



JR Background Skies for Blender

Introduction

This asset pack provides over 300 high quality background skies that can be placed behind your main scene. They are formatted for use with Blender's Asset browser.

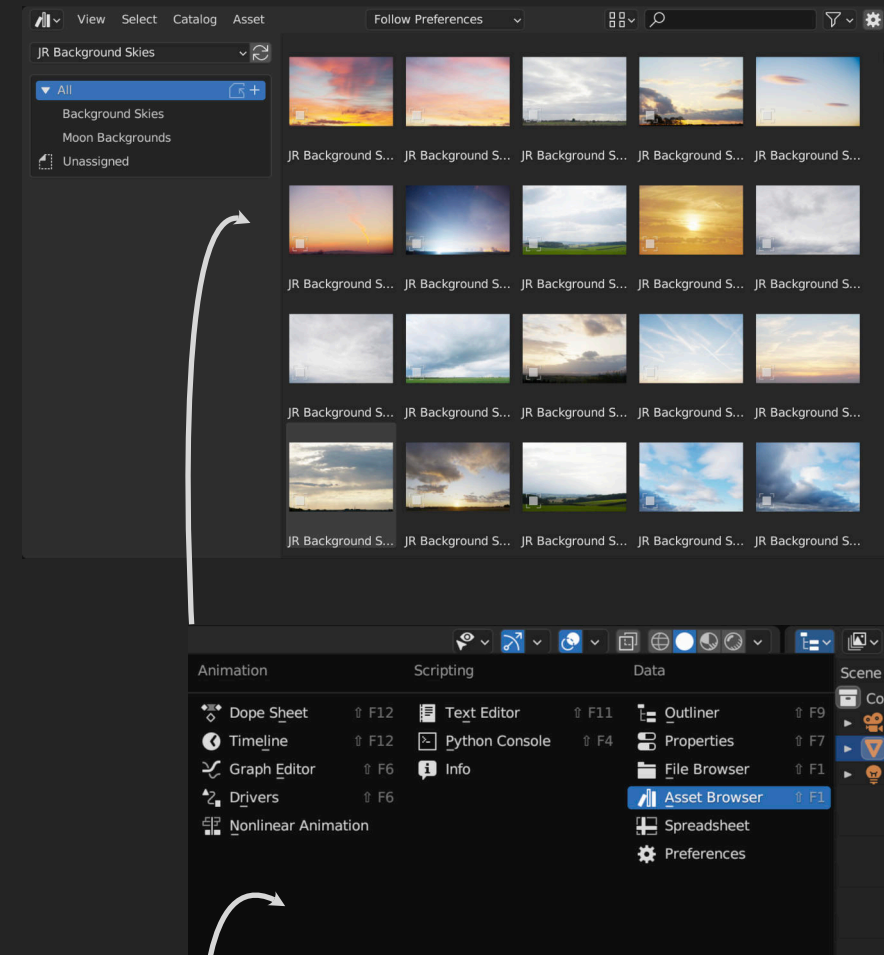
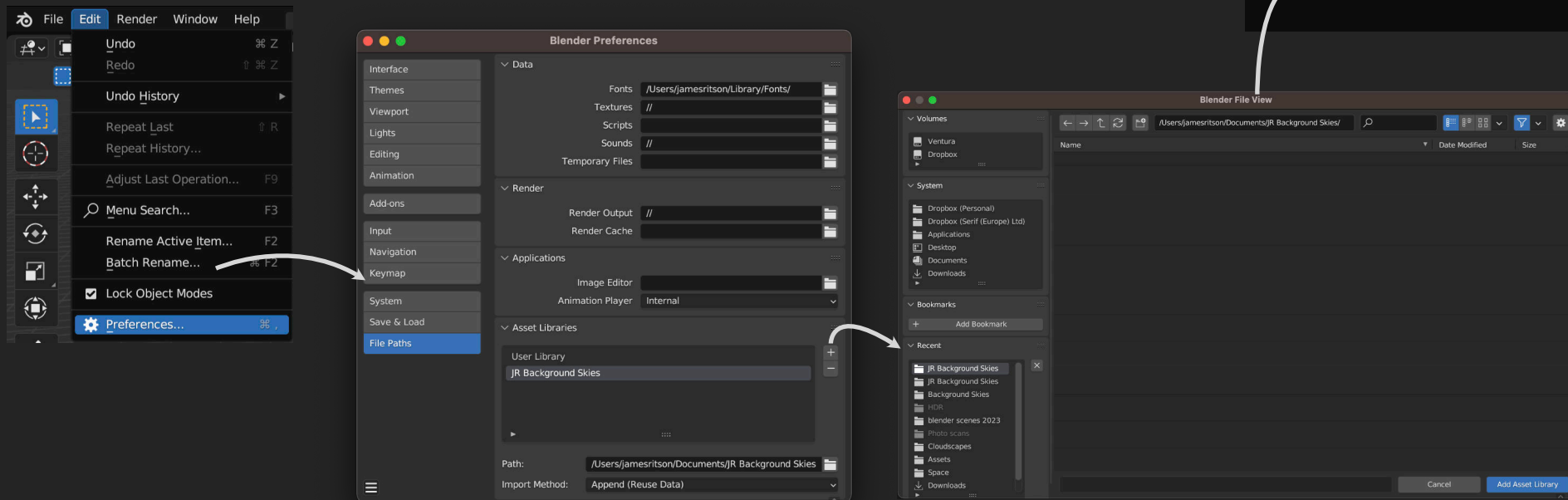
The source images have been developed from RAW data using a linear 32-bit HDR workflow and exported to half-float linear OpenEXR, which means they work well with blender's linear compositing workflow as they provide a 'true' dynamic range (compared to gamma encoded JPEGs and other image formats). The resulting skies look dynamic and powerful. The images are from a mix of cameras, but the minimum width or height is 5000px and the maximum is 8000px—plenty of resolution to work with for high quality renders.

Each background sky object comes with its own unique material, which lets you quickly adjust settings such as emission gamma, strength and saturation.

Please note: the sky planes are large, and depending on your default view and camera settings you may need to increase the end clipping distance. See the [Further Instructions & Troubleshooting](#) section below for more information.

Installation

1. Extract the *JR Background Skies* folder to a disk location of your choice.
2. Within Blender, go to **Edit>Preferences** and navigate to the **File Paths** section.
3. Under the **Asset Libraries** category, click the plus icon to add a new path. Navigate to and enter the *JR Background Skies* folder, then choose **Add Asset Library**.
4. Now access the **Asset Browser**—you can do this by changing one of the editor types within the default *Layout* workspace, or you can duplicate the workspace beforehand. My preference is to duplicate the Layout workspace, then change the **Outliner** view to the **Asset Browser**.
5. Change the asset category to *JR Background Skies*. You should now see all the assets listed: simply drag-drop an asset of your choice onto your scene to place it.



Further Instructions & Troubleshooting

Each background sky asset has a Geometry Nodes modifier that causes the sky to track camera movement. This makes it easy to ensure the sky is always positioned and rotated correctly.

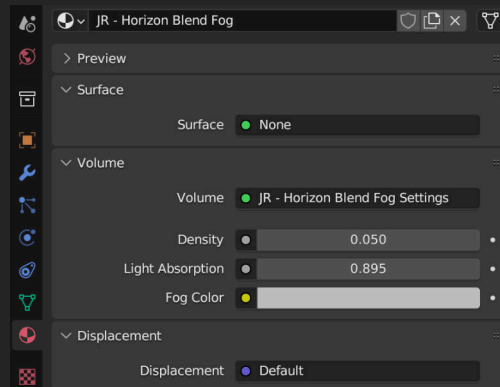
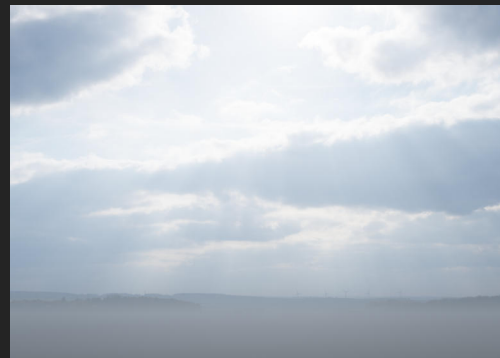
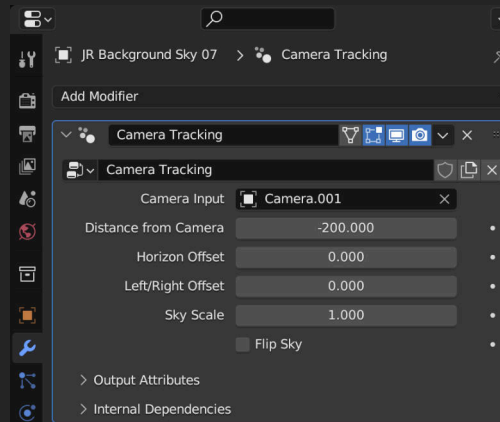
With the placed sky object selected, go to the Modifier tab. You will see a geometry node called **Camera Tracking** with various options:

- **Camera Input:** change this to your active camera. Its position and rotation will then be used to translate the sky.
- **Distance from Camera:** used primarily to accommodate different aspect ratios and focal lengths. Modify this until the sky covers the whole “sensor” or surface area of the camera.
- **Horizon Offset:** lets you shift the sky up or down so you can easily make the horizon line match up with the bottom of the camera view.
- **Left/Right Offset:** if you have space either side of the camera view, this lets you shift the sky so you can change the area of the sky that is visible.
- **Sky Scale:** making this value larger will increase the size of the sky but also move it further away from the camera, allowing you to work with bigger scenes.
- **Flip Sky:** flips the sky horizontally—useful for variation, or if you want to match a light source coming from the opposite direction.

When you place a sky asset, the original referenced camera will also be imported with it. Feel free to delete this and reference your existing camera on the **Camera Input** option.

Note that your camera's **Clip End** value should be increased significantly so the sky can be displayed (see the next page for more information about this).

You will also find a **Horizon Blend Fog** asset you can drop into your scene—this is a simple volume that helps soften and blend the sky horizon. You can configure its density, anisotropy (light absorption) and fog colour on the **Material Properties** tab, under the **Volume** section.

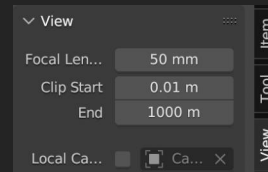
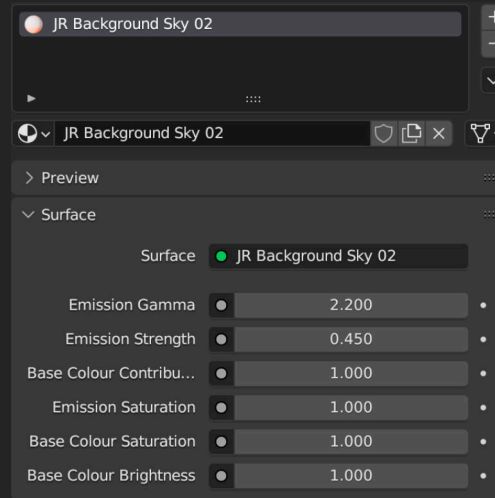


Further Instructions & Troubleshooting

Each background sky asset has its own unique material and node group.

Without going to the **Shader Editor**, you can access the **Material Properties** section on the **Outliner** and modify material properties including emission gamma, emission strength, base colour contribution and more:

- Emission Gamma controls the power transform value. If the sky contrast is too great or too little, try adjusting this value.
- Emission Strength is the overall contribution of the sky emission—this causes intense areas of the sky to become brighter and potentially illuminate objects in your scene (depending on size and distance of the sky).
- Base Colour Contribution is the mix of the general base colour (non-emissive). This fills out the darker areas of the sky.
- Emission Saturation controls the colour intensity of the emissive areas.
- Base Colour Saturation controls the colour intensity of the base colour areas (usually the darker parts).
- Base Colour Brightness controls the brightness of the base colour areas.

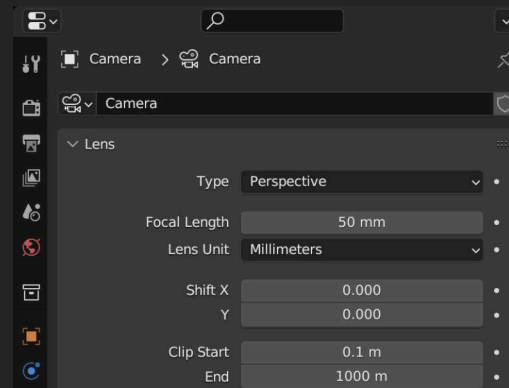


Each sky is physically large. If you are not able to see it in the viewport or through a camera, your **Clip End** value may be too low.

If you are not able to see the skies at all, your **Clip End** value may be too low.

Access the side **N** panel (by pressing "N") and switch to **View**. Check the Clip Start and End values—if **End** is set to 100m or lower, try raising it to at least 1000m.

You will likely need to change the **Clip End** value of your Camera as well. This defaults to **100m**—again, try raising this to at least **1000m**.



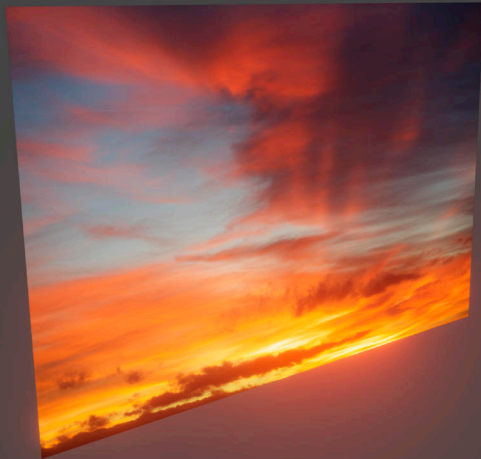
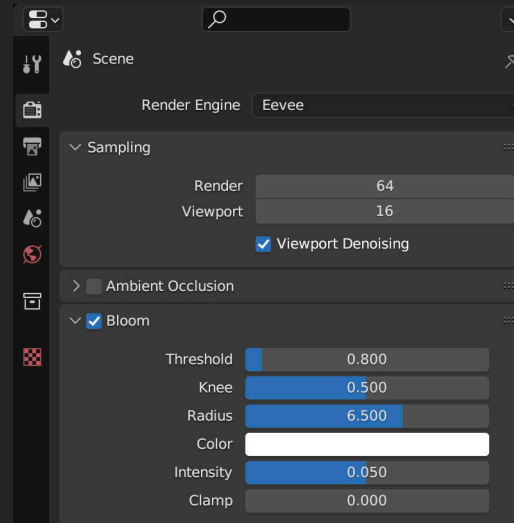
Further Instructions & Troubleshooting

Although these assets have been developed primarily with Cycles rendering in mind, they also work in Eevee.

In particular, enabling Bloom will cause the brighter emissive parts of the skies to glow, which can produce a pleasing effect.

When placing a sky, you will want to ensure its orientation matches that of your camera so the perspective looks correct. You can achieve this by using the Rotation XYZ controls on the Object Properties tab (or by using the shortcut R followed by X, Y or Z on the keyboard).

If you have any questions or issues, please do contact me on james@jamesritson.co.uk



Credits

All 3D renders and editing by James Ritson (<http://www.jamesritson.co.uk>)

