GAMER GUIDE

BALDUR'S GATE 3 EDITION

the need to know you didn't know you needed

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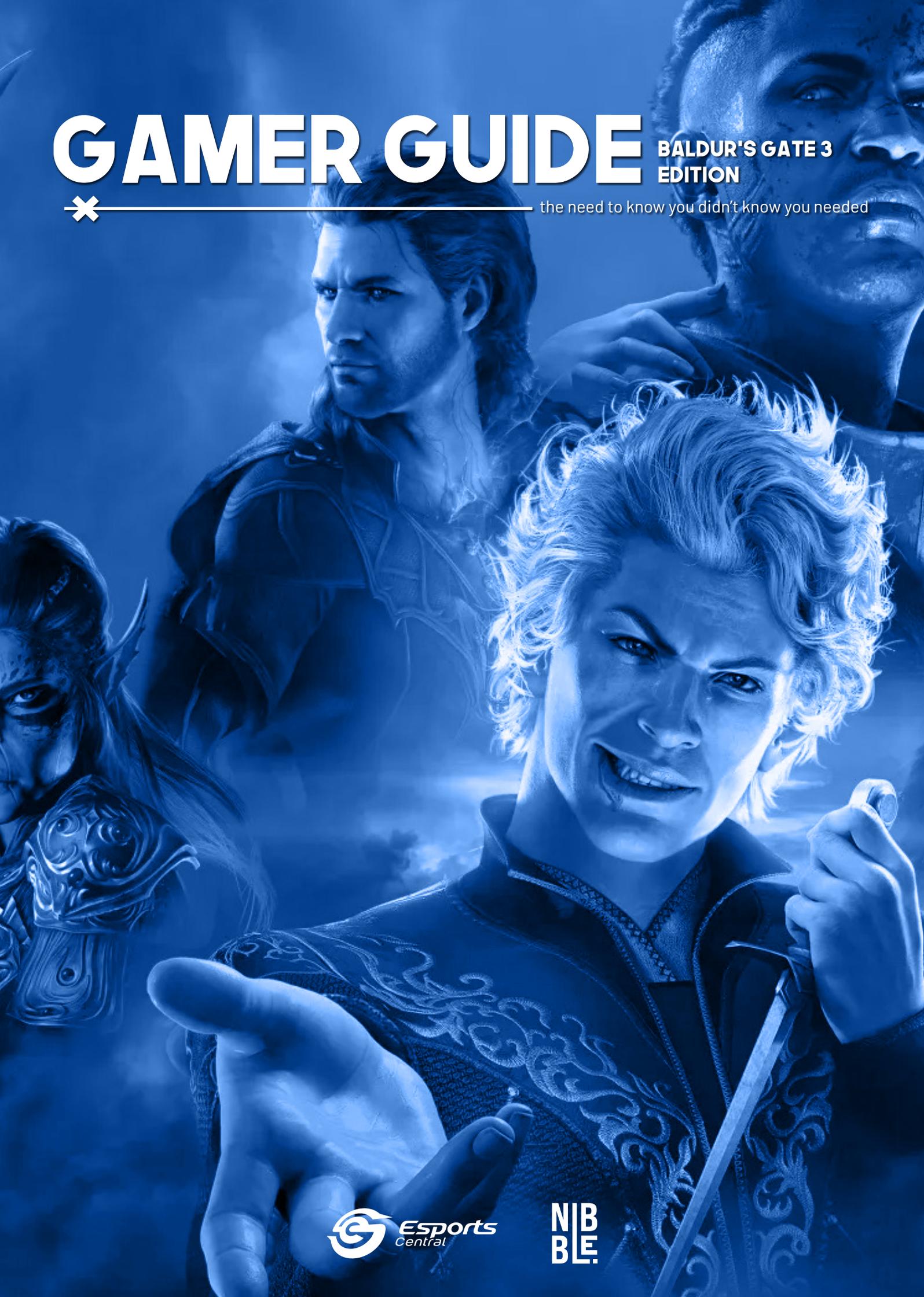
WHAT IS IT?

Baldur's Gate 3 (BG3), developed and published by Larian Studios, is the third instalment in the Baldur's Gate series, inspired by the Dungeons & Dragons tabletop role-playing system. Initially, it was released as an early access version on macOS, Windows, and the Stadia streaming service in October 2020. The game remained in early access until its full Windows release in August 2023, followed by PlayStation 5 and the macOS version. An Xbox Series X/S version is also planned for 2023.

This role-playing video game (RPG) offers both single-player and cooperative multiplayer modes. Players have the freedom to create one or more characters and assemble a party that can include pre-generated characters to embark on their journey. Additionally, players can choose to join forces online with others, teaming up to progress through the game's narrative.

BREAKDOWN THE BASICS

BG3 draws its inspiration from the 5th edition of Dungeons & Dragons. This means there's a lot to learn in the game, and if you're new to Dungeons & Dragons, you might feel a bit overwhelmed trying to figure out how everything works in this expansive RPG world.
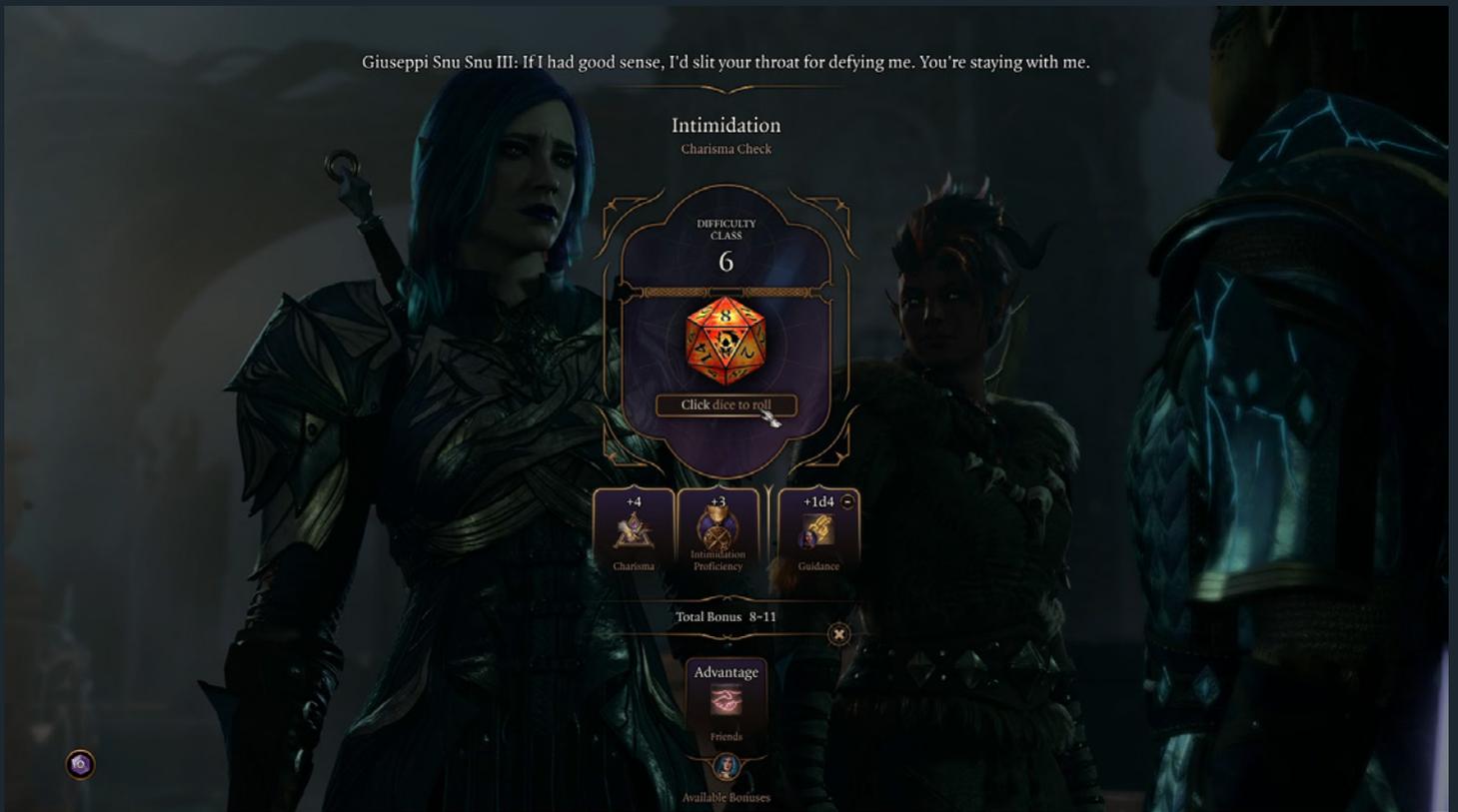
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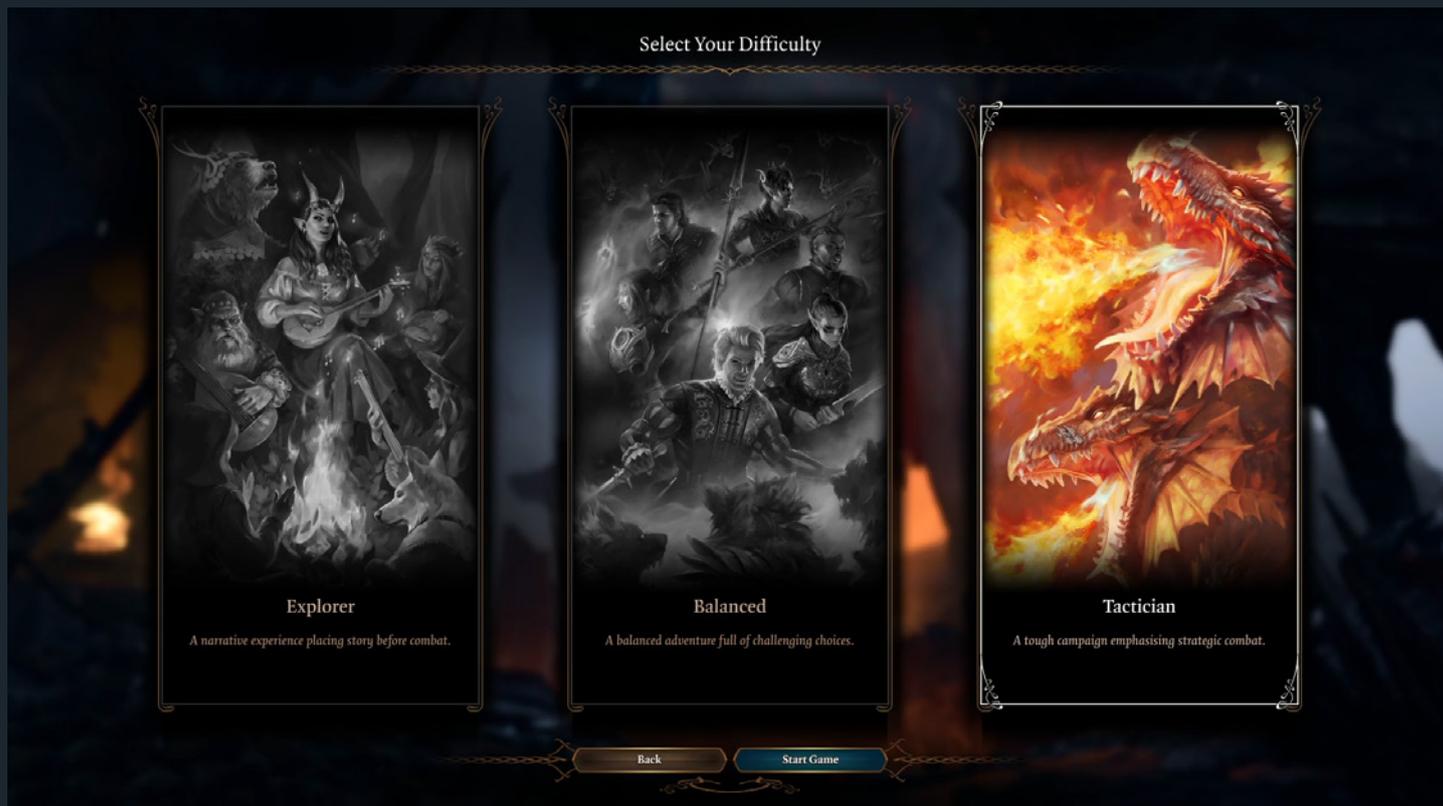
Modes

BG3 offers 3 levels of difficulty to choose from:

- Balanced Mode: This is the standard mode, offering a well-rounded experience with a mix of storytelling and combat.

- Explorer Mode: Designed for players who prioritise the story and cinematic elements, this mode features easier enemies.

- Tactician Mode: For those seeking a greater combat challenge, this is the hard mode that ramps up the difficulty in battles.

Giuseppi Snu Snu III: If I had good sense, I'd slit your throat for defying me. You're staying with me.

Intimidation
Charisma Check

DIFFICULTY
CLASS
6

Click dice to roll

+4 Charisma +3 Intimidation Proficiency +1d4 Guidance

Total Bonus 8~11

Advantage

Friends

Available Bonuses

Dice Rolls

The D20, a 20-sided die, plays a central role in the game's mechanics. It determines the outcome of various actions, be it combat or dialogue, where success or failure hangs in the balance. Characters and creatures in the game possess abilities based on 6 Ability Scores, which serve as the foundation for nearly every D20 roll a player makes.

When a player takes an action requiring a roll, such as attacking, the game generates a random number between 1 and 20. Success hinges on modifiers, including Proficiency bonuses, Ability Scores, and situational factors. Meeting or surpassing a specific Difficulty Class (DC) or an opponent's Armour Class (AC) results in success, while falling short leads to failure. This introduces an element of unpredictability, mimicking real-life uncertainties.

The game faithfully mirrors these rules, allowing players to embrace the tactical decision-making and character progression synonymous with the tabletop game. Character Classes dictate their Skills, Abilities, and Proficiencies, and the D20 system ensures fairness in resolving conflicts, even extending to non-combat interactions like dialogue and persuasion attempts. Persuading a Non-Player Character (NPC), for instance, hinges on a persuasion roll using the D20 system, injecting tension into narrative-altering decisions.

Actions

Actions are specific manoeuvres your character can execute, serving various purposes in exploration and combat, such as movement, aiding allies, or dealing damage to enemies. A character's available actions depend on their Class and equipped gear.

To use actions in BG3 your character must expend the corresponding resources. Typically, characters can perform one action and one bonus action during their turn, but certain abilities, like Action Surge, might grant additional action points.

Actions represent the primary resource for attacking or casting spells, with specific skills assigned to different action types. Most of these resources replenish at the end of a character's turn. Understanding this mechanic is vital in combat planning, as you aren't obligated to use both actions before ending your turn.

Combat

Combat usually starts in real-time exploration mode, granting players the freedom to move characters and explore their surroundings. When a combat situation arises, the game seamlessly shifts into turn-based combat mode, enabling players to carefully strategise their moves.

In this turn-based mode, every character, whether a party member or enemy, takes actions based on their initiative, determined by a D20 roll plus their Dexterity modifier. During their turn, players can choose from various actions, like attacking, casting spells, using special abilities, or interacting with the environment. The outcome of these actions relies on the character's attributes, abilities, gear, and the results of dice rolls, introducing an element of chance and unpredictability into the combat dynamics.

Character Creation

Character creation in BG3 offers extensive customisation for players to shape their character's appearance and personality. This includes choosing gender, facial features, and more. Beyond aesthetics, these choices deeply influence the game.

Your character's Race, Background, and Class impact their Abilities, Proficiencies, dialogue choices, interactions in the game world, and success rates. The character you create shapes how the game responds to you. Character creation lets you define your character's traits and build.

For newcomers to computer role-playing games (CRPGs) or Dungeons & Dragons, the character creator can be overwhelming due to its vast options. However, companions will assist you in balancing your choices. You have control over their progression and abilities. While you can change Classes and Abilities, Race and Background are fixed.

Start by considering how you want to play the game, as BG3 offers extensive role-playing freedom. Determine your character's combat style, interpersonal skills, and personality. Then, proceed to make specific character-building decisions accordingly.

Races & Backgrounds

In BG3, Races play a significant role in shaping your character. They influence appearance, innate abilities, dialogue choices, and how NPCs view your character. When creating your character, you'll select a Race, each offering distinct buffs, exclusive effects, and unique physical traits.

Backgrounds, on the other hand, impact your character's initial Proficiencies. They come with 2 Background features and aren't bound to Races or Classes. Backgrounds also influence how NPCs perceive you and can alter the course of events.

Classes

Classes in BG3 define distinct playstyles for characters in the game. Each Class offers unique Feats, which are special abilities characters can wield, and also influence dialogue choices through tags. Furthermore, BG3 introduces Subclasses that players can opt for once they've gained enough XP.

- Barbarian: Embrace your wild instincts, primal strength, and unquenchable rage.

- Bard: Master the power of music through study and adventure, utilising song, speech, and magic.

- Cleric: Represent the gods you worship, wielding potent divine magic for various purposes.

- Druid: Channel elemental forces and share a deep kinship with nature and animals, mastering the art of Wild Shape.

- Fighter: Achieve mastery in combat, wielding weapons with unmatched skill and donning armour like a second skin.

- Monk: Harness cosmic enlightenment, employing deft dodging and martial arts attacks to dismantle foes.

- Paladin: Uphold oaths of justice and righteousness, becoming a beacon of hope in challenging times.

- Ranger: Excel as scouts and trackers, forming a deep connection with nature for hunting favoured prey.

- Rogue: Utilise stealth, skill, and reflexes to gain the upper hand in diverse situations.

- Sorcerer: Tap into innate magic from a gift or bloodline, embracing natural spellcasting abilities.

- Warlock: Forge pacts with powerful patrons, trading loyalty for supernatural abilities and unique magic.

- Wizard: Master the arcane by specialising in various schools of magic, combining ancient spells with modern research.

Abilities & Feats

Stats in BG3 play a fundamental role in determining your character's success across various actions. The higher your Ability Score, the greater your chances of succeeding in tasks, whether it's hitting an enemy or persuading an NPC.

- Strength: Affects your accuracy (Attack Roll) and damage with Strength-based weapons, as well as your Jump distance and carrying capacity.
- Dexterity: Influences your accuracy (Attack Roll) and damage with Dexterity-based weapons. It also determines your combat Initiative (chance to act first) and Armour Class (chance to avoid enemy hits).
- Constitution: Impacts your maximum Hit Points, which represent your ability to withstand damage.
- Intelligence: Governs the effectiveness of spells cast by Wizards, affecting the likelihood of their success.
- Wisdom: Determines the spellcasting prowess of Druids, Rangers, and Clerics, influencing the success rate of their spells.
- Charisma: Shapes the spellcasting abilities of Bards, Paladins, Sorcerers, and Warlocks, affecting the success rate of their spells.

Feats in BG3 provide unique talents and expertise, offering additional passive or active abilities that complement your Class and Background choices. These Feats cover a wide range of enhancements, from improving Ability Scores to gaining Proficiencies that enhance combat effectiveness or provide valuable bonuses for non-combat scenarios. By choosing Feats wisely, you can address character weaknesses or further bolster their strengths.

Skills & Illithid Powers

Skills in BG3 come in 2 types: active and passive, and they affect your character's ability to perform tasks. Active Skills are used in exploration and combat, while Passive Skills provide buffs or effects to your stats. All Skills use a 20-sided dice roll.

Illithid Powers, also known as Tadpole Powers, are unique abilities linked to the Mind Flayer tadpole implanted in your character's head and Origin Companions. These Powers enhance your control over the Illithid abilities. To gain more of these Powers, you must find and consume additional parasites hidden throughout the game world.


Equipment

Weapons in BG3 are tailored to specific Classes, each having unique stats, bonuses, and effects. Proficiency with a weapon increases your chances of hitting (Attack Rolls), and higher Ability Scores boost the damage. Simple weapons are easier to handle and more common, making them accessible to a wider range of characters.

BG3 features 4 Armour categories: Clothing, Light Armour, Medium Armour, and Heavy Armour. Not all characters can wear every type, and how Armour impacts your Armour Class (AC) depends on its type and your stats. AC measures your difficulty to hit in the game; higher values make you harder to hit. Armour Proficiency is crucial; wearing Armour you're not proficient with restricts spellcasting and imposes disadvantages on Ability Checks, Saving Throws, and Attack Rolls.

The game includes an encumbrance mechanic with 3 severity levels. At maximum encumbrance, certain actions become impossible. Efficient inventory management is essential.
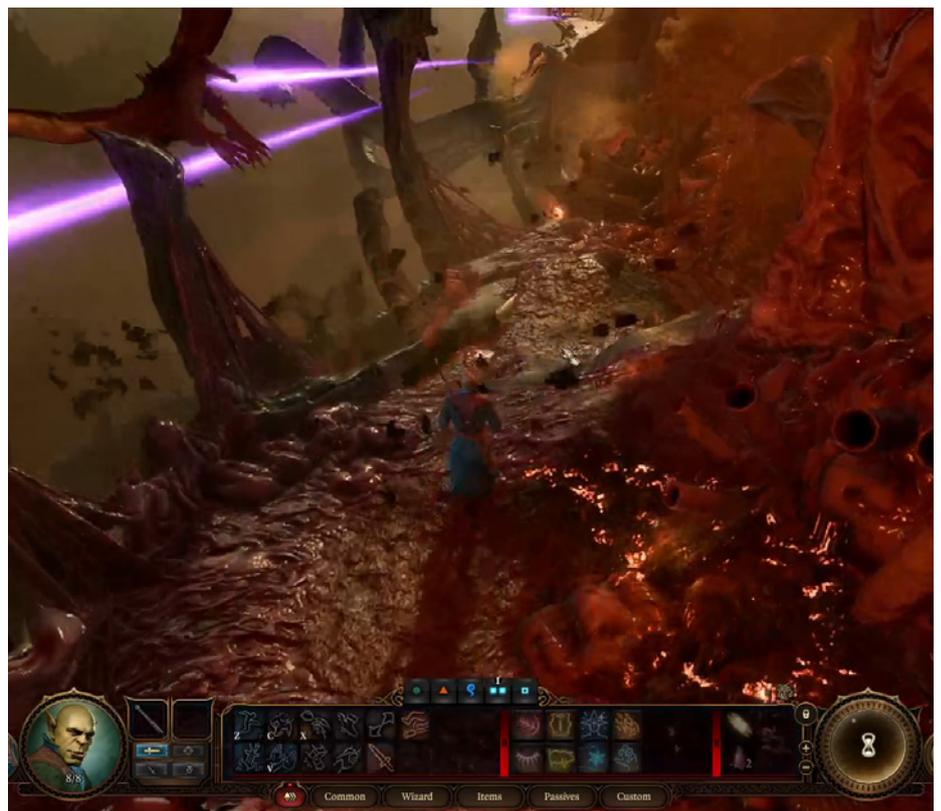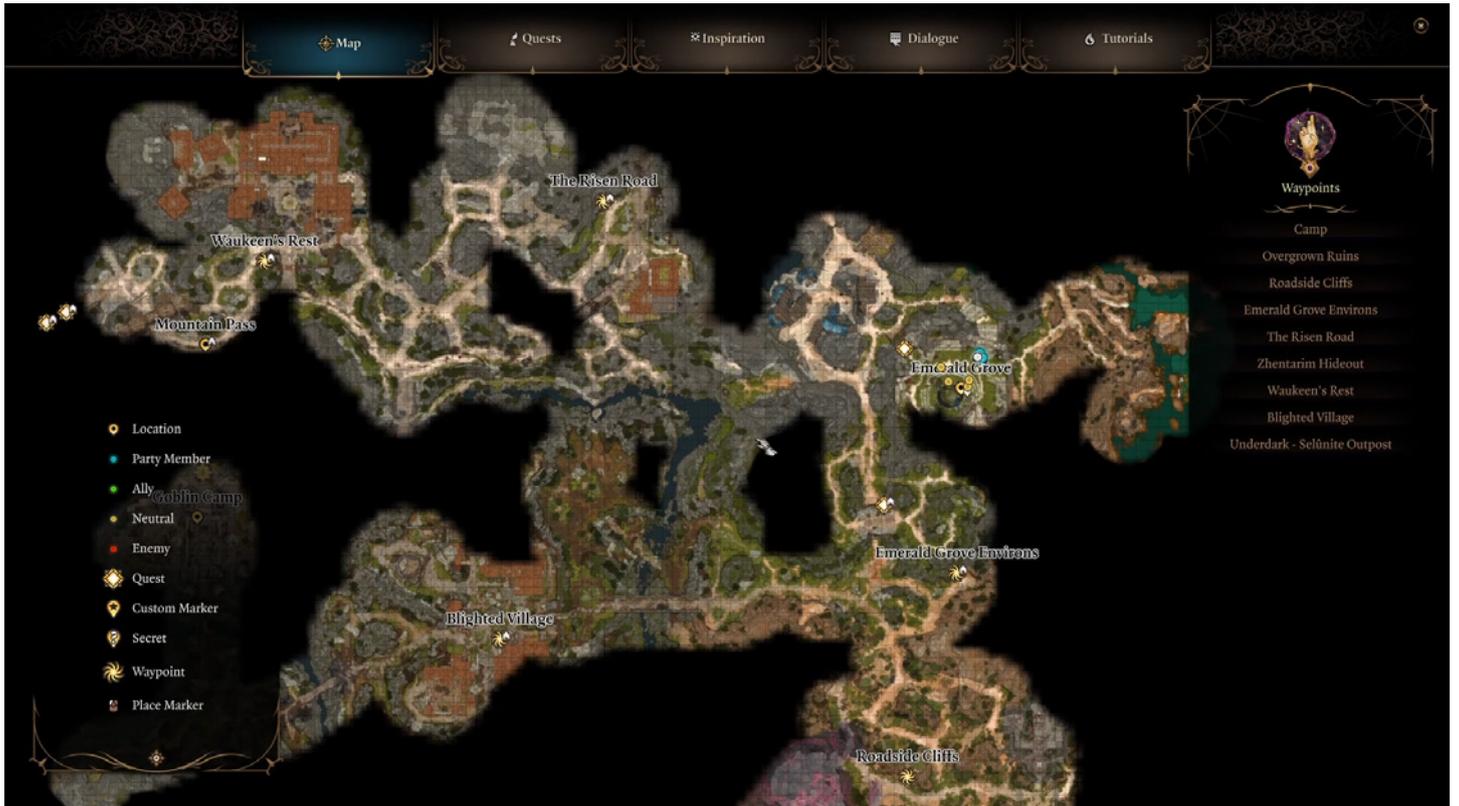
Camp

The Camp in BG3 is a unique feature that acts as both a refuge for your party and a place to temporarily rest. Besides your Companions, you can also invite other NPCs to stay at your Camp, and certain quests can only progress after resting at the Camp. When your characters exhaust their spell slots, a visit to the camp is necessary to replenish them.

Additionally, the Camp provides an opportunity for interactions with your Companions, allowing you to discuss quests and further romantic interests. You have the convenience of fast travelling to the campsite whenever you're not in combat, and this action transitions the location to its daytime version.

Locations

BG3 takes place in the mystical land of Faerûn. The areas you'll travel through are extensive and filled with adventure and magical discoveries around every corner. Below are the maps you will uncover as you progress through the story.

Prologue Locations:
- Nautiloid

Act 1 Locations:
- Wilderness
- Chapel Ruins
- Emerald Grove
- Owlbear Nest
- Blighted Village
- Whispering Depths
- Putrid Bog (Sunlit Wetlands)
- Overgrown Tunnel
- The Risen Road
- Zhentarim Basement
- Goblin Camp
- Mountain Pass: Rosymorn Monastery
- Creche Y'llek
- Underdark
- Arcane Tower
- Grymforge

Act 2 Locations:
- Shadow-Cursed Lands
- Reithwin Town

Act 3 Locations:
- Lower City
- Sewer and Undercity
- Rivington & Wyrm Gate

TIPS & TRICKS

Diversity is key

To effectively tackle the various challenges during your adventure, it's advisable to assemble a well-rounded party. Ensure your group includes a Rogue for lockpicking and trap disarming, a Cleric-type character for support, healing, and buffs, and a Tank to absorb damage and protect the party. This balanced composition will enhance your party's chances of success in a variety of situations.

If at first you don't succeed

In BG3, you can employ a strategy known as "save scumming" to retry actions, like dialogue choices or lockpicking, if you fail them. This technique involves saving your game before critical moments and reloading if things don't go well. Unlike traditional tabletop gaming, Baldur's Gate 3 allows this approach, so you can use it to your advantage if you're okay with repeating actions for better results.

This is not your average RPG

Play cautiously! BG3 uses a resource system that may differ from what you're accustomed to in traditional video games. With limited spell slots and HP recovery opportunities, frequent long rests can hinder your advancement, especially since camp supplies are limited early in the game. Make regular use of cantrips for spellcasters and be mindful of conserving HP when you can. Resting freely isn't always an option.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Baldur's Gate 3 emerges as a defining milestone in the realm of fantasy role-playing games. This game transports players into an intricately designed world where storytelling shines. With a diverse cast of brilliantly crafted characters, brought to life through outstanding writing and voice acting, there's a narrative replete with profound choices, intricate alliances, unexpected romances, and gripping turn-based combat encounters. Baldur's Gate 3 stands as a testament to the genre's enduring appeal, leaving an indelible mark on both newcomers and seasoned enthusiasts alike.