

Blu-Ray Review: James Cameron's 'Avatar' Revolutionizes HD

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 26, 2010 - 12:17pm

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CHICAGO – When “Avatar” played in theaters, many viewers wondered how it would look at home without the benefit of 3D or IMAX to help propel the awe of the experience. The recently-released Blu-ray should settle any arguments. It looks amazing. The film itself may remain divisive and the lack of special features hints at an upcoming double dip, but this is arguably the best Blu-ray picture to date.



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.5/5.0**

Director James Cameron recently boasted of his satisfaction that “Avatar” made it to Blu-ray/DVD with no trailers piggybacking on the film and even a limited menu. He liked the idea that the viewer was dumped right back into the world of Pandora and there is something to be said for streamlining an experience that can often get bloated with previews, clips, and, most bizarrely, advertisements for the Blu-ray technology that you’re watching.

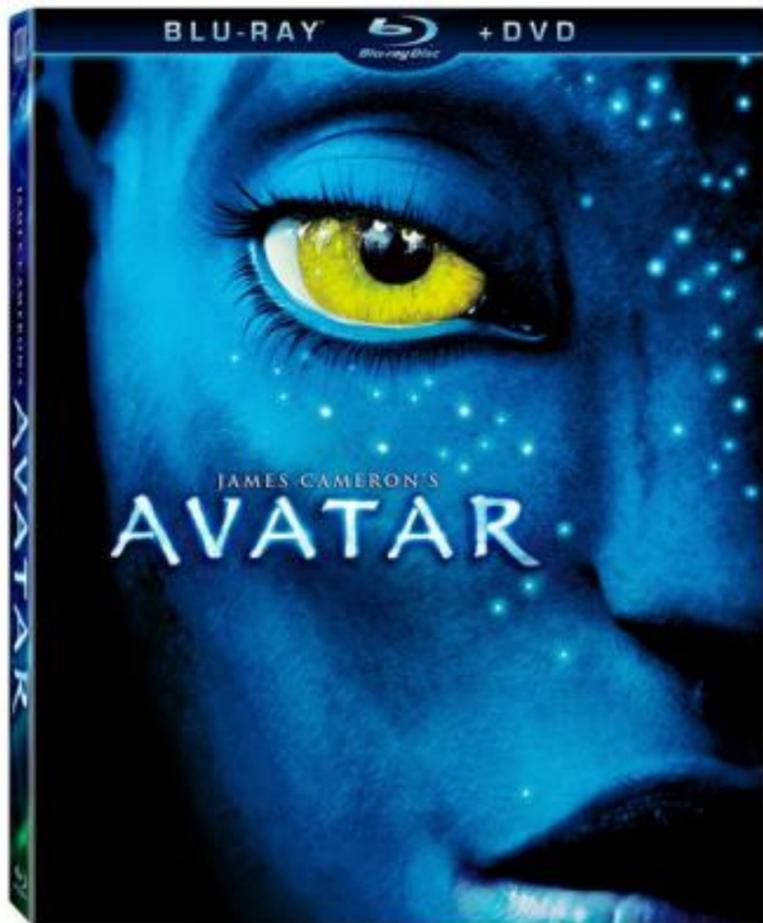


Avatar was released on DVD and Blu-Ray on April 22nd, 2010.

Photo credit: Fox Home Video

Having said that, Cameron also knows that fans of the biggest movie of all time would have loved even a single minute of behind-the-scenes footage, deleted scenes, etc. and the complete lack of special features practically announces that this is unlikely to be the only edition of “Avatar” on Blu-ray even in 2010. Getting the film itself into the hands of its diehard fans as quickly as possible is notable, but they should be aware that this is probably a placeholder for a special edition by the holiday season with all the bells and whistles and possibly even a director’s cut of the film (when one considers how often Cameron has released director’s cuts in the past for films like “Aliens” and “The Abyss”).





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Photo credit: Fox Home Video

With the awareness that you may be selling it on Ebay by the end of 2010, "Avatar" is still a must-own on Blu-ray for one simple reason: no film has ever looked more impressive. Somehow, Fox has managed to recreate a lot of the 3D experience in 2D 1080p. The depth of the picture is remarkable, as if one could reach in and touch the characters. Shadows, line detail, the color levels: it is all perfect and truly must be seen to be believed. Cameron received wild praise and nearly an Oscar for pushing the limits of theatrical technology and his film similarly and appropriately pushes the envelope when it comes to video quality on Blu-ray.

As for audio, the sound design of "Avatar" was often overlooked in favor of its landmark special effects but it really shines on Blu-ray. The default mix is an English DTS-HD Master Audio track and it's flawless with the perfect blend of score, dialogue, and sound effects. The disc also includes a standard Dolby Surround track, Spanish, Portuguese, & French 5.1 tracks, and a descriptive audio track.

The Blu-ray release of "Avatar" wisely includes a standard DVD as well, meaning you take your passport to Pandora anywhere with a disc player, although the lack of a digital copy for a film that I'm sure many would love to watch on their iPod, laptop, etc. is a bit of a letdown. With even one special feature or a digital copy, this would be a 5-star release purely for the visual bar it sets. It still comes close.

Even the most loyal fans of "Avatar" would admit that the film's biggest strength is a visual one. When I saw it in theaters, I had some serious problems with the storytelling/dialogue and I still do, but the jaw-dropping feast for the eyes feels even more impressive on Blu-ray than it did in theaters and this is a review of the Blu-ray and how it will satisfy fans, not the film itself. With that in mind, this honestly feels like the tipping point for the technology; the moment when people finally make the upgrade from standard DVD to Blu-ray and don't turn back. Cameron leads the way again.

'Avatar' is released by Fox Home Video and stars Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Sigourney Weaver, Stephen Lang, Joel David Moore, Wes Studi, and Michelle Rodriguez. It was written and directed by James Cameron. The Blu-Ray and DVD were released on April 22nd, 2010. It is rated PG-13.



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Source URL (retrieved on Apr 19 2024 - 2:26am):

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