Expect security checkpoints, especially at military base airshows.

## AFTER ENTRY

- Scout where everything is; that means food vendors, bathrooms (bathroom trips during the airshow are quicker if you know where they are!), seating areas, etc.
- If attending via general admission, find the general seating area and pick a good place to sit. The best spots won't be there long after gates open!
- Keep the kids occupied. It is usually at least 2 to 3 hours after gates open until flying starts. Find educational or interactive booths, or take them to the static displays and talk to the pilots and ground crews.



# UNDERSTANDING THE SCHEDULE



If an airshow's website has a schedule for the day, print it off, screenshot it, OR buy a program (if available) after you arrive. This way, you can make sure you don't miss a specific performer you're interested in.

- The flying portions of the show generally start between late morning and early afternoon.
- Static display areas are open from gate open to gate close.
- Airshows MAY change the schedule due to weather, safety issues, maintenance issues, or any other operational need.
- If the airshow has a social media page, follow it, as last-minute announcements may be made there.



# **SAFETY, COMFORT, & WEATHER AWARENESS**

- **HYDRATE!!!** This is the single most important point I want to make. Airshows take place during some **VERY** hot and humid times of the year, so drink **WATER**. Not soda. Not beer. Not wine. **WATER**. The number of folks I've seen pass out at airshows from dehydration is not even remotely funny.
- If the forecast calls for a chance of rain, take a small umbrella or poncho with you.
- **HEARING PROTECTION!** Jet demo teams are insanely loud, and some solo performers start off with a sharp break (turn) away from the crowd, with the business end of the afterburners pointed straight at the crowd. Take earplugs or earmuffs specifically designed for hearing protection. **ALWAYS** take hearing protection for children regardless whether or not the flying acts are jets or propeller planes.
- Always keep an ear out for announcements over the PA system, as some may be safety related.

# AIRSHOW ETIQUETTE

- **BE KIND** to the staff, volunteers, and all the folks who put on the airshow. Without them, there is no airshow!
- **Do NOT** block others' view of the airshow! This means umbrellas, flags, canopies, gear, etc.
- **Make sure to supervise children** around displays and **DO NOT** touch aircraft without explicit consent from staff or pilots. (That goes for adults too!)
- **When wandering about the grounds,** keep your head on a swivel and pay attention to your surroundings. Staff may move vehicles and aircraft or emergency medical services may be moving quickly to reach someone in need.

# **RULES OF THUMB**

## **MILITARY BASE AIRSHOWS...**

- **WILL have extensive security in all areas. Expect metal detectors, both walk-thru and wand style. BRING YOUR PHOTO ID!**
- **Do not allow coolers or any large bags or backpacks. Check the airshow's website for specific FAQ's as some may allow a clear bag or backpack.**
- **Might have restrictions on focal length of camera lenses.**
- **WILL have a tremendous crowd. Some bases draw in over 300,000 people over a two day weekend.**
- **Offer free general admission. Reserved seating and VIP options are often for sale online at the airshow's website, with the proceeds usually going to veterans charities.**
- **WILL enforce "off-limits" areas. Don't wander off to areas designated as "off limits."**
- **May not have on-base parking. Don't be surprised if parking is off-site and shuttle buses are used.**
- **Expect you to listen to announcements and directives from base personnel. Be cool and you'll have a fantastic time!**
- **Usually have pilots interact with fans after their performances; pilots love signing autographs for kids!**



# **RULES OF THUMB**

## **PUBLIC & PRIVATE AIRPORT AIRSHOWS...**

- **Usually charge for general admission. VIP and reserved seating options are sometimes available.**
- **Usually allow some sort of cooler, backpack, or tote. Again, check the event's website for specific details.**
- **Sometimes has what's known as a "Photo Pass" ticket for avid photographers with special access to areas not available to the general public.**
- **May offer airplane rides! Keep in mind, the rides are generally not cheap, as the funds from those ticket sales are used to keep those aircraft in safe and working order through an extensive maintenance program. Also, aviation fuel is expensive!**
- **May allow pilots to "fly-in."**
- **Generally have less or no restriction on photo or video camera gear.**
- **WILL NOT allow beer, drugs, or weapons to be brought in either!**

# BONUS TIPS - AIRSHOW PHOTOGRAPY



Seeing as this guide is designed for the beginner in the world of airshows, I figured I'd thrown in some photography tips in case you'd like to capture some of the action too!

- Use a DSLR or Mirrorless-style camera specifically designed for photography. Cellphone cameras are fine for static displays, but to get a GREAT picture in flight, you'll need a good camera.
- Starting out, it's perfectly fine to use the auto mode while you're getting used to it. Once you're familiar with it, switch over to shutter priority mode.
- Use a shutter speed of 1/1000 or faster for jet aircraft. They are FAST and you'll need a very quick shutter speed to freeze the action.
- Use a shutter speed of 1/250 or slower for propeller aircraft to catch the "blur" of the propellers and make it look true-to-life. Fast shutter speeds freeze the propellers, making it look like a static model stuck in the air.





## **THANKS FOR READING!!!**

**I hope you enjoyed this quick crash course into the world of airshows and aviation! If you'd like to learn more, follow me on Facebook (American Airshow Review) or visit my website at [www.americanairshowreview.com](http://www.americanairshowreview.com)!**

- Chaz Teets - Owner/Operator - American Airshow Review**