

AVSIM Commercial Scenery Review

ImagineSim *KATL*



Product Information

Publisher: [Imaginesim](#)

Description: Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

Download Size:
31 MB

Format:
Download

Simulation Type:
FS9

Reviewed by: [Jeremy "Rightseater" Fletcher](#) AVSIM Staff Reviewer - July 20, 2008

KATL

When applying to become an AVSIM reviewer, I made a request to review only products for FS9. The reason for this is not only because my system struggles to handle FSX with satisfactory frame rates, but also because I feel that FS9 still has a lot to offer. One recent offering for FS9 from the folks at Imagine Simulations proves my point; a scenery add-on for the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (KATL), which I am told will also be available for FSX in the near future, if it is not already by the time this review is posted.

In this review we are going to see how ImagineSim has recreated the busiest airport in the world and determine if it has met the increasingly hard to meet standards of the flight simulator community. I will be doing so with and without the aid of any other AI traffic, and no ground texture or mesh add-ons so that you can see what improvements are made to the default KATL. Join me now for a tour of what I hope to be the next permanent member of my virtual world.

Installation

Unzipping the \$32.65 USD, 31MB download from simMarket (also available from Flight 1), yielded a folder on my desktop consisting of two files; a read-me, and an auto-install file. Double clicking on the latter sent me through a process of verifying my FS9 main directory location, agreeing to some terms and conditions of use, and entering the mile long product code I was given to install this add-on with.

It took only a short moment for the program to install KATL on my computer, which left me with a new folder in my FS9 directory titled "Imagine Simulation". Inside this folder you will find the files necessary for this scenery to work, as well as a manual, which I recommend taking a look at before heading into the sim.

The manual included is not exactly a blueprint of KATL, but it can be useful, especially when it comes time to park your aircraft. The manual begins by discussing some performance tips to help you get the most out of your computer while using this scenery. There's really nothing new here, but it did remind me of the performance benefits of turning off scenery shadows. Next in line is general information about the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, none of which is necessary to know, but makes for a good read nonetheless.

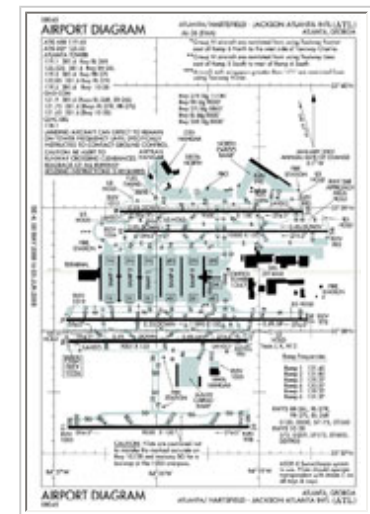
Continuing on, you will come across the airport diagram followed by a section discussing gate procedures. You might want to print this section out for later reference as it details how to use the Delta parking system included in this add-on, and also shows you which aircraft are suited for each gate. The manual concludes with some FAQ's and closing credits.

Airport Overview

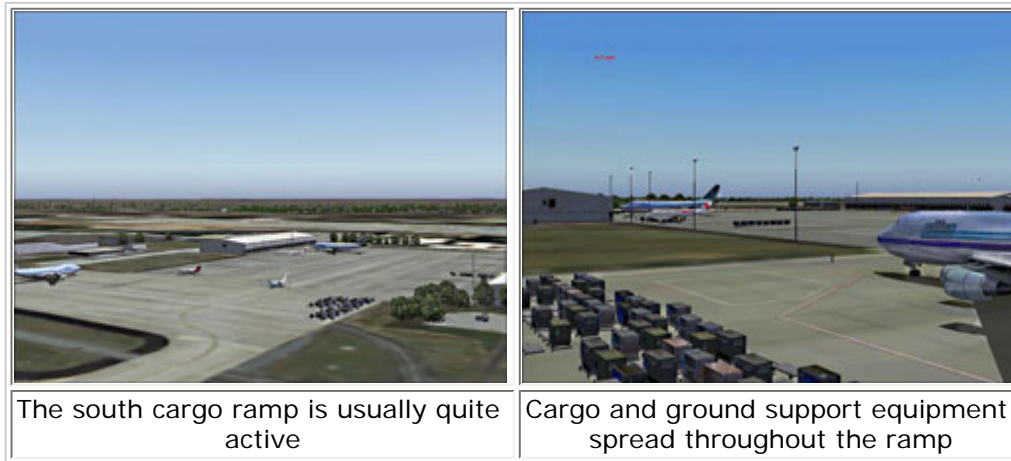
Let's start our inspection with a quick overview of the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Intl. Airport. You can follow along with the airport diagram. This airport has five parallel runways heading east and west; two north of the gates, two south of the gates, and one all by itself on the south side of the airport.

The north section of the airport is where you will find a pair of fuel farms, cargo ramps, general aviation parking, and other goodies that we will check out in that section of this review. Moving south, you will come to the passenger terminals and ramps, and the tower. Move further south and you will come to the south cargo area, various hangars, a fire station and more. That is where this review will begin.

South Cargo Ramp Area



The south cargo area of the airport is made up of a lot of hangars and miscellaneous buildings, all of which are textured to appear weathered, and most of which have some form of company logos or other identification. There are some static and AI aircraft that frequent this area, as well as a number of static and dynamic ground vehicles. Support equipment is spread throughout the ramp, including carts, air stairs, I think I saw an APU, and much more.



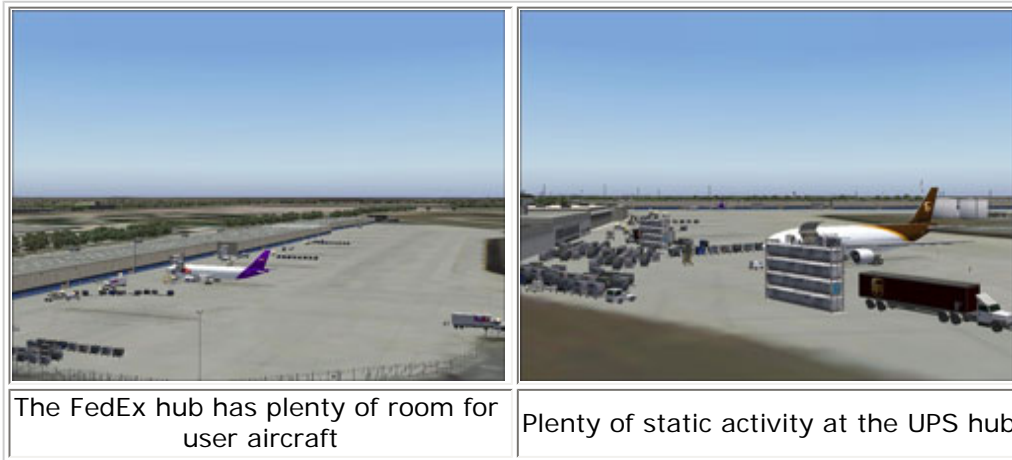
Some trees have been added in between buildings and alongside a few taxiways, which helps to make up for the fact that the autogen trees are vacant from the airport grounds and a square perimeter around the airport. Fences have been added to isolate certain areas of the south ramp, and with each visit to this area I find something else that catches my eye.



Two taxiways lead from the south ramps to the southernmost runway, which is the 9000 ft long rwy 10/28. Multiple miscellaneous scenery additions can be seen spread throughout this area as well, including the south side of the runway, which runs alongside the southern fence. I can't speak for all add-on traffic programs, but with Traffic 2005 installed and running at 70% I found that ImagineSim still left plenty of room to bring my cargo aircraft into this area.

North Ramps

If you like flying cargo aircraft you will feel welcomed to the north area of this airport. UPS and FedEx hubs have taken over the eastern portion of the north cargo ramps. Both areas contain a host of ground support equipment, static and AI aircraft, and plenty of static and dynamic ground vehicles. The FedEx hub stretches west to east, far enough to handle more aircraft than you can throw at it, and UPS leaves a few spots for your own aircraft to park.



Moving west you will come across a few GA aircraft. I believe all of these aircraft are of the AI variety, though I never stuck around long enough to be sure. As you pass the famous Renaissance Hotel, which has been crafted quite well, you will notice an Airtran hangar, other cargo aircraft and support equipment, and a continued assault of static and dynamic ground vehicles. More perimeter fencing can be found surrounding the north ramps as well.



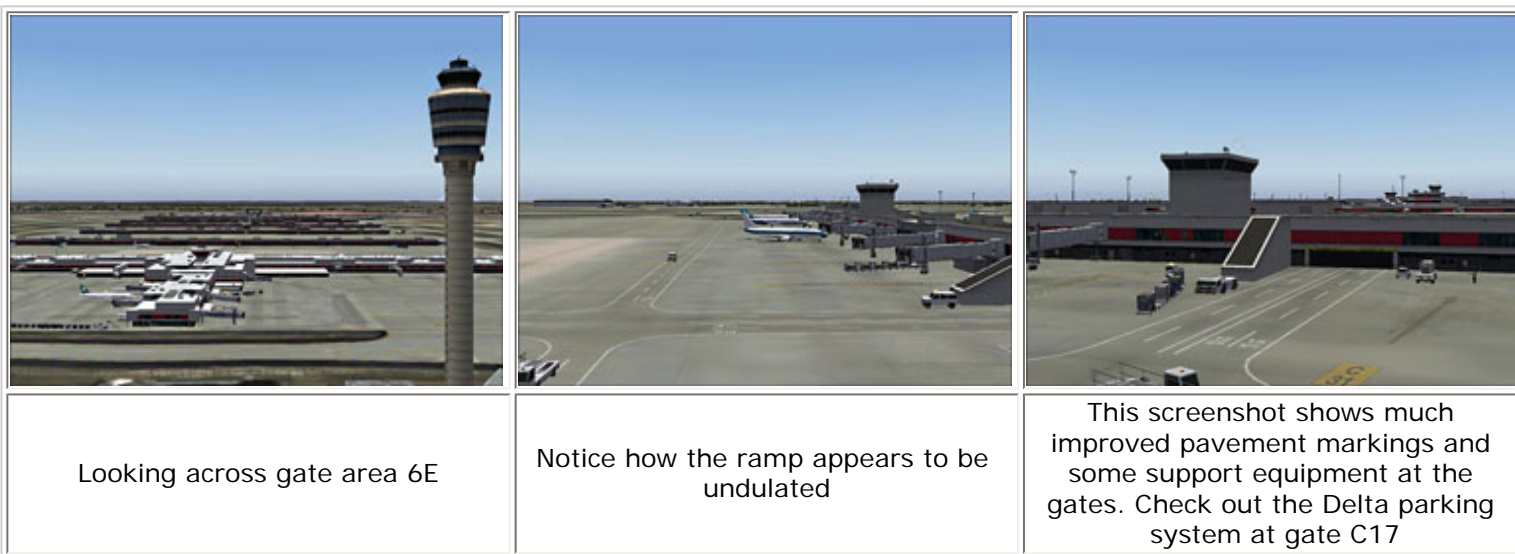
Fuel farms make up both sides of the north ramp, each of which contain countless tanks, ground vehicle refueling areas,

more buildings, and fuel support equipment. I noticed behind the Renaissance and other buildings that there were parking lots with the vehicles as part of the ground textures. This looks okay from above, but from near ground level, creates an eyesore from my point of view.

The Gates

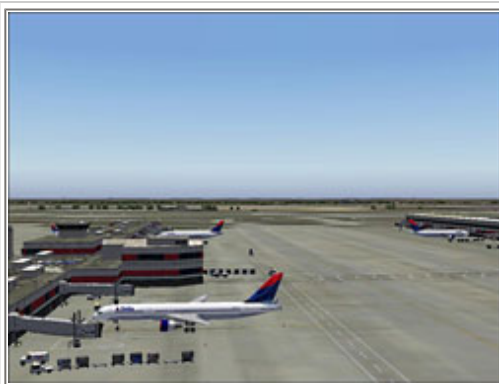
In the center of the airport is where you will find the terminal, tower, and all of the passenger gates. The gates are all in a row from 1 north/south through 6 north/south, and end with a perpendicular gate 6E. The gates come complete with jetways, Delta parking systems, and more ground support equipment. As with most airports, each gate is intended to accommodate certain size aircraft, which can be predetermined by reading the manual.

The Delta parking system is a handy traffic light type of system that will help you to position your aircraft properly for correct jetway docking. Green, yellow, and red lights are used to advise you to proceed, slow in preparation to stop, and to come to a complete stop. Red and green neon tubes are used to keep you in the correct direction, which will result in the ability to hook up with the jetways.



The jetways are activated by use of a NAV2 frequency, which should align themselves with your aircraft properly if you have parked as you should. You will need to refer to the manual to determine which aircraft are suited for which jetways, though I have yet to be misled by ground control.

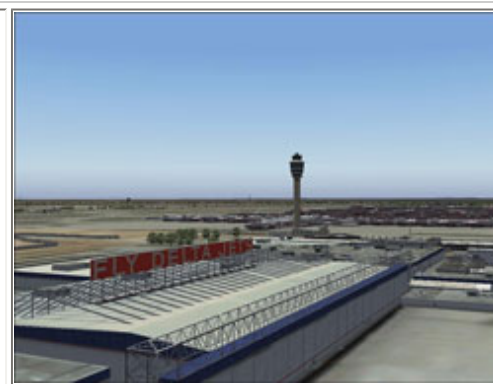
Depending on which, if any, AI traffic add-on you use, the gate areas can become extremely eventful. Using only the default traffic, I found plenty of room to park, which is made simple by ImagineSim having dedicated a handful of spots to user aircraft only. With Traffic 2004 installed and running at 70%, I barely found room to breath, which is not a distant reality at this extremely busy airport.



As you might expect, Delta takes up a lot of space here in Atlanta



A night shot of the gates as the traffic begins to slow a bit



The famous FLY DELTA JETS sign

On either side of the gate areas you will find more hangars and buildings, all of which are equally as detailed as what we saw on the north and south ramps. The famous Fly Delta sign has been modeled as well, which would have been a notable complaint from me had it not been.

Runways, Taxiways, and Ramps

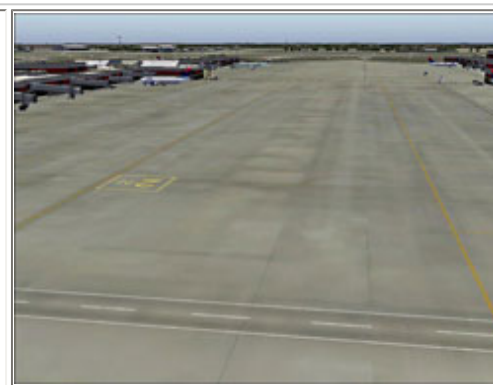
There are some add-ons out there that replace taxi, runway and ramp textures, none of which will be needed with this scenery. ImagineSim has modified all pavement textures to resemble well used, yet sufficiently maintained taxiways, runways and ramps. Each runway now has much more authentic looking identifiers, markings, and touchdown marks. All pavement has indications of cracks here and there, some natural weathering and discoloration, and all markings are moderately worn. Also, runways are now properly identified with the white lettering in red backgrounds.



This runway is obviously well used



Much better taxiway markings than by default. Notice the lack of a repeating pattern in the taxiway textures



The ramps have a much more authentic look. Default airports do not have these types of identification markings.

Some add-on pavement textures have a tendency to exhibit a repeating pattern, which can be hard to overcome in just a single bitmap image. ImagineSim, however, has done a fantastic job of giving the feeling that each runway, taxiway,

ramp area, and indeed all pavement, are unique and not a repeat of other areas. Just take a look at the screenshots from a variety of altitudes and you can see what a great job was done in this aspect of the add-on.

Performance

During my first approach into KATL, I was well aware that there was a scenery add-on coming up. My frame rates took a noticeable hit, but in fairness this was in the PMDG 747. Other aircraft, such as the LDS 767, Captain Sim C-130 and PSS 777 were also difficult for me to enjoy in the immediate area of KATL. Other aircraft, however, such as the Captain Sim 727, PMDG 737, and all of my GA aircraft, performed very well.

By comparison I average about 22-24 FPS in the PMDG 747 in other locals, but flying into Atlanta resulted in 15-17 FPS. This is with Traffic 2005 installed and cranked up to about 70%.

I managed to improve my performance considerably by disabling scenery shadows and pulling a few sliders just a shade to the left. Now I maintain a full 25 FPS in my LDS 767 (locked at 25) in most places, and Atlanta only drops me down to about 21. In other words, it took a bit of a compromise on my part, but the ImagineSim KATL scenery now causes no notable performance problems for me. For a better idea of how this scenery may affect your particular setup, I highly recommend consulting the AVSIM forums.

Departing Atlanta

I have very few complaints about this offering from the folks at ImagineSim, and in fact, I have found it to be a frequent stop when traveling through the southwest. Great attention to detail has been given to all of the hangars, buildings, terminals, the tower, gates, and indeed all areas of this airport. As far as I can tell, there are few, if any, notable exclusions with the exception of the autogen, which seems a bit odd in a perfect square around the airport.

I give this product my thumbs up, and am grateful that ImagineSim has kept those of us still using FS9 in mind. I am also pleased to report that ImagineSim has advised me that they are dedicated to updating this add-on as need be, the first of which can be found at there website.

Perhaps a compromise will need to be made for some simmers, maybe a reduction in AI traffic, less autogen, or some other performance enhancing technique, but I believe most will find themselves intrigued with the quality craftsmanship put into this offering.

To form your own opinion of this product, ImagineSim has offered a free demo evaluation available at their website. And, as always, please consult the AVSIM forums prior to any purchase.

What I Like About KATL

- Great recreation of airport hangars, terminal, tower, buildings, etc
- Nice addition of dynamic ground support equipment
- Great detail on pavement, such as runways, taxiways, and ramps
- The Delta parking system is a nice touch
-as are the animated jetways

What I Don't Like About KATL

- Performance can be an issue, though a compromise should be obtainable

Printing

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[KATL](#)

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Comments?

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