

Microsoft Flight Simulator 2024 Made Easy for PS5

*Your Journey to Skilled Pilot, with Cockpit Training, Flight
Planning, Navigation, Realistic Flying Techniques, and 24
Customized Missions*

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Although this guide explains aviation principles and simulator operation, it is not intended to replace professional flight instruction, aviation certification programs, or training provided by licensed instructors, approved flight schools, or aviation authorities. Microsoft Flight Simulator 2024 is designed primarily as a simulation and entertainment platform, and users should not depend solely on simulator experience when making decisions related to real-world flight operations.

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Part 1: Getting Started

CHAPTER 1 - Welcome Aboard: What MSFS 2024 Is and What You're Getting Into

Before you touch a single control, it helps to understand exactly what you bought, what it will ask of your PS5, and what — realistically — the first few hours will feel like. This chapter is that orientation.

1.1 What You Actually Bought

Microsoft Flight Simulator 2024 (MSFS 2024) is not a flying-themed action game. It is a simulation of real-world aviation, built on a live digital twin of the entire planet: real terrain, real airports, real air traffic, and weather pulled from live meteorological data. When you look down at London or Lagos or Los Angeles, you are looking at satellite and aerial imagery of the actual place, reconstructed in three dimensions.

On PS5, this arrived later than on PC and Xbox — the console version launched on 8 December 2025, built specifically around the DualSense controller and, from Sim Update 5 onward, PlayStation VR2. That matters for you as a reader: PS5 is the newest platform for this simulator, which means the community, the settings, and the accessory ecosystem are all still maturing. This book assumes zero prior experience with flight simulators of any kind, on any platform.

The core loop is simple to describe and endless to master: you choose an aircraft, choose a departure and destination, and fly the route using real procedures. There is no scoring system chasing you, no timer, and in most modes, no way to “lose.” The simulator's job is to be as close to the truth of flying as your hardware allows. Your job, over the next fourteen chapters, is to learn to fly it.

It helps to understand what problem this software is actually solving. Real flight training is expensive, weather-dependent, and geographically limited — you fly from whichever small airfield is near you, in whatever aircraft your local school owns, when the weather cooperates. MSFS 2024 removes every one of those constraints. You can practice a short-field landing in the Scottish Highlands at sunrise, then five minutes later practice a crosswind approach in the Andes at dusk. Professional pilots use this exact simulator, or its predecessor, to stay sharp on procedures between real flights. You're starting with the same core tool as people who fly for a living — you're just starting at the very beginning of it.

One expectation worth setting early: this simulator will occasionally humble you, and that is by design. A cross-wind that pushes your aircraft sideways on final approach isn't a bug — it's the same cross-wind a real pilot would have to correct for. Every difficulty you encounter in this book has a real technique that solves it, and that technique is what you're actually here to learn.

1.2 Why This Isn't Like Your Other PS5 Games

If you've come from action, sports, or racing games, the biggest adjustment isn't the controls — it's the pacing and the definition of success. A wrong turn in a racing game costs you a few seconds. A wrong turn in MSFS 2024 might mean re-planning a twenty-minute climb, and that's fine. Nobody is watching a leaderboard. The table below sums up the mental shift worth making before your first flight.

FROM ARCADE GAMING TO REAL AVIATION

MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2024 ON PLAYSTATION 5

IT'S NOT JUST A GAME — IT'S FLIGHT TRAINING

ARCADE GAMING	VS	FLIGHT SIMULATION
• Fast-Paced Action • Instant Results • No Real Consequences • Simple Controls • Entertainment Focus		• Realistic Physics • Procedures Matter • Patience & Precision • Learn From Mistakes • Real-World Skills

REALISTIC FLIGHT PHYSICS
Every movement affects the aircraft. Feel the weight, lift, drag, and environment.

PROCEDURES
Follow real-world checklists, clearances, and standard operating procedures.

PATIENCE
Good decisions take time. Rushing leads to mistakes.

FLIGHT PLANNING
Plan your route, check weather, fuel, NOTAMs, and alternates.

INSTRUMENT MONITORING
Read your instruments, manage systems, fly the aircraft.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS
Understand your surroundings, traffic, weather, and terrain.

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES
Every mistake is a lesson. Analyze, adjust, and improve.

REAL-WORLD AVIATION SKILLS
Build knowledge and experience that transfer to real aviation.

Books shown: AIM (Aeronautical Information Manual), PILOT'S HANDBOOK OF AERONAUTICAL KNOWLEDGE, AIRPLANE FLYING HANDBOOK (FAA-H-8083-3C), FAR/AIM (FEDERAL AVIATION REGULATIONS), AVIATION WEATHER SERVICES ADVISORY, POOLEY'S FLIGHT GUIDE.

The mindset shift from arcade gaming to simulation.

This isn't a warning to lower your expectations — it's the opposite. Once you stop treating mistakes as failures and start treating them as information (“why did that landing bounce?”), the simulator becomes one of the most rewarding things you can do with a PS5, because every skill you build actually means something in the real world of aviation.

There's also a pacing difference that catches new pilots off guard: real flights take real time. A short hop between two nearby airfields might take fifteen minutes; a transatlantic airliner flight can take six hours or more of real time, even with time compression tools. You are never expected to fly a full long-haul route start to finish in one sitting — experienced simmers routinely pause mid-cruise, save, and resume later, exactly as this book will show you in Chapter 7. Knowing that up front changes how you plan your first few sessions: pick flights that fit the time you actually have, not the flight time an airliner would need in real life.

1.3 The Living World: What Makes MSFS 2024 Different

The single feature that separates this simulator from everything else on PS5 is that the world is not designed — it's reconstructed. Four systems work together in the background of every flight to make that possible, and understanding them will help you make sense of things you'll notice in later chapters, like why your local airport looks eerily accurate, or why a flight at 3pm looks different from the same flight at 3am.

In practice, this means the weather you fly through on a Tuesday afternoon is pulled from real Tuesday-afternoon weather data for that region — real cloud layers, real wind direction, real visibility. It means that airliner crossing your flight path at 34,000 feet may be modelled on an actual scheduled flight. And it means the sun sets where and when it should, based on the real date and your real-world position on the globe. None of this is required knowledge to fly — but it explains why so many pilots describe their first flight over their own hometown as the moment the simulator “clicked” for them.



The four systems behind MSFS 2024's living world.

1.4 The Fleet: What You'll Eventually Be Flying

MSFS 2024's complete aircraft roster spans 125 machines at the top edition, grouped loosely into six families. You won't fly all of these in your first month, and you shouldn't try — Chapter 2 onward will point you to the right aircraft for each stage of learning. For now, use this as a map of where you're headed.



The six broad aircraft families in MSFS 2024.

A practical tip from experience: almost every new pilot wants to start in an airliner because it looks the most impressive. Resist that urge. The General Aviation category — small, single-engine aircraft like the Cessna 152 and 172 — responds to your inputs the way a real light aircraft does, which makes it far easier to feel what pitch, roll, and power are actually doing. You'll fly your first ten hours almost entirely in that category, and Chapter 6 is built around exactly that aircraft class.

It's also worth knowing that within each family, aircraft range enormously in complexity. Two aircraft can both be “General Aviation” and feel completely different to fly — one might have three simple gauges, another a full glass cockpit with a flight computer. The table below gives you a small, sensible reading list of aircraft across the difficulty curve, well ahead of where this book will actually take you, so you know what you're working toward.

Aircraft	Category	Difficulty	Why It Matters
Cessna 152	General Aviation	Beginner	Your Chapter 6 training aircraft.
Cessna 172	General Aviation	Beginner	The real world's most-flown trainer.
Diamond DA40	General Aviation	Beginner-Intermediate	First taste of a glass cockpit.
Cessna 208 Caravan	General Aviation	Intermediate	Bush-flying and cargo contracts.
Airbus A320neo	Airliner	Advanced	Chapter 11: autopilot, MCDU, ILS.
Boom XB-1	Supersonic	Advanced	A supersonic bonus aircraft, added simultaneously across PC, Xbox, and PS5.

1.5 Editions Explained: What's in the Box

MSFS 2024 on PS5 is sold in four editions. They don't differ in features, flight model, or world detail — every edition gives you the full living Earth, the same career system, and the same Challenge League. The only differences are how many aircraft and bespoke hand-built airports are unlocked from day one.

Edition	Price (USD)	Aircraft	Handcrafted Airports	What You're Really Paying For
Standard	\$69.99	70	150	Everything you need to learn properly. Start here.
Deluxe	\$99.99	80	155	+10 aircraft, +5 airports over Standard.
Premium Deluxe	\$129.99	95	160	+25 aircraft, +10 airports over Standard. Best value if you'll play for years.
Aviator	\$199.99	125	160	Everything in Premium Deluxe plus all 30 Microsoft Marketplace payware aircraft.

Buying advice

If you're not sure this hobby is for you yet, Standard is a genuinely complete experience — 70 aircraft is more than enough to learn on for months. If you already know you're going to be here for the long haul, Premium Deluxe is the edition most experienced simmers recommend: the jump from 70 to 95 aircraft covers almost every major training and career milestone, at a smaller premium than Aviator. Save Aviator for later; everything it adds can also be bought individually from the in-game Marketplace once you know what you actually want (see Chapter 14).

1.6 PS5 vs PS5 Pro: What Actually Changes

You do not need a PS5 Pro to learn to fly, complete Career Mode, or fly comfortably in VR. But if you're deciding between the two consoles, or wondering whether an upgrade is worth it, here's what genuinely changes and what doesn't.

Area	PS5	PS5 Pro
Resolution	Dynamic 4K, upscaled; drops resolution first when the scene gets heavy.	Higher and steadier native resolution, especially over dense cities and clouds.
Graphics modes	Performance and Balanced modes.	Adds a dedicated Quality mode with extra headroom for detail sliders.
PSVR2 performance	Fully supported; expect to lean on lower detail settings for a stable image.	More stable frame pacing in VR, which matters more for comfort than raw sharpness.
Load / streaming	Fast SSD streaming; brief pauses possible over ultra-dense airports.	Quicker world-data streaming, fewer texture pop-ins at speed.
Storage needed	Roughly 30-50 GB depending on edition — dramatically smaller than MSFS 2020's footprint thanks to cloud streaming — plus ongoing world-update downloads.	Same install size; a fast SSD or expansion card is strongly recommended either way.

The honest summary: PS5 Pro buys you comfort and headroom, not a different game. Everything in this book — every setting, every control, every procedure — works identically on both consoles.

It's also worth knowing that the simulator doesn't stand still after launch. Asobo and Microsoft ship regular free World Updates — improving specific countries' terrain and airports — alongside numbered Sim Updates that add features like the PSVR2 support and Marketplace access that arrived with Sim Update 5. None of this costs extra on top of your edition price, and none of it requires you to do anything beyond keeping the game updated, which the PS5 handles automatically in the background.

1.7 Installing the Game

Installation on PS5 is straightforward, but a few choices in the first-launch wizard will affect every session afterward, so it's worth doing deliberately rather than mashing through it. Here's the path from box (or download button) to your first flight.



The installation and first-launch sequence.

Practical installation notes

- Wired ethernet beats Wi-Fi for the initial download — with world updates layered on top of a base install that's far smaller than MSFS 2020's, a stable connection still saves real time.
- Keep the PS5 plugged into power (not standby) during install; large installs occasionally pause under aggressive rest-mode settings.
- If you're on a PS5 with a smaller internal SSD, check free space before you start: between the base install, day-one patch, and later World Updates, this title's footprint grows over time.
- Choose your data-saver / streaming setting deliberately during setup. Streaming pulls live-world data as you fly; if your connection is limited or metered, the wizard lets you cap this — revisit it in Chapter 15 if you notice stutters later.
- The first-launch wizard will ask you to pick a home airport. Don't overthink this — you can change it any time, and Chapter 6 will have you flying from a specific training airport regardless.

1.8 Career Mode at a Glance

Every edition of MSFS 2024 includes Career Mode, and while Chapter 12 walks through it in full, it's worth knowing the shape of it now — it will quietly influence choices you make from Chapter 6 onward, like which aircraft you spend time getting comfortable in first.

You begin as a Trainee Pilot based anywhere on Earth you choose — your hometown works well, since you'll recognize the terrain. From there, you take on contracts: small cargo runs, sightseeing tours, medevac flights, all generated dynamically around your chosen base. Completing contracts earns reputation and unlocks certifications, which in turn unlock new categories of work — aerial firefighting, search and rescue, remote cargo operations — all the way up to flying scheduled passenger routes as an Airline Transport Pilot.

None of this is linear in the way a game's story mode is linear — you can skip straight to whatever type of flying interests you most, provided you have the certifications for it. Career Mode also feeds into the Challenge League, a competitive mode with structured events available across every MSFS 2024 platform, entirely separate from casual cross-platform flying. More on both in Chapter 12 and Chapter 14.



A typical Career Mode progression, though the order is yours to choose.

1.9 Common Day-One Questions

Quick answers before you start

Do I need a HOTAS or flight stick? No — the game is fully playable and well balanced on the DualSense; Chapter 3 covers this in depth. Do I need PS Plus? Only for online multiplayer and Challenge League; solo flying and Career Mode work offline. Will it work on a base PS5, or only PS5 Pro? Both are fully supported — see the comparison table above. Can I fly with a friend on PC or Xbox? Yes, cross-platform multiplayer is supported for standard flight, and Challenge League results are shared across every platform too. How much free time do I need? Your first few chapters work fine in 30-45 minute sessions — nothing in this book requires an uninterrupted multi-hour block until you choose to attempt one. Is it appropriate for kids? Yes — there's no violence or mature content, though the learning curve suits patient older children best. Can I use this book if I already own MSFS 2020? Absolutely; most concepts carry over directly, and this book will flag the handful of places PS5 or 2024 changed something meaningfully.

1.10 Accessories: What You Need and What's Optional

One of the more reassuring things about MSFS 2024 on PS5 is that the entry cost is exactly what you already paid — the DualSense controller alone is a complete, well-supported way to fly every aircraft in the game, including airliners and helicopters. Everything past that is an upgrade, not a requirement, and this book is written to work perfectly well without any of it.

Item	Needed?	Notes
DualSense controller	Required	Fully mapped out of the box; Chapter 3 covers every button and the gyro option.
TV or headset audio	Required	You need to clearly hear ATC and engine/wind sound — both carry real information.
HOTAS / flight stick	Optional	Nice upgrade once you're past the basics; not needed to learn or finish this book.
Rudder pedals	Optional	Adds realism to crosswind landings (Chapter 10); the DualSense handles this fine without them.
PSVR2 headset	Optional	Free Sim Update 5 support for all 125 aircraft; see Chapter 13 before buying one just for this.

A word of caution before you go shopping: it's tempting to research HOTAS setups and rudder pedals before you've even landed your first Cessna. Experienced simmers almost universally recommend the opposite order — learn the fundamentals on the controller you already own, and only buy hardware once you know

specifically what limitation you're trying to solve. Chapter 3 will tell you exactly what the DualSense does well and where an upgrade genuinely helps.

1.11 Quick-Start Checklist Before Your First Flight

Before you move on to Chapter 2, make sure each of these is done. It'll save you from interrupting your first real flying session in Chapter 6 to go fix a setting.

- Game fully installed and updated to the latest patch (Settings → check for updates).
- DualSense controller charged above 50%.
- Headset or TV audio confirmed working — you'll want to hear ATC and engine sound clearly.
- A play session of at least 45 uninterrupted minutes set aside for Chapters 2-3 (setup and controls).
- Realistic expectations set: your first landing will probably not be pretty, and that is completely normal.
- A notepad or notes app handy — in the early chapters you'll be assigning your own control mappings and settings; jotting down what you changed saves confusion later.
- If you plan to use PSVR2 eventually, no need to set it up yet — Chapter 13 walks through that setup once you're comfortable flying on a flat screen first.

Chapter Summary

Key takeaways

MSFS 2024 is a simulation of real-world flight built on a live digital twin of Earth, not an arcade game — success is measured by procedure, not speed. The world you fly through is powered by real terrain imagery, live weather, real air and sea traffic, and accurate time and seasons. All four editions share the same core experience and differ only in aircraft and airport count, with Premium Deluxe offering the best long-term value for most players. PS5 Pro improves visual stability and headroom but changes nothing about how you'll learn to fly, and the DualSense controller alone is a complete, well-supported way to fly the entire fleet. Career Mode gives your flying a sense of progression whenever you want it, from Trainee Pilot up to Airline Transport Pilot. With installation complete and your checklist ticked off, you're ready to move into Chapter 2: setting up the game properly for the first time.

Looking ahead: Chapter 2 turns the settings you skimmed past during installation into deliberate choices — graphics mode, accessibility options, and the audio setup that makes ATC intelligible from the very first taxi call. By the end of it, your PS5 will be configured the way an experienced simmer would configure it, not just the way the default wizard left it.

From there, Chapters 3 and 4 hand you full control of the DualSense and the realism/assist sliders before Part 2 puts you in the cockpit for real. Read the chapters in order the first time through — each one assumes

the settings and vocabulary from the ones before it — and keep this book nearby during your early flights. It's written to be referenced mid-session, not just read cover to cover in one sitting.

CHAPTER 2 - First Launch: Setup, Settings, and Making It Yours

The first-launch wizard takes about ten minutes and asks you a dozen small questions. Answer them well and every session afterward runs smoother. This chapter walks through each one, plus the settings the wizard never asks about but you'll want under control before Chapter 3.

2.1 Connecting and Charging Your DualSense

Before the wizard even starts, it's worth getting the basics of your controller connection right, since this is the one piece of hardware every single flight depends on. The DualSense can connect to PS5 either wired, via USB-C, or wirelessly over Bluetooth, and for a simulator that reads continuous, fine-grained stick input for hours at a time, the choice matters more than it does in most other genres.

A wired USB-C connection removes any possibility of Bluetooth interference or input lag, which matters most during precise moments like a crosswind flare on landing. It also means you never have to think about battery level mid-flight. Wireless is perfectly reliable for the vast majority of players and is what most PS5 owners use day to day — but if you notice any stick input feeling delayed or “floaty” during Chapter 3's sensitivity tuning, switching to a cable is the first thing to try before you start blaming the settings themselves.

Battery habits worth building

A fully charged DualSense lasts roughly 8-12 hours of typical use, but flight sessions can run long, especially airliner flights with real-time cruise segments. Keep a USB-C cable within reach rather than waiting for a low-battery warning mid-flight — the controller charges fine while in use, so plugging in doesn't interrupt anything. If you're using two controllers for a co-pilot session (more on multiplayer in Section 2.12), label or otherwise distinguish them; MSFS 2024 doesn't visually differentiate controllers on screen the way some multiplayer games do.

2.2 Before You Tap Start: What the Wizard Will Ask

The first time you launch MSFS 2024, a setup wizard runs automatically. It's easy to click through it on autopilot — literally — but five of its screens set defaults that shape every flight you take afterward. Below is the sequence you're about to see, so nothing catches you off guard.



The five decision points inside the first-launch wizard

None of these choices are permanent. Every single one lives in the main Settings menu and can be revisited at any time — Section 2.10 gives you the full map. But getting them right now saves you from flying your first few sessions with, say, ATC audio buried under music volume, which is a genuinely common first-week complaint in the PS5 community.

2.3 Language, Region, and Units

The wizard's first screen sets your display language, ATC voice language, and measurement units. Aviation traditionally uses a mix of units depending on what's being measured — altitude in feet, visibility in statute miles or metres depending on region, speed in knots — and MSFS 2024 follows real-world convention rather than picking one system throughout. If you're not from an aviation background, this can look inconsistent at first. It isn't; it's accurate.

Region also quietly affects which real-world airports and cities get suggested to you as defaults throughout the game, including in Career Mode's contract generation. Setting this to where you actually live tends to make your first few hours more recognisable and, frankly, more fun — flying over your own neighbourhood hits differently than flying over a random city you've never seen.

2.4 Data & Streaming: Getting This Right From Day One

This is the single most consequential screen in the wizard, and the one most new pilots click through without reading. MSFS 2024 streams enormous amounts of live terrain, imagery, and weather data as you fly, and how you configure that streaming affects both visual quality and how smoothly the game runs, especially near dense cities.

Setting	What It Controls	Recommended Starting Point
Online Data Streaming	Pulls live terrain, weather, and traffic data as you fly.	On — this is the feature that makes the world “living.”
Rolling Cache	Stores recently streamed terrain locally so you don't re-download it.	32 GB if storage allows; raise later if you fly the same region often.
Data Saver Mode	Reduces how much live data streams in, to save bandwidth.	Off, unless you're on a capped or unstable connection.
Auto-Save Interval	How often your flight progress is checkpointed.	Every 5 minutes — cheap insurance against a crash or power cut.

Why Rolling Cache matters

Rolling Cache is easy to skip past, but it's one of the best-value settings in the entire game. Once enabled, MSFS 2024 keeps a local copy of terrain data for places you've already flown, so returning to the same airport or region loads faster and stutters less — particularly noticeable in detailed cities like London, Tokyo, or New York. If you have the storage space, there's very little reason not to allocate at least 32 GB to it.

2.5 Choosing Your Graphics Mode

Both PS5 and PS5 Pro give you a choice of display modes that trade resolution for frame-rate stability. This setting lives in the wizard, but it's also the one you'll most likely revisit after your first few flights, once you know what kind of flying you actually enjoy.

GRAPHICS SETTINGS COMPARISON

CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODE FOR YOUR FLIGHT

PLAYSTATION®5
DISPLAY SETTINGS
PS5

PERFORMANCE MODE Maximize Frame Rate	BALANCED MODE The Ideal Compromise	QUALITY MODE Maximum Visual Fidelity
FRAME RATE 60 FPS (STABLE)	FRAME RATE 40 FPS (STABLE)	FRAME RATE 30 FPS (STABLE)
BEST FOR BUSY AIRPORTS Smooth performance in demanding scenarios with many aircraft & vehicles	BEST FOR GENERAL FLYING Perfect balance of performance and visual quality for most flights	BEST FOR SCENIC FLIGHTS Maximum detail, textures, and lighting for immersive visual experiences
FRAME RATE STABILITY ██████████ EXCELLENT VISUAL DETAIL ████████ MEDIUM RESOLUTION ██████████ DYNAMIC 1440p RENDER SCALING ██████████ REDUCED AMBIENT TRAFFIC ██████████ HIGH RECOMMENDED USE Busy Airports, Multiplayer, Complex Environments	FRAME RATE STABILITY ██████████ GOOD VISUAL DETAIL ██████████ HIGH RESOLUTION ██████████ DYNAMIC 4K RENDER SCALING ██████████ BALANCED AMBIENT TRAFFIC ██████████ MEDIUM RECOMMENDED USE Cross-Country Flights, Training, Most Weather Conditions	FRAME RATE STABILITY ██████████ GOOD VISUAL DETAIL ██████████ ULTRA RESOLUTION ██████████ NATIVE 4K RENDER SCALING ██████████ 100% AMBIENT TRAFFIC ██████████ LOW RECOMMENDED USE Scenic Flights, Sightseeing, Solo Exploration

WHY SWITCH MODES?
Different flying situations demand different priorities. Choose Performance for busy airports and multiplayer, Balanced for everyday flying, and Quality for breathtaking scenic experiences.

PS5 OPTIMIZATION
All modes are optimized for PlayStation®5 performance with stable frame rates, fast loading, and stunning visuals tailored for console gaming.

HOW TO SWITCH
Access these modes anytime in Options > General > Graphics. Changes apply immediately. Choose the mode that best fits your current flight.

The three display modes and where each one shines

A genuinely useful habit from experienced simmers: don't pick one mode and forget it. Switch to Performance for airliner flights into busy hub airports, where dozens of AI aircraft and detailed jet bridges are taxing the console hardest, then switch back to Balanced or Quality for a quiet scenic flight over open