

Review of MSFS's Beechcraft 18: History in flight

Microsoft, Asobo and Carenado have come together to produce another Marketplace airplane for Microsoft Flight Simulator and this one is a good one. Local Legend #4 is a simulation of the classic an...

7 min. de lecture

[Voir l'original](#)

Microsoft, Asobo and Carenado have come together to produce another Marketplace airplane for Microsoft Flight Simulator and this one is a good one. Local Legend #4 is a simulation of the classic and legendary Beechcraft Model 18 and the moment it was announced I knew I had to check it out. After putting in some serious flying time with it, it's now time to review the whole experience. Here are my thoughts on the MSFS Carenado/Asobo Beechcraft Model 18. Let's go!

A bit of history

Commonly referred to as a simply the Twin Beech or sometimes as the Beech 18, this is a low wing, twin engine, utility airplane was designed with the ability to perform a wide

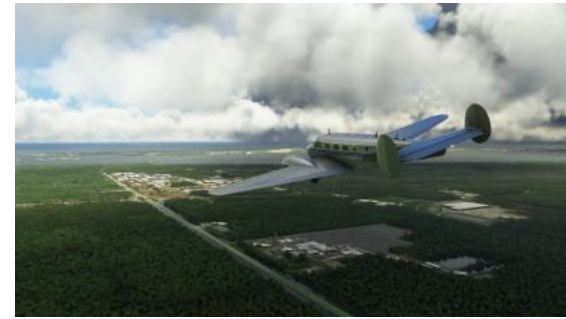
range of missions. I suspect the Model 18 exceeded even its original designer's goals as, over the course of its history, it has been used as a an airliner, VIP transport, freight, firefighting aircraft, multi-engine trainer, bombardier trainer, and at least one currently performs at airshows in an aerobatic role – yes, you read that correctly.

Two Pratt & Whitney R-985-AN-1 Wasp Junior 9-cylinder radial engines power the Beech 18 giving it good performance up to 20,000 feet. It can climb at 1,200 feet per minute, has a 195-knot maximum speed, and a range of 1,200 miles. It could also carry up to 6 passengers plus two crew.

First flown in January of 1937, production ramped up quickly and 9,000 were produced up until 1969 with service in both civilian and military roles. The Beechcraft Model 18 can rightly be hailed as one of the most versatile twin engine aircraft ever produced and I have to agree given its history.

Visuals







Carenado's artists are among the best in the business and its no surprise that this aircraft looks extremely good.

On the exterior we have impressive levels of detail. The bump maps are excellent and with the high-resolution textures help show off small imperfections in the skin as well as the rivets. The radial engines are superbly detailed on their own from the exhaust stacks up to the visible portions of the engine. Even the classic Beechcraft logo is beautifully recreated and holds up under close inspection. You can see the same attention to detail in the landing gear, the navigation lights, and the flip down landing

lights as well as in the streamlined aerial on the top of the cockpit.



Moving inside, the superb attention to visual details continue. The hatch at the back of the aircraft opens and closes which is great to see. The passenger compartment looks and feels like late 1930's luxury with the tray tables popping open and closed on click. There's also the view from the windows which looks

magnificent although those twin radial engines do spoil the view down.

Up in the cockpit you see a classic 1930s and 1940s airplane with a few modern accoutrements tacked on. Nearly every switch works and is beautifully animated. The gauges are classic and immediately familiar to anyone who loves American aircraft from that era. They also look sharp and are readable even from a distance. There is a GNS 530 Garmin GPS unit in there which is more modern along with the more modern transponder and radios. They don't feel out of place in what you can present is a flying and working Beech 18 in 2022.

The lighting on the inside is also exceptionally well done. Gauge lights at night look phenomenal, there's additional red lights on the side that can light up the cockpit in low intensity red, dome lights for the passengers and even a classic seatbelt/no smoking sign that lights up when switched on. Through and through this is a very visually pleasing production.



Audio

Carenado can be a bit hit and miss sometimes with their audio. Here they have succeeded in providing an authentic feel albeit with a few bugs.

The aircraft has a satisfying engine sound with only a hint of that occasionally repeating drone that creeps in on other Carenado aircraft. Most of the time, however, they just sound like the purring radials that they are. They could be a bit meatier sounding at times but on the whole I like the sound of them.

Many of the switches and knobs have their own unique sounds too which just adds to the

authenticity. And there are great sounds for the operation of the gears and flaps. This also has some nice creaks, squeaks and groans that you can hear during taxiing and during fast rolls and turns.

My biggest complaint is surrounding the start-up sounds. The fuel pump system is loud but the engines turning over seem to get overpowered by the pump. I've also experienced a bug where the fuel pump sound would continue to play even when the pump had been switched off. I tried to get it to stop by starting and stopping the pump but it would just keep replaying the sound. I've only experienced that bug once so far but it was very irritating.

Systems



This is a pretty simple aircraft once you know the procedures. Battery, set fuel systems, use the fuel pump or fuel cock, turn on the magnetos and hit the starter and the engines roar to life. It's not quite as deeply modeled as

the stuff that we've seen from SWS or JustFlight but it's not bad either.

Like many MSFS aircraft, there's no wear or engine limit modeling so you can run this at maximum power forever and it won't fail or blow up. The engines can overheat and you won't be penalized. Still, I like to follow the procedures and open the radiators during climb out which are beautifully modeled if not all that functional.

There is still good engine modeling when it comes to the normal procedure of flying it. Climb to altitude and watch the manifold pressure fall off requiring adjustments to the fuel mixture to maintain optimal power and performance. I forgot about this the one time and stalled the airplane during a climb out as we got above 11,000 feet and the engines lost power with full mixture. Oops. Forgot about that but easily fixed by leaning the mix.

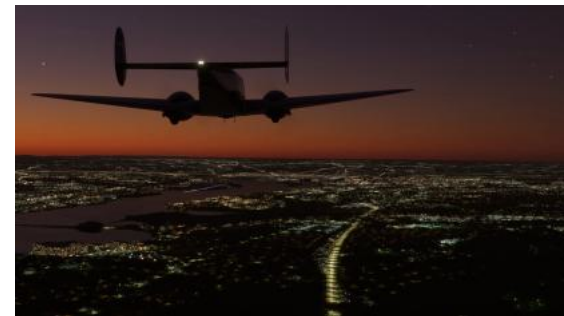
This aircraft has an autopilot which makes it a great long distance cruiser. It is, however, a more primitive model so if you're used to more modern aircraft this will take a bit of adjustment. The autopilot roll switch are combined which keeps the wings steady. You can then switch on and off heading, altitude hold and pitch control. Pitch control has a wheel that lets you pitch up and down but its still very hands on as you need to manage your

climb/descent and speed. There's even a roll control.

I did experience a bug with the autopilot system where it would flat out not engage. So far as I know it wasn't a matter of procedure but just a random bug. I've encountered it once in over a half dozen long haul flights

There is a small bug with the start-up sequence too. The default position of the starter switch is on the left position at the moment. To start the aircraft successfully you'll need to move the starter back to the center and then back to the left. It's a minor irritant but its worth noting.

Flying it



In writing this review I've put a lot of flying hours into the Carenado/Asobo Beechcraft Model 18. I decided to fly it across the United States and I've already [published part one of my experience doing that right over here](#).

Taxiing the aircraft is a bit of a challenge because of the poor visibility over the nose. It is relatively easy to maneuver as, like most taildragger MSFS aircraft, the rudder control seems to give you a lot of control that you might otherwise need differential braking for. Maneuvering the aircraft left and right to give you better visibility can help.

Taking off is a bit more of a challenge. That transition between tracking straight on three wheels to tailwheel up has caused me grief on every single takeoff. I've watched others do it with less trouble so it's clearly my technique or my rudder pedals causing me trouble, but I still find the transition unnatural compared to what I'm used to with the tail draggers in IL-2 and DCS.

Once up in the air, however, the Beech 18 cleans up beautifully. The gears and flaps go up and the aircraft likes to drop the nose a little (corrected with a bit of trim) and then you're up and away. This airplane likes to climb and for a type of its era it seems to have a lot of power on hand.

Landing requires a careful approach path and it tends to float a lot (like many MSFS aircraft) so getting it back down can be a bit challenging too.

All in all, the Beech 18 is fun to fly and a bit of a challenge to work with on taxi, takeoff, and landing. Typical I think for a classic twin engine aircraft from its era. You won't be bored with this plane and its handling but you also probably won't be overwhelmed by or find it overly frustrating once you do have a handle on it.

Conclusion

Asobo and Microsoft have continued to bring together some interesting aircraft as part of their Local Legends series and the Beechcraft Model 18 continues that tradition. This is the third Carenado/Asobo collaboration and it's one of their best. I'm also a fan of the work they did with the Beechcraft Model 17 Staggerwing ([read the full review here](#)).

There are a few negatives with the work here. Quirks with the sounds and with the start-up procedure are among the worst offenders. Those looking for a deeper experience with maintaining the engines and systems will want to look elsewhere. Nothing catastrophic.

On the positives I can easily point to the superb visual quality in all respects, the good flight

dynamics and engine performance, excellent sim performance, and the overall versatility of the airplane particularly if you want to take it cross country like I have been doing. The aircraft is also available for just \$15.99 USD in the Marketplace so its also among the cheaper options there. Another easy recommendation for those who like their classic airplanes for Microsoft Flight Simulator!