

Laredo, TX, USA

January 2024

I started the new year with a last-minute spotting trip to a relatively unknown but very interesting airport in the south of Texas. Based on recent photos that I saw on various aviation photo websites, spotting possibilities looked great and with a decent weather forecast, I decided to take the gamble and booked my United ticket thru Expedia just four days in advance for about EUR 600.

7 January 2024 Houston-George Bush KIAH

C-GVDP	Bombardier CS300	Air Canada
G-ZBKK	Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner	British Airways
N205NN	Embraer 175LR	American Eagle
N243WN	Boeing 737-700	Southwest Airlines
N3138J	Bombardier CS300	JetBlue
N340NB + N341NB	Airbus A319-100	Delta Air Lines
N3757D	Boeing 737-800	Delta Air Lines
N413AS	Boeing 737-900ER	Alaska Airlines
N8845L	Boeing 737-8 MAX	Southwest Airlines
N930LR	CRJ 900ER	Mesa Airlines
XA-AML	Boeing 737-800	AeroMexico

Plus:

*[United Airlines](#): A320/B737-8/B737-900/B777-200;

*[United Express](#): CRJ 200/Emb145/Emb175.

An intermediate stop in Houston allowed some time to write down a few tailnumbers.

7 January 2024 San Antonio KSAT

N86350	Embraer 175LL	United Express
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After arrival in San Antonio, I picked up my rental car (Dodge Charger) and bought some spotting necessities (ladder, food and drinks). The next morning I drove 2.5 hours southbound to the border town of Laredo, where I would stay for the next 10 days.

Laredo Airport KLRD

8 January 2024

"10868"	T-38A Talon	USAF	
91-0102/RA	T-1A Jayhawk	USAF	
11-72208	UH-72A Lakota	US Army	
160846/G-446	Beech T-44C	US Navy	
N208CR	Cessna 208B EX		
N225AW	Beech 260		
N332QS	Embraer 505 Phenom 300	Netjets	
N337GG	Cessna 337F		<i>std</i>
N357ER	Pilatus PC-12/47E	Ed Rachal Foundation	
N420FG	HA-420 HondaJet		
N53KV	Cessna 525	Servicios Aereos MOP	
N6087C + N6098U	AS350B2 Ecureuil	US CBP	
N778GV	Piper PA.46-600TP		
N846PW	Pilatus PC-12/47	U-Haul	
N880AC	Mitsubishi MU-2B-60		
N908GF	Bell 407	Air Evac Lifeteam	
N994MZ	Cessna 421C		
XA-FLB	Embraer 550	Fly Across	
XA-GVT	Cirrus SF50 Vision Jet	Soluciones Aereas de la Laguna	
XA-PBP	BAe 125-900XP	Aero Sami	

XB-DGG	Cessna 421C	private
9 January 2024		
92-0354/XL	T-1A Jayhawk	USAF
2306	HC-144B	US Coast Guard
N14NM	Beech E90	Driscoll Children's Hospital
N3937A	AS350B3 Ecureuil	US CBP
N397SW	Boeing 737-300	iAero Airways (Swift Air)
N525AP	Cessna 525A	
N560WE	Cessna 560XLS+	Wholesale Electric Supply
N592Q	Cessna 441	
N5NR	Cessna 680A	L&F Distributors
XA-MJT	CL-605	Aerolineas Ejecutivas
XA-TPB	BAe 125-800XP	Aero Sami
XA-VEG	Cessna 550	Aeordinamica de Monterrey

10 January 2024

N106AE	Bell 206L-1	Air Evac Lifeteam
N425BS	Cessna 425	
N425TX	Cessna 425	Continental Forwarding Services
N653TB	Beech 200	OCCI
N7199H	Beech U-21H	
N71BD	Gulfstream IV-SP	Executive Jet Management
N72AY	Learjet 35A	private
N751BC	Gulfstream G200	International Bank of Commerce
N903SM	Pilatus PC-12/45	Driscoll Children's Hospital
N9176G	Piper PA.46-350P	

11 January 2024

C-GBOT	CL-650	Novajet
N147CJ	Falcon 2000LX	Domino's Pizza
N225AV	Gippsland GA8-TC320 Airvan	
N234ER	Pilatus PC-12/47E	Ed Rachal Foundation
N335F	Cessna 525C	Paradigm Jet Management
N351BC	Cessna 525	International Bank of Commerce
N404BZ	Beech 260CHW	Textron Aviation METS
N440US	Boeing 737-400	iAero Airways (Swift Air)
N444FA	Cessna 414	
N5202Y	AS350B2 Ecureuil	US CBP
N521RA	Embraer 505 Phenom 300	
N54CF	Cessna 510	private
N654CP	Falcon 50	AC Aviation Services
N797CB	CL-300	H-E-B
N800BD	CL-300	Discount Tire
N809HK	Embraer 145ER	
N999ES	Beech C90	

12 January 2024

11-72212	UH-72A Lakota	US Army
11-72216	UH-72A Lakota	US Army
N476TR	Socata TBM-960	
N625SW	Boeing 737-300	iAero Airways (Swift Air)
N820CA	Cessna 680A	Conagra Brands
N821HP	Cessna 525A	GRT Transportation
N900HA	Cessna 525A	
XA-FGL	Gulfstream G280	Servicios Aereos Regiomontanos

13 January 2024

N142VA + N860VA	Robinson R22	Veracity Aviation
N368QS	Cessna 680	Netjets
N428QS	Embraer 505 Phenom 300	Netjets
N654FX	Gulfstream G650ER	Flexjet
N674QS	Cessna 680A	Netjets
XA-LAP	Cessna 680A	Taxi Aereo de Veracruz
XA-RAD	BAe 125-800XP	VIP Empresarial
XB-FNX	Falcon 50	Alta Actitud Jets

14 January 2024

167102/B-266	T-45C Goshawk	US Navy
N122DS	Raytheon 390 Premier 1	AEG Petroleum
N302QS	Embraer 505 Phenom 300	Netjets
XA-AND	Gulfstream G650	Aerolineas Sol

15 January 2024

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Due to cold and overcast weather conditions, I did not visit the airport this Monday.

16 January 2024

C-GAME	HA-420 HondaJet	Skyservice Business Aviation
N281H	Pilatus PC-12/47	Sterling Air
N410SK	CL-605	Oshkosh Corporation
N571BC	Cessna 560XL	International Bank of Commerce
N940DF	Socata TBM-940	

17 January 2024

02-3648/XL	T-6A Texan II	USAF
02-3667/XL	T-6A Texan II	USAF
87-70160	Beech C-12U2	US Army
2301	HC-144A	US Coast Guard
N1KD	Cessna 560XLS	Duncan Aviation
N1RD	Cessna 525M2	Duncan Aviation
N35JM	Cessna 560XLS	
N405HM	CL-300	
N525HC	Cessna 525	
N71CH	Cessna 700	CH Robinson
N75MB	Beech 360	
N922QS	Cessna 680A	Netjets
XA-TYD	Beech 400A	Servicios Aereos Interestatales
XA-VGL	Embraer 505 Phenom 300	Transpais Aereo
XB-NBV	Beech 58TC	private

Regular passenger traffic

Allegiant Air: A319/A320 (flights to Las Vegas on Thursdays and Sundays)
 American Eagle: Emb175 (multiple daily flights to Dallas-Fort Worth)
 United Express: Emb145 (multiple daily flights to Houston)

Regular Cargo trafficAeronaves TSM

CRJ 200SF: XA-ADS/XA-RGC/XA-TRQ/XA-VCX/XA-VDL/XA-VFL
 DC-9-33F: XA-UPS
 MD-82SF/MD-83SF: XA-UZI/XA-VBG
 SA227AC Metro: XA-MIO/XA-PNG/XA-UKJ/XA-UQB/XA-USJ/XA-VCZ

Amazon Prime Air (Atlas Air)
B737-800BCF: N5179A

Ameriflight
SA227AT Metro: N241DH
Saab 340B/F: N968AF

Ameristar
DC-9-15RC: N782TW/N783TW/N784TW/N785TW

Berry Aviation
Emb120: N229SW/N235SW/N561SW/N586SW/N707TG
Saab 340B/F: N185KJ

DHL/iAero Airways (Swift Air)
B737-800SF: N708MB (DHL c/s) / N916BR (iAero c/s)

Encore Air Cargo
SA227AC Metro: N430MA

Everts Air Cargo
MD-83SF: N964CE/N965CE

FedEx
A300-600: N650FE/N664FE/N741FD

FTair
SA227AC Metro: N680MD

IFL Group
Falcon 20: N511FL/N521FL/N531FL

Kalitta Charters II
B727-200F: N726CK/N729CK
B737-400F: N406CK

Kolob Canyons Air Service
SA227AC Metro: N746KA

Legends Airways
Saab 340B/F: N440CL

McNeely Charter Service
SA227AC/DC Metro: N2699Y/N320MC/N654AR

Royal Air Freight
Falcon 20: N20WK/N760RA/N766RA/N780RA
Learjet 35A: N945W

UPS
B757-200PF: N412UP/N428UP/N470UP

USA Jet
B727-200F: N726US
Falcon 20: N811AA/N827AA
MD-83SF: N831US
MD-88SF: N832US/N835US/N836US/N837US/N842US

Other cargo aircraft

N126CZ	Embraer 120ER Brasilia	Freight Runners Express	
N353CK	Learjet 35A	AirNet Systems	
N406LC	L-100-30 Hercules	Lynden Air Cargo	
PP-YBD	Boeing 737-300SF	Modern Logistics	<i>std</i>
UR-CAJ	Antonov 12BK	Ukraine Air Alliance	

Located right near the US-Mexican border, the small-scale airport offers quick and convenient customs clearance with 24/7 facilities for both countries. This makes it a popular place to stop for business jets and small cargo aircraft with automotive parts on their way to and from Mexico (e.g. Monterrey, Saltillo, Cabo San Lucas). Weekdays except Mondays are generally the busiest days.

The airport has two north-south oriented runways with a third one intersecting at a 45-degree angle. The FedEx ramp and passenger terminal are located on the east side. On the west side, you will find from south to north the main cargo ramp, customs ramp, Signature FBO and transient parking. The border patrol helicopters also operate from the west ramp, with the Army Lakotas located on the southside and the civil CBP helicopters north of the fire station.

Around the airport are several good spots for photography, regardless of runway usage. Security and police were very friendly and did not mind at all that I was taking pictures near the fence with a ladder, which is helpful to get a clear view over the fence at every spot (3-4 steps should be sufficient for most people).

For traffic going to the eastern ramps, you can photograph inbound and outbound traffic in the morning on runway 18 from the parking lot of the Uni-Trade baseball stadium in the northeast corner, or alternatively along Casa Blanca Road when runway 36 is in use. The unofficial airport viewing area is located on the southwest side at the end of Airpark Drive. There is a mostly empty parking lot located between the runway and the west ramp, providing good photo opportunities all day long. For aircraft on the taxiway, you will need less than 50mm here for larger cargo aircraft and about 70-150mm for business jets. For traffic on the runway, you will need 150-300mm in most cases. With runway 18 in use, keep in mind that not all landing traffic may pass here as smaller aircraft may vacate the runway halfway and not at the end.

Along the west ramp there are several spots between the warehouses and hangars where you can take photos of parked and taxiing aircraft. As the ramp is uncontrolled by ATC, some aircraft may taxi without talking to Ground Control (e.g. when repositioning from the customs ramp to the south cargo ramp or the FBO). Anything from less than 50mm till 300mm is required, depending on the size of the aircraft and where they are parked/taxiing. At most places light will be best in the afternoon.

10 January 2024 Cotulla-La Salle County KCOT

N990GR Beech 350

About half-way between San Antonio and Laredo you can find the small village of Cotulla. Its airport is located on the northeast side of town. There is not much to see; for photography light is best in the afternoon/evening.

18 January 2024 San Antonio KSAT

N406BN	Boeing 727-200F	Paramount Jet
N612DT	Gulfstream I	Mission Air Capital Services
N701BN	Gulfstream I	Mission Air Capital Services
N789G	Gulfstream I	Mission Air Capital Services
N407LQ	Bell 407	
N111CM	Embraer 505 Phenom 300	Summit Aviation
N111YW	Cessna 650	private
N22GA	Cessna 525B	Belt Tech Industrial
N419CE	Cessna 525C	Crescent Electric Supply
N443QS	Embraer 505 Phenom 300	Netjets
N48HW	Beech 400A	Winter Livestock
N550GL	Beech 200	

N579TX	Cessna 525	Law Offices of Douglas D Ketterman
N702QS	CL-350	Netjets
N73KH	Cessna 525C	Hurd Enterprises
N820FJ	Cessna 650	Merlin 1
N440US	Boeing 737-400	iAero Airways (Swift Air)
N134AN + N572UW	Airbus A321-200	American Airlines
N972UY	Airbus A321-200	American Airlines
N728AN	Boeing 777-300ER	American Airlines
N276NN	Embraer 175LR	American Eagle
N354NW	Airbus A320-200	Delta Air Lines
N353FR	Airbus A320-200N	Frontier Airlines
N242WN + N7865A	Boeing 737-700	Southwest Airlines
N8538V	Boeing 737-800	Southwest Airlines
N8713M	Boeing 737-8 MAX	Southwest Airlines
N632NK	Airbus A320-200	Spirit Airlines
N17303 + N47330	Boeing 737-8 MAX	United Airlines
N27239	Boeing 737-800	United Airlines
N37541	Boeing 737-9 MAX	United Airlines
N420UA	Airbus A320-200	United Airlines
N66893	Boeing 737-900ER	United Airlines
N86322	Embraer 175LL	United Express
XA-VYA	Airbus A320-200	VivaAerobus
N536VL	Airbus A321-200N	Volaris

On my departure day I had some time in the morning to do some spotting in San Antonio as my flight was only leaving around 14.15h. Spotting possibilities at this airport depend on the runway in use. With runway 22 in use, you may be able to find a spot along Wetmore Road in the mornings. I did not try this myself, so I cannot tell you about the experience. When runway 13-31 is in use, you can stand on level 6 of the parking garage near the terminal and photograph all movements from here. You have to park your car at level 1 short-term parking and then take the elevator to level 6. In the afternoon the light is best, although heathaze can be a problem here. You will need about 100-300mm for airliners and more mm's for business jets. Alternatively, when runway 13 is in use, you can find a spot at the north side of the airport along San Pedro Avenue. 70-200mm will do for most airliners in the approach. Also here light is only good in the afternoon.

18 January 2024 Chicago-O'Hare KORD

N12006	Boeing 787-10 Dreamliner	United Airlines
N26906	Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner	United Airlines
N458UA	Airbus A320-200	United Airlines
N66893	Boeing 737-900ER	United Airlines

After a quick transfer in Chicago, I arrived back in Amsterdam on 19 January. While a spotting trip to one relatively small airport did not result in a huge number of photos, the quality of traffic definitely made up for that. This unique airport is a true gem where aviation history is still alive with 40+-year-old cargo aircraft visiting the airport on a daily basis. At most other airports in North America (except Alaska) those aircraft are few and far between, whereas in western Europe they are mostly banned altogether due to noise and pollution restrictions. I did not experience any safety issues in Laredo, but I do recommend staying in a 4-5-star hotel rather than cheaper motels. With the weather being very pleasant most of the time (mostly sunny skies with some cirrus clouds, temperatures of 20-25 degrees Celsius), I had a wonderful time enjoying my aviation hobby.