



What is Soaring?

Soaring is the art of sustained flight without a motor. Since the dawn of time mankind has dreamed of soaring like an eagle, and today that dream is reality. Modern sailplanes routinely fly great distances and to awe inspiring heights using the pilot's skill to harness the power of nature.



When once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return.

– Leonardo da Vinci



The Soaring Society of America, formed in 1932 and one of the oldest aviation organizations in the United States, currently serves the needs of over 12,000 American glider pilots.

The SSA is also the only aviation group in this country primarily governed and driven by volunteers. It is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster and promote all aspects of gliding and soaring in sailplanes.

SOARING magazine is the monthly publication of the SSA and contains a wealth of information. Everyone from newcomer to seasoned veteran will enjoy articles on soaring technique, contest reports, equipment reviews, and more.



For more information about membership in the SSA and the sport of Soaring, including where to fly in your local area contact the Soaring Society of America:

E-mail: feedback@ssa.org

Website: www.ssa.org

Phone: (575) 392-1177

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Hobbs, NM 88241

DISCOVER SOARING



AND
CHALLENGE YOUR SPIRIT!



All About Soaring...

What is soaring?

Soaring is the art of flying a sailplane. Flying this aircraft is an exhilarating experience. You will learn to harness the energy in the sky – using solar power, which causes hot air to rise in currents called thermals, and powers the wind that blows across mountain ridges.



Who can fly sailplanes? You can!

Glider clubs and commercial operations across the country can introduce you to the challenge and joy of silent flight. FAA rated instructors teach flight fundamentals and prepare you first to solo, and later for the private pilot certificate examination that allows you to carry passengers.

Soaring is a great activity for the whole family. Teens can solo a sailplane at age 14 and obtain a pilot certificate at age 16. Youth involvement is encouraged, and some scholarships are available for dedicated young pilots.

How safe is it?

Most anyone can learn the basic skills required to pilot a sailplane safely. The aircraft are built and tested to rigorous standards set by the FAA and underneath the smooth exterior of the slender aircraft is incredibly strong modern composite material.

Can I afford this?

When learning to fly: By flying every day a beginner can often solo in two weeks for about \$1,500. Flying only on the weekends, solo can be reached in roughly 35 flights for about \$2,500. Completion of your Private Pilot Glider License will typically cost another \$1,500. Training through a club can often be substantially cheaper but may take longer.

Once you have earned your pilot license: Aerotows, where the glider is towed behind an airplane, are the most common method of launching a glider; these cost roughly \$30 (depending on height). Sailplanes can be rented for \$25–\$50 per hour from commercial operators, or are



frequently available free of hourly charge with paid membership at one of the numerous local clubs. Many pilots choose to own their sailplane.

After I learn to fly, what's next?

For many soaring pilots the ultimate experience is flying great distances. Modern sailplanes can fly incredibly far at amazing speeds.

For the goal oriented, the SSA recognizes a broad range of achievement awards from the ABC badges earned as you work towards your pilot certificate to the 2,000km Diploma. Record flights are acknowledged at the state, national and world records are:

Altitude:	49,009 ft
Distance:	1,869 miles
Speed:	154mph*



Some pilots enter contests where they race over courses of up to 300+ miles. Others become glider instructors. Additionally, soaring can be shared with friends and family by taking them up for a flight. Soaring clubs provide a family atmosphere where the accomplishments of the day can be shared in the

setting sun. There are endless ways to grow as a pilot and continue to explore the magic of silent flight.



Is soaring for me?

A good way to find out is with a ride or an introductory lesson. Typical cost is around \$100.

Soaring is both mentally and physically challenging and ultimately it is extremely rewarding. It demands personal discipline, requires excellent decision making skills and in return rewards you with the opportunity to fly like the eagle; at one with nature.

Where can I find out more?

Contact the Soaring Society of America or a soaring operation near you. Contact details are on the back page or insert card.

Happy Soaring!



* Average speed over a 100km course.

Useful to know...

Do I need a license to fly a sailplane?

Yes. Sailplanes and sailplane pilots are regulated like all other aircraft by the FAA.

Are there fitness requirements?

A medical examination is not required to fly a glider; even a motor glider! Good general health and vision are needed (vision correction is ok).

I'm a FAA airplane rated pilot. What does it take to add on a glider rating?

- You can add on a glider rating with a minimum of 3 hours dual and 10 solo flights.
- No written test is required.
- Adding this rating will update your Flight Review.

Eventually I want to buy my own sailplane, how much will it cost?

A pre-owned sailplane capable of safely providing terrific soaring enjoyment costs \$5K–\$25K, depending on

equipment and performance. A top of the line, new racing sailplane runs \$75K–\$100K.

What are the operating costs if I own a sailplane?

Primary costs are tows, maintenance and insurance. Maintenance is usually minimal costing around \$2–\$300 per year for a required annual inspection. Insurance costs vary significantly with the value of the sailplane; a group insurance plan is available to SSA members.

What is a motor glider?

Motorized gliders come in two basic forms, self-launch and touring. A self launching glider uses a retractable motor and propeller. The touring motor glider looks more like a conventional single engine aircraft with the propeller at the front. Motor gliders can takeoff under their own power and can operate out of any airport, even if the airport does not have a gliding operation or tow plane.

