

AVSIM Commercial Scenery Review

Approaching Innsbruck



Product Information

Publishers: [Aerosoft](#)

Description: Commercial add-on scenery.

Download Size:
171 MB

Format:
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Simulation Type:
FS9

Reviewed by: [Viktor Lakatos](#) AVSIM Staff Reviewer - October 12, 2009

Introduction

I had thought it would have been less difficult to introduce my subject before I sat down to write my review. Browsing previously published reviews on sceneries we can find dozens of huge airports worldwide with multiple runways, labyrinths of taxiways, several terminals and endless aprons. Innsbruck airport gives us something special. It is not a JFK, Heathrow, Frankfurt, or Hong-Kong-scale airfield. However, this airport is also a famous one, but not because of its complexity, nor its passenger statistics. Its location and unique surroundings put it in the list of the most enjoyable airports in the world.

Although this review deals with Flight Simulator 2004, let me quote Flight Simulator X as it calls its Innsbruck approach mission as 'one of the most challenging instrument approaches in the world'.

Approaching Tirol

You have heard about Austria, but have not heard about Tirol? No way. Tirol, the western part of Austria, is a well-

known and very popular winter holiday destination. The city of Innsbruck, the heart of Tirol, is situated at the height of 1883 feet (574 meters) down in the narrow valley of Inn River. Its name means 'Bridge of the Inn'. The special geographical situation makes Innsbruck operations for aviators very exciting.



This map shows the location of the city between the high peaks in the Inn valley (Google Maps)

Innsbruck-Kranebitten Airport (IATA: INN/ICAO: LOWI) handles mostly regional flights and seasonal charters. Kranebitten is located next to the city in a western direction. In 2008 there were almost 45,000 movements registered which means approximately a 5% increase according to the previous year. The airport is well-known in the aviation world for its demanding approach due to the surrounding high peaks of the Alps and the unique weather.

Therefore certain aircraft types are prohibited from operating at the airport, others need to obtain special authorization given by the state authority in charge with air traffic control and safety of Austrian airspace, Austro Control GmbH. No doubt: Innsbruck is one of the most challenging airports in Europe. Although the range of aircraft-types is limited, we can meet all types from a Cessna 150 up to a wide-body Boeing 767 heavy on the ramp.

The runway directions are 08/26 with the length of 6561 feet (2000 meters) made of concrete. The standard runway usage is 26 for arrivals, 08 for departures. There are, however, procedures for 08 landings and 26 departures. Special circumstances, i.e. weather limitations might be reason for changing runway directions.

Runway 26 is equipped with a precision approach lighting system with ICAO-standard category-I flashing lights in 600 meters length. In addition there are 20 white flashing lights from 4900 meters to 600 meters before the threshold. For vertical visual guidance there are PAPI (Precision Approach Path Indicator) lights consisting of 4 units on both sides of the runway showing a 3.5 degree glideslope angle. In the opposite direction, there are neither an approach lighting system or touchdown-zone lights, only the same kind of PAPI lights are available for vertical positioning.



Final approach RWY 26, photo by Thierry Deutsch



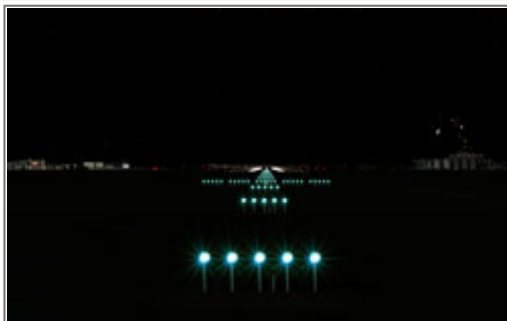
Final approach RWY 26, default FS hills look too bald



Approach lights of runway 26 by day...



...dusk...



... and night.



Runway 08 by night, no approach lights, only PAPI

Regarding the navigation, OEV localizer and DME beacons play important role. A glide slope antenna is co-located with a glide slope of 3.8 degrees.



Captain's hint: Don't forget: Use of the 'APP' autopilot mode is strictly prohibited during non-precision approach. Glide slope indications shall be considered only as advisory information. Always follow and cross-check fix altitudes written on the relevant approach chart and use V/S autopilot mode if you wish.

AB (ABSAM) locator is the 'approach ban' during instrument approaches for runway 26. Above AB locator pilots shall change to visual flight rules and an immediate missed approach shall be executed unless the crew has visual contact.

Since Innsbruck operations derive from ICAO standards, I will try to give you a bit of a special review. I will put Aerosoft's new release through its paces, but I will spend more time with the navigation procedures to show all the difficulties and beauty of an Innsbruck approach. I will try to give tips on how to fly safely and how to make your simulation more realistic. The complexity and difficulties of Innsbruck airport are not on the ground: airborne operation is the joy of what I would like to introduce to you.

Regarding the special geographical environment, the weather conditions shall also be discussed to make our simulation both real and safe. The weather around Innsbruck is generally good, but the visibility over the city compared to the rest of the Inn valley can be much less during low cloud base. This effect is called as 'Stadtwuzel'.

Summer has rain showers, winter brings heavy snow, and these factors can lower the cloud base and reduce visibility. Winds are normally westerly, except when the Foehn wind blows. A Foehn wind is a special type of dry down-slope wind which occurs in the lee of a mountain range. Surface winds from 120 to 150 degrees at 15 to 25 knots gusting 30 to 50 knots is called as Foehn situation.

The preferred runway direction for landing is 26, but during Foehn conditions the wind on final creates a low-level wind shear risk so RWY 08 is strongly recommended to be used even with a slight tailwind. In the review I will give you advice later on how to fly safe approaches during Foehn conditions.

Getting started

There was no difficulty in purchasing or installing the product. Aerosoft's new release is available at the vendor's online shop at the price of EUR 23.95 or USD 28.65. Just put it to your cart, proceed to checkout and pay for it in the manner you chose (options are PayPal, regular credit card, or bank transfer). The setup is the usual Aerosoft-made one: simple and clear, takes only a few minutes. Don't forget to have the serial code in your hand prior to your starting the install wizard.

As the scenery is compatible with Austria Professional 2004 and Ultimate Terrain Europe, its installation status is being checked during setup. The install shield offers you an option to add static vehicles to the scenery – if you wish to add them, just mark this option with a mouse click.

As the scenery is on your hard disk it is worth to have a look at your Start menu. 'LOWI Cofing tool' and 'LOWITraffic' are to fine tune your settings according to the hardware limits. The former is to switch on/off static vehicles, the latter handles dynamic ground traffic which I will discuss later.

The 30 page manual is served in PDF-format both in German and English. The English part is only 10 pages but gives all the necessary information of what a beginner user needs (advanced sim-pilots will look after further details anyway). Aerosoft supplies a pack of LOWI charts, but I suggest online-pilots to get the latest charts from the [VACC Austria](http://www.vacc.austria.at) website.

Test System
Intel Core 2 Duo 2.33 Ghz 2GB RAM NVIDIA9600 512MB Windows XP SP3 FS 9.1. Acer P203W 20" CrystalBrite Screen Saitek X52 Pro flight controls
Flying Time: 10 hours

Innsbruck is a small airport so it is easy to get familiar there. One strip and a small apron with no fixed stands. Compared to Europe's leading airports it is quite difficult to get lost in Innsbruck. Difficult, non-standard aerodrome operations, however, require the knowledge given by the additional chart package.

Scenery overview

Austria Professional 2004 scenery, however, is not a prerequisite for this scenery but is recommended to make the Innsbruck area (and the whole country) more realistic. The Inn River is missing in the default FS-scenery and the product adds it only to the local surrounding. As I do not have the Austria Professional 2004 add-on, my screenshots show the default FS textures of the Alps.

As we look down at Aerosoft's Innsbruck scenery from a bird's eye view, we can see a nice photographic landclass with relatively smooth borders. If I had been the author, I would have added a much longer part of the Inn River. I do miss the river from its valley in a longer way as the Inn may be a great aid for visual navigation. The GMAX designed 3D objects have good quality; we meet many custom buildings that also raises the level of reality.



The scenery from bird's eye view. I miss a longer river a lot!



Very nice overview of the airport, grass and field textures are my favourites



Photorealistic custom buildings

The city is alive: vehicles are moving in the streets continuously, traffic is always huge on Motorway A12. I cannot go on without making a note on train traffic. I was just looking at the trains in detail: passenger and freight trains are moving, safety devices in railroad level-crossings are working: gates are closing and a red flashing lights shows that a train is getting closer. As the train passed the level-crossing, the gates opened. Great small details: the pantographs of electric locomotives were sparking.



A passenger train is passing a level crossing. Gates are operating.



A look from the western edge with traffic on A12 Motorway



A small street by night, note the lamps and rare traffic.

Airfield details

As we know now, Innsbruck is a relative small airfield with one concrete strip. There is only one apron for the daily commercial service (although there is also a smaller one in the northern part of the airport for leisure purposes). Taxiways A and B connect the apron with the runway. Taxiway Z couples the northern hangars to the runway. It is difficult to examine the airport in details due to its size.

There are no markings on the apron; aircraft are guided to parking positions by marshallers. The detailed ICAO standard runway and taxiway markings are nice and crisp. In the real world the stop bars of the three taxiways are controlled by the tower. Due to Flight Simulator limitations, external control of these bars cannot be simulated.

But the stop bars are working: as we approach them with our aircraft, red lights change to green showing out to the runway for departure. I suggest setting the brakes a bit farther from the holding point during taxi-out. When you are cleared to enter the runway, you can pass through the stop bar and the red stop lights will turn to green simulating real operations.



The control tower. Do the ATC guys have lunchtime right now?



Overview on the airport buildings: the terminal and the parkings.



Static vehicles in the apron.



'Port-side' view of the terminal with shuttle buses. Informative signs are guiding the drivers.



The parking house is not too busy, you always have a free place there.



Airport buildings from the east.

The above mentioned flashing light system of runway 26 is only turned on in low visibility; however this switch cannot be simulated in FS9. So, these lights are always on.

Good news for helicopter fans, there are two helicopter landing facilities included in the scenery: LOJO is used by rescue helicopters of ÖAMTC (Österreichische Automobil, Motorrad und Touring Club; Car and Motorcycle Club of Austria) and the Ministry of Inner Affairs. The other heliport is located on the top of the hospital building. In the simulator, designers defined this heliport as LOKI where you can find it in the airport menu of your FS software. An FS-bug puts your helicopter to the ground level selecting LOKI. Just select 'Flight' menu and click on 'Reset flight' option to correct this small failure.



Air Rescue Center 'Christophorus 1' of ÖAMTC.



Police and rescue helicopter hangars.



Tyrolean Airlines hangar



Oh Oh, Boeing 767 does not fit the engine run stand...



Heliport on the top of the hospital building. You cannot position your helicopter there upon starting the game due to an FS bug. A 'reset flight' click corrects it.



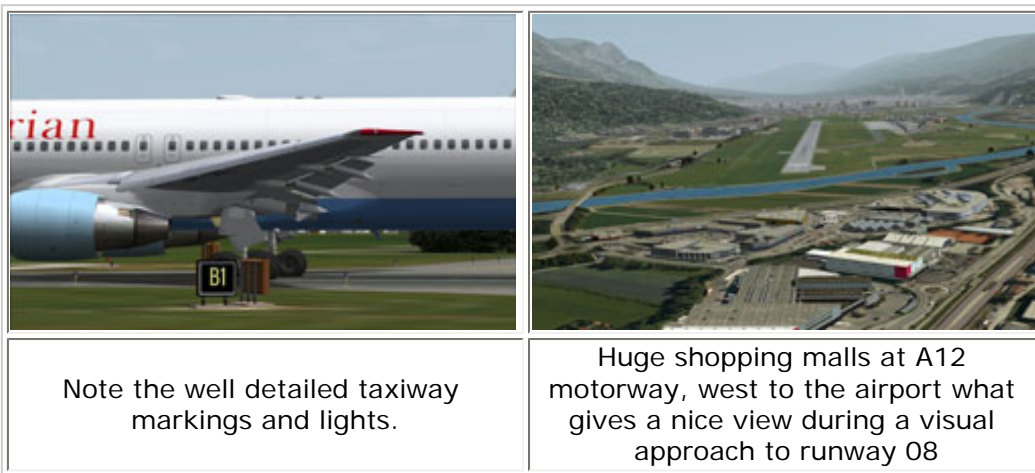
Old hangars



Entry gate at the northern part of the airport. Unfortunately I found it locked.

I liked the nice grass texture between the apron and the runway. It looks cool. However, there are – I do not know how to explain it – a few vertical grass textures (see below) I found them unnecessary and not really nice. It makes the feeling that the grass is uncared for.

Remembering my Austrian holidays, the grass is always nicely cut there; I have not seen anything like this. The night textures are very nice, although dark vehicles are moving on the apron at night. I cannot say anything bad about the textures at all.



Note the well detailed taxiway markings and lights.

Huge shopping malls at A12 motorway, west to the airport what gives a nice view during a visual approach to runway 08



Airport employees should not neglect sport activities.



Nice textures even by night, or ...



...sunset.

The airport is fully compatible with Aerosoft's Airport Enhancement Services (latest version is 2.02.). This means that if you activate this scenery in AES for xx credits, all the services will be available. Although there are no moving passenger jetways in Innsbruck, all ground handling services can be used and there is a 'follow-me' car to guide you at the airport.

As I have written, there are no fixed parking positions in the apron. The designers, however, have defined stands since it was necessary in FS9. Like in real life, use the marshaller for guidance to find your parking position or to get out from the apron.

Hardware issue

FPS rate is always an important issue when trying out a new product. I did a comparison between three models with maximum display settings. I set everything to maximum, used 1280x800x32 resolution with trilinear filtering, MIP mapping level 5 and 6 hardware rendered lights. I switched off the weather, and put a default Cessna C-172 at the end of runway 08, facing towards the city. Then I took off, and made a turn above the city to see how the FPS was changing. Then I did the same with a Level-D Boeing 767-300 and a PMDG Boeing 747-400. (I only used the last one for FPS test, as it's not recommended for Innsbruck operations anyway....). I always fly with FPS limit set to 25.

Approaching Innsbruck scenery frame rates:

Type	2D cockpit	Virtual cockpit	External view
C-172 default	25	25	25
Level-D Boeing 767-300	23-25	23-25	25
PMDG Boeing 747-400	20-22	17-25	25

I had no FPS problems with my configuration at all during the test (without weather). If you realize decreasing frame rates, you can pull back one or more sliders in the display menu. I say again, the numbers above show maximum

detail settings. Custom weather engines, of course, may affect the performance of your hardware.

I also tried to fly a visual approach from Rattenberg NDB to runway 08 using rainy, overcast FS weather with maximum detail. I didn't enjoy what I saw. Using Level-D B767 I had to realize a 30-40 percent FPS drop. During the approach, my frame rate was only 15-18. I suggest to try this with as high a detail as you are brave, and then you can pull back the sliders according to your graphical preferences.

The real deal

I have already dealt with some basic navigation, now let's jump in. (I used a Boeing 737 in the following examples, autopilot systems of other types can be different.) Don't forget: **MY FLYING TIPS MUST NOT BE USED FOR REAL AVIATION; THESE ARE ONLY FOR FLIGHT SIMMING PURPOSES!** First, let's see a LLZ/DME approach for runway 26. I will not teach you how to read approach charts point by point, I just want to point out some key facts. Be aware of the localizer offset; be ready to fly a curve, passing AB locator to align with the runway centerline. In case of a missed approach, pay special attention to the left turn. Monitor speed with maximum bank angle.

Captain's hint: Passing AB locator without visual contact: Missed approach! Even if you are above your MDA. Your approach clearance limit is AB.

I suggest to use autopilot prior to AB in VOR/LOC lateral and V/S vertical mode. You will be busy even without manual flight. These are the rules of a real European airline. They work with strict autopilot rules, i.e. in Innsbruck autopilot shall engage as soon as possible (!) after departure or missed approach to decrease crew workload.



The approach what I especially like is the special circling approach to runway 08. This type of approach is allowed during daytime only. Its first stage is the instrumental part, same as the special LLZ/DME approach for runway 26. As you pass AB, check ALT HOLD on FMC and regarding lateral navigation switch to HDG SEL mode to continue. Just join the right-hand traffic circuit of runway 08. During foehn conditions, do not descend below 5000 feet MSL until passing the southern part of the airport. During foehn conditions moderate turbulence, wind shear and possible dawn draughts can be expected over the Inn River. You may also experience a significant increasing of the tailwind component on base leg. Do not search after any approach lights, there are only PAPI lights. (Having visual reference above AB you can either continue straight-in to RWY 26 or circle to 08).

When we think we've spent enough time in Innsbruck (I can't imagine how long it would be), have a look at the departure procedures.

Captain's hint: Always use full CLB thrust and MAX ANGLE CLB speeds at departure from Innsbruck runway 26 until reaching 9500 feet. Innsbruck is not the aerodrome where you will take care of your engines or save fuel.

Looking at the charts, visual departure runway 26 seems to be interesting. It is visual; since a visual turn is included in the procedure before joining LLZ OEJ inbound to AB locator. The required weather minimums are 1500 meters ground visibility and 1500 ft ceiling. Flight visibility shall be at least 3 kilometers for category A and B aircrafts, 5 kilometers for category C and D aircrafts. After lift-off you should climb VISUALLY along the valley with maximum

gradient. After reaching the area of the village of Zirl comes the left turn: maintain low speed (V2+15kts) with maximum bank angle. Be aware of altitude restrictions.

Captain's hint: Study engine-out procedures. You are not allowed to fly in the direction you want in case of an engine failure. Always assign a take-off alternate!

I recommend using charts for those who have not tried it yet. It raises the reality level of flight simming to a height you have not seen before. Furthermore, in my opinion charts are necessary for an enjoyable simulation and maximum experience of Innsbruck operations. If you don't know what is where, you cannot find it. The vicinity of Innsbruck airport is not a flat, wide table. It's rather like a bucket. It's high time beginners upgraded themselves to an advanced level. Approaching Innsbruck is a good reason for that!

Summary

I enjoyed all the moments testing this product and I use LOWI as a regular destination in daily simulation. This scenery, however, is very special for me in comparison with other sceneries, like the huge (using Aerosoft phraseology) mega-airports. I enjoyed flying to Innsbruck even with default scenery. I use the new Aerosoft scenery not because of the high-quality terminal buildings, jetways etc. but because of the rise in adrenaline as I descend down to the clouds approaching Innsbruck.

The design team did the best that they could: they modeled the airport and its surroundings. They could not have added anything more to flight simulation. And what I especially respect: they did not want to do more than reality. As we can read in the manual, the team were able to recognize the limitations of their project: 'Keeping in mind that the main task was to build an airport for simulation purposes I had to refrain myself from creating each and every house of this very beautiful city, even though I was very much tempted.' – the author says. You will understand what I am talking about if you fly even short routes, i.e. Milano-Innsbruck, Munich-Innsbruck, Vienna-Innsbruck, etc.

Aerosoft's Approaching Innsbruck is a definite must-have for those who fly not (only) because of the moving jetways and automated docking guidance, or large airports with tons of 'shiny' features, but like challenges and are not afraid of navigating in foggy weather between high snowy peaks. Aerosoft's Approaching Innsbruck scenery shows that Innsbruck is in deed: A small, lovely airport at a beautiful place, an island of peace.

What I Like About Approaching Innsbruck

- Regular high Aerosoft quality
- Represents a calm, friendly town and regional-size airport without any exaggeration
- Alive town, moving traffic
- AES compatibility
- I would love visual approach for runway 08 even if the scenery didn't have the previous advantages.

What I Don't Like About Approaching Innsbruck

- Unnecessary and low-quality 2D grass textures scattered in the airfield
- I would have added more details to the surroundings (especially the Inn River)

Printing

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