Flight Planning

What do you need to consider before flying? Why? How do you get the information you need to make safe decisions? Pilots don't like surprises.

Weather

Clouds
Type
Height from ground
Location

Visibility
Critical for VFR flight

Wind
Takeoff
Cruise
Landing

Bad Weather
Thunderstorms
Hail
Freezing rain
Freezing fog
Icy runways
Ice of any sort…

Turbulence

Fuel

How much?
Taxi
Takeoff
Cruise
Arrival
Landing
Takeoff
Alternate
Arrival
Landing
Return trip
Return alternate
Reserves

Destination
Availability
Type
Cost

Weight & Balance

Weight:
Aircraft
Fuel
People
Baggage
Cargo

Balance:
"Envelope"
Forward
Aft
"Nose-heavy"
"Tail-heavy"
Ballast

Performance

Takeoff:
Runway length
Type of takeoff

Climb:
Clear obstacles
Reach cruising altitude

Cruise:
Clear obstacles
Winds aloft
Time
Fuel economy

Arrival:
Clear obstacles
Set up for landing

Landing:
Go-around
Runway surface
Runway length
Type of landing

Situational Awareness

Pilot:
Skill & training
Health
Fatigue

Taxi:
Airport diagrams
Airport descriptions
Signs & markings

Departure:
Procedures

Cruise:
Navigation
Obstacle location
Diversion

Arrival:
Procedures

Landing:
Weather
Runways

Time:
Night flight…
Lighting

Preflight Inspection

Battery
Engine compartment
Birds
Oil
Fuel
Tires
Control Surfaces
Cleanliness
Frost, snow, ice

"Safety is no accident. It must be planned."

Homework

Fill out the "Would Today Be a Good Day to Go Flying?" chart for one week.

Consider the weather, your health, and any other factors that you believe may be important.