

AVSIM Freeware Review



Review By Daniel Almeida

Rating Guide

Publisher: [SANDIM](#)

Description:
AN-24RV Turboprop

Download Size: 13.2mb	Format: Downloadable zip file	Simulator: Fs2004
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Introduction:

Turboprops are normally not my cup of tea. I find them too slow and too boring when compared to heavy jet aircraft. There are some exceptions though, The TU-114 for example is such a fantastic piece of engineering that nobody can ignore it and there are also other smaller not as spectacular aircraft, that have a lot of "sex-appeal" for me as well. One of them that really can throw a smile on my face is the Antonov AN-24 (and its family of AN-26, 30 and 32 aircraft that were developed upon the AN-24 model). It looks great, it's from an era before the FMC's and it's from Russia, (ok, it's actually from Ukraine) the country of the great airplanes (I know, I'm biased ;-)). Some time ago the SANDIM team developed the AN-24 for FS9 and put a package together that looked like a winner, unfortunately I have only had the time to test it now and here are my thoughts about the FS9 simulation of the AN-24.

History:

The AN-24 had its maiden flight in 1960 and entered service in 1963 flying for Aeroflot. It's still produced today in China under the name Y-7 and surprisingly a whole lot of them are still in service. The An-2X and 3X family is also used very often as military aircraft and I had the pleasure to see some of them flying for the Polish Air-force this year during a visit to Krakow. The aircraft is powered by two Ivchenko AI-24A turboprops, driving four-blade constant speed propellers. It can carry 55 passengers over a distance of 1300 nm.

Installation:

Well, first of all we should clarify one thing. The original AN-24 package was very buggy and had problems with the autopilot, the ADF needles, the FDE and other things. Very soon after the original release a patch was uploaded to AVSIM that corrected some mistakes. The patched AN-24 is however still a mixed bag of excellent ideas, great features and some bugs, but the FDE is still a problem. I went to [Avsim](#) and looked in the Russian aviation forum section for advice and I found it in a post of Gabor Hrasko, who's a very dedicated AN-24 simmer. He wrote a great tutorial about the navigation systems of the AN-24 and put also a list of patches and advised add-ons for the Antonov together. I had therefore the choice to review an easy to install but somewhat "undone" package or an improved but very hard to install package and I decided to go for the second option. The first two steps of the installation, i.e. the original package and the patch 1 are just a matter of double-clicking an *.exe and choosing the directory, for the other files however you'll need to do a lot of editing, and if you're afraid of messing with *.cfg files, then this might not be really for you. [Here](#) is the link to Gabor's tutorial. The original package and patch 1 can be found at Avsim's file library. The other links are provided in Gabor's document. Be prepared, the installation is really troublesome.

Model:

The outside model looks very nice and is not very fps hungry on my machine (and I have only a low end system at the moment).

The VC looks good and has some clickable spots, the model was released before the SDK from Microsoft however, and I think that's the reason why we didn't get a full clickable VC at this time. In 2D-view you get the VC side-views, i.e. if you use SEESELF=1 in your FS9.cfg you won't have side-views at all, just air...

The performance in the VC is a bit poor but that might be hardware related. All in all a great model, very realistic and very nice to look at.

Test System
AMD Athlon XP 1700+ 512mb Ram Geforce4 Ti4600 Audigy2 Windows XP Home Wingman Extreme Joystick CH Yoke Pedals
Flying Time: 30+ Hours



2-D Panel & systems:

The panel is together with the available patches a work of art. Most systems are simulated and included, especially the navigation equipment is very, if not absolutely, complete. You can navigate with RSN beacons, using Azimuth and Orbita values provided by the flight-planner from Gabor's tutorial. There's also a NAS system included, similar to the NVU system of the TU-154. The main difference to the Tupolev here is the fact that you can't program two waypoints at once (one active and one in stand-by). In reality this isn't a big problem as the navigator has two hands and big instruments in front of himself, i.e. he can just switch the values to the next waypoint in a few seconds and that's it. In the sim we have a problem here, as we have only a mouse and little tiny instruments on a little computer screen...the switching of waypoints is very slow this way and sometimes we might have some serious trouble because of that. In Gabor's tutorial you can find some work-around for these problems but you can't really solve it at the moment. Gabor seems to

be developing a new utility that will take over the switching of waypoints for the AN-24, when this is released, it will be a great step-forward for the navigation with this plane.



Both 2D and VC Panels reproduced in amazing detail

All other instruments are also included, like two ADF's , VOR, etc.

The autopilot is custom built and like most systems of this era, not very sophisticated. You have heading and automatic turn modes on the one side; and pitch respectively altitude hold on the other. The autopilot can't track radials.

The panel layout is very well done, you get the most important instruments on the captain side, and you have easy to reach sub-panels, for the flight-engineer and navigation spots. One important thing that has to be done is the right initialization of the panel, also described in the tutorial. You'll have a lot of problems other wise, like e.g. invisible sub-panels when trying to reach them from the navigator spot. One interesting thing that happened to me was that I had no VHF radios after loading the sim with a cold & dark

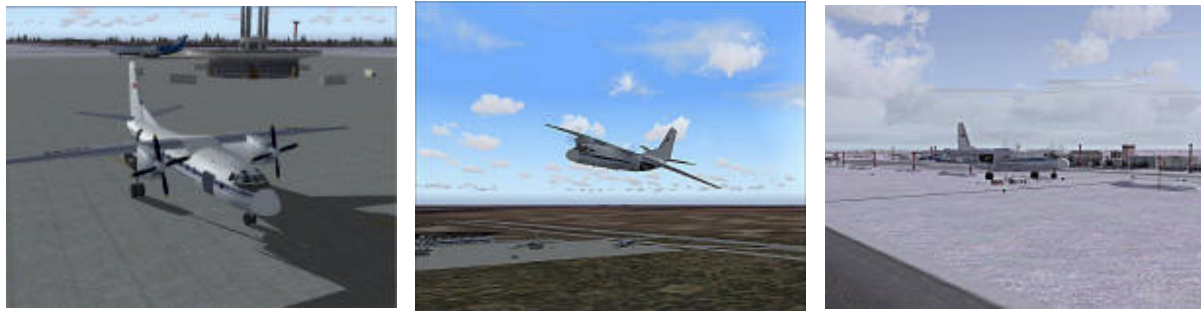
Cessna. I had to shut down the Antonov the hard way to get all the systems, but this might be hardware related, I don't know.

To summarize it, you'll get a very, very realistic panel. The systems left out, are mostly impossible to reproduce because of FS9's limitations like the jet engine of the An-24RV (used sometimes on take-off). In FS9 a plane can be either a turboprop or a jet but it can't be both...

There's also a service panel to get the joystick input directly from Windows but it does just that and is only meant to be used if you have a joystick with a lot of noise that interferes with the autopilot. You can also assign buttons etc, but it's not to be compared with the joystick routine of the PT Tu-154.

FDE:

Well, unfortunately, this is where this package is lacking in my opinion. By the way, the FDE used is the latest one, mentioned in Gabor's tutorial. I didn't really look at the real numbers this time I have to admit, but I didn't bother because I got some very strange behaviour from the FDE sometimes. One thing for example is to accelerate during take-off roll (let's say 220Km/h) and try to raise the nose something like 15°. What do I expect normally? Right, nothing will happen, the aircraft will gain altitude and that's it. With the AN-24 it tends to stall with very small angles of attack, it doesn't matter what the speed and that just can't be realistic in my opinion. During cruise and descent it seems OK, I can reach the cruise speed of 450Km/h without trying too hard and the airplane behaviour is not bad, even though it feels a bit dead when compared to the Tu-154. The main difference here is the joystick routine however and the comparison might not be that fair to be sincere, as there's no other add-on for FS9 that flies so well as the PT Tu-154 anyway.



Various screenshots of the AN-24

Conclusion:

The AN-24RV really has a lot of potential but it makes an undone impression, even after all the unofficial patches. The main problem at the moment is the FDE, but the installation routine is also too complicated at the moment if you want to fly the AN-24RV in its latest stage.

The visuals are very good and the systems included are great too, but that as important as it is, is not everything. I hope the developers find some time again to invest in this plane, especially because their new addition to the FS world (the TU-114) is surely a work of art but fails to reproduce the navigation instruments of the real counterpart. I think the decision to include easier navigation instruments might help the newbies or the not so hardcore simmers, but it takes a lot away of the uniqueness of the Russian aircraft. The An-24RV on the other hand has this uniqueness in it but it needs a last touch-up to be perfect. The SANDIM team is working at the moment on a payware Tu-134, I really hope they don't forget those people who care about real world navigation and who actually love to learn to fly these birds as they are supposed to be flown.

But it's a great package anyway and if you don't have it yet, get it!

[Click here to download the base package](#)

[Click here to download the patch](#)

[Click here to download the tutorial manual](#)

What I Like About The AN-24

- Great Panel
- Realistic System Simulation
- Good VC
- Good exterior model

What I Like About Don't Like About The AN-24

- Bad FDE
- A few bugs still evident in the aircraft
- Installation of patches and unofficial updates are complex

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Antonov AN-24

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