

Aerosoft

Airbus A320 Family Professional Bundle for P3D v4.3+

Based on A318/319 v1.1.0.1 and A320/321 v1.2.0.2

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i7-7700K @ 4.6ghz | ASUS GTX980 4gb | 16gb 2400mhz RAM | 500gb dedicated SSD | Windows 7 64bit

Intro

The Airbus A320 family consists of four narrow-body twinjet airliners known as the A318, A319, A320, and A321 with each having a different fuselage length as the primary difference. The A320 was introduced into service with Air France in 1988 and makes use of extensive fly-by-wire flight controls. The A320 family's primary competitor is Boeing's 737 family, with newer models of A321 rivaling their 757. The Aerosoft Airbus Family bundle focuses on the primary A320 family in service known as the CEO or "current engine option" variant. This includes the CFM and IAE powered A318-321 with the A319-321 having the option for Airbus's Sharklet technology as opposed to wingtip fences. The package retails for \$80.99 US for the download version and \$81.99 for the CD version, with upgrade pricing available for those who own the previous Airbus Bundle.

Exterior Model

Comparing to the previews Aerosoft Airbus A320 Family model, not too much has changed. That being said, this lack of major update means all of the liveries previously created for the older version are still compatible with the newer one, albite some .cfg tweaks. The Aerosoft team did include a few additional models this time around with various satdome options available. Unfortunately, these options are not hot-swappable like on some other addons and are instead a completely separate model, meaning no mixing and matching components if that's something you enjoy.

It is worth noting that the new externals have received some minor updates to take advantage of P3Dv4's new technology and have been recompiled using the latest available compilers. That being said, the model does still hold up quite well and I can't personally think of anything additional that I would like to see added or changed. Compared to the previous model, it does look a bit better but that is mainly due to the new technology available in P3Dv4.





Interior Model

The interior model is where most of the upgrades from the previous A320 family package lie. The VC has received a major overhaul in both models and textures and it really makes a difference. The text on all the panels and gauges is sharp and clear and the sound environment is immersive. Another major welcomed addition is the inclusion of TFDi Design's TrueGlass and RealLight technologies adding windshield rain effects and a much more robust lighting engine. I even experienced St. Elmo's fire when flying over a thunderstorm once! Each variant of Airbus also has some subtle differences in the layout of their overheads. There were some places in the 2D popups that I did notice some text overlapping or becoming misaligned. While it wasn't always repeatable it did happen often enough to be of some slight annoyance. I generally received high framerates compared to other 3rd party airliners of similar class.







Systems

The Aerosoft A320 Professional Bundle is designed with the mindset that the aircraft should be detailed enough to enjoy day-to-day operations but not fully “study level” (whatever that means anymore based on anyone’s varying definition). It is my opinion that they hit this mark fairly well. From what I could gather from real-world resources, the A320 family is able to be properly simulated and enjoyed for normal condition flying. The only thing I did pick up on is that the default ATC system still works even with the radios switched off. The fact that Aerosoft didn’t go

the full-systems and full-failure simulation route is to keep the plane affordable for the type of flying most people tend to do. While I agree it would be nice to have some service-based failures, generally as long as a plane is operated within the proper parameters, you'd never see those failures anyway. Also, at the moment, the captain and copilot gauges display identical information. This is planned to be updated at some point, but for now something to take into account. I also noticed that using my joystick mapped trim buttons, the trim was highly sensitive. Simply clicking on the trim wheels instead make for much smoother adjustments.



Unfortunately, there is one aspect of this plane that I really must take issue with. It was not designed to be flown with a frame rate below 18 FPS due to the way the fly-by-wire system was modeled. This isn't normally a problem, as the aircraft performs exceptionally well as far as the frame rate goes. It's the times where external forces make the simulator drop below that level. For example, I personally only like to sit in front of the sim for around an hour or two so I make heavy use of time acceleration to skip most of the boring cruise (usually 4x max). The problem arises when P3D is trying to simulate more at once at a faster rate causing the FPS to drop below that 18 FPS threshold. When the FPS drops, even for a second, the Airbus would throw itself entirely out of whack: porpoising, flying off track, and sometimes even throwing itself into a dive while doing barrel rolls. The solution? Don't use time acceleration. Okay, fine. I did a few shorter haul flights within my time constraint without time acceleration and for the most part everything was fine and dandy and my FPS stayed above 18. I run my sim computer with multiple monitors: one for the sim and the other for utilities and general internet browsing

while in cruise. On a couple flights I again lost complete control of the plane with instant death-spirals and other loopy behavior on a simple task switch (ie switching from Chrome to P3D). The frame rate dropped for maybe half a second and suddenly I'm upside down with all systems shut completely down in a cold and dark state at 33,000ft. And even though all systems were shut down the aircraft was still responding to input commands. The control surfaces weren't moving externally at all but the plane was responding to input. Granted system-failure wasn't intended to be simulated but if it happens in such an extreme case like that, I would expect something to be modeled.

Now in the Aerosoft forums, Mathjis stated that the blame for minor drops lies primarily with the external utilities. Personally, I feel like they are taking the wrong approach to this matter by blaming other developers (which seems to be a theme for almost all developers anytime something goes wrong these days). They know that the primary bulk of their users use external weather engines and other utilities that will cause occasional hiccups and frame rate drops. It doesn't matter that if the sim is running at a smooth 30+ FPS, there will be a time on most systems where something will cause it to drop below that 18 FPS threshold they set. Why not take this into account from the get-go? Sure, upgrading the PC hardware to the latest and greatest Nvidia 10XX series is probably a damned good solution, but it isn't feasible for many people due to the cost and isn't even guaranteed to stop those hiccups entirely even with conservative graphics settings and other high-end components (note that my PC does exceed their recommended requirements apart from the operating system). And in the modern simming world you can't outright expect users to just run a default sim apart from scenery and your plane. A standard has been set years ago that includes these other utilities, especially when the product also integrates the use of these utilities (ie weather radar) and developers should take all of these factors into account. This is certainly not an issue I have encountered on other developers' aircraft and I sincerely hope they can figure something out before they implement the same philosophy into their A330, a plane I am very much looking forward to *IF* I can use time-acceleration on long hauls. *Rant over.* Forum post in question located here: <http://forum.aerosoft.com/index.php?/topic/137842-airbus-goes-nuts/>

Sounds

As stated previously, the cockpit environment soundscape is wonderfully done and the addition of an automated co-pilot to help run through checklists is an added bonus. External sounds are also comparable to my experience around their real-world counterparts.

Conclusion

For roughly \$20.25 USD/plane the Aerosoft Airbus A320 Family Professional Bundle is well worth the investment. You get 4 aircraft types with 2 engine options, Sharklet and satdome external options, and multiple different VC layouts. Unless you are looking to simulate full systems failures regularly, I see no reason to spend more for fewer models. In addition, it is easy on the frame rate compared to other airliners available, just so long as nothing else is slowing your system down.