

Borderlands 2 - Guns, Guns, Guns

Flaming sniper rifles, rocket launchers, shotguns with exploding rounds, electric machine guns, alien energy weapons, and heat seeking acid grenades. Get the picture? At its core, Borderlands 2 is all about the loot, with tender loving care given to the guns. The loot system is mature and robust, with no two items alike. Along with the guns there are shields, grenade mods, class mods, and relics, all with the same 'common-to-ultra-rare' progression. To go with the never ending quest for better weapons and items, the game has a robust skill tree that allows you to customize your character to your play style.

With equal parts Diablo, World of Warcraft, and Call of Duty, Borderlands 2 is a post-modern game by any definition (ARPG/MMO/FPS if you're keeping track). The FPS elements are not overly twitchy, and as your skill tree develops, weapons get easier to control. Your RPG choices do make a real difference in the gameplay--and you can feel your character becoming more powerful in the world. And my particularly favorite aspect of the game, and ultimately reason I'm still playing it, is for the online co-op multiplayer. I get to play in an online adventure while chatting with my friends, which I can best describe as a 21st century book club experience.

And no review of this game could be complete without a shout out to its leading megalomaniac bad guy: "Handsome Jack." He is constantly driving you forward with his taunting, goading, and down-right evil and sadistic actions--think of him as a charming Darth Vader. It also seamlessly weaves together the characters from the previous games, including my personal favorite: "Claptrap," your enthusiastic robotic companion (and if you take him for his word, your "master"). With details like customized taunts based on your character class, polished voice acting, intricate level design, and oodles of easter-eggs, Borderlands 2 represents a high-water mark in gaming. To take a page out of Claptrap's playbook: "Come minions, give this game a shot!"

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