GAMER GUIDE

HORIZON FORBIDDEN WEST EDITION

the need to know you didn't know you needed

Esports Central

NIBBLE

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS IT?

Horizon Forbidden West is a third-person, action role-playing game developed by Guerrilla Games in February 2022. It is also the sequel to *Horizon Zero Dawn*, the wildly popular 2017 game that was initially only released on Playstation. *Horizon Forbidden West*, similarly, is only available for PS4 and PS5 at the time of writing. It received remarkable reviews across the board and even won Best Game and Best Visual Art awards at the 2022 Star Awards less than six months after its release.

This is a single-player game where the player controls a young protagonist named Aloy. In *Horizon Forbidden West* you explore the post-apocalyptic, machine-ridden Forbidden West, which is based on the US states of California, Nevada, and Utah.

This story takes place about six months after the events of *Horizon Zero Dawn* and Aloy discovers new enemies, extreme natural phenomena, and a vast array of beautiful environments. She revisits old alliances, forges new ones, uncovers a secret threatening imminent extinction, and reveals a hidden chapter from the past.

Prepare for a life-changing adventure!

BREAKDOWN THE BASICS

Mechanics

These are the things you need to know about how the game works, as well as what will make it easier to navigate this vast, open-world game - starting with the way you want to experience the game:

Modes: There are two options for your HUD (heads-up display) - Guided and Explorer:

Guided - Shows quest icons on the screen, guiding you to the exact location with a distance marker.

Explorer - Shows quest icons on the compass at the top of the screen.

The difficulty options also influence the game experience quite a bit beyond just the ease of progression. There are some things that don't change regardless of the difficulty - enemy behaviour, enemy levels, and amount of experience earned.

The damage Aloy takes increases with difficulty level, while enemies take less damage. We've listed the levels below with some more of the variables:

Story	Simplified combat allows you to immerse yourself in the story experience.
Easy	Combat is light and contributes to the experience while exploring the world and story.
Normal	A balanced experience of combat, exploration, and story.
Hard	If you're looking for challenging combat on top of your story experience, then this is for you.
Very Hard	This isn't about the story anymore. The combat is demanding and will test the skills (and patience) of the player.

The first two difficulties allow access to additional settings:

Concentration Duration - Get more time to line up your shots. Aiming slows down time and this setting allows adjustment of the duration.

Auto Concentration - Toggle this setting to automatically enter Concentration mode when you aim.

Auto Heal - Another toggle setting that activates automatic consumption of Medicinal Berries when Aloy's health goes below 50%. As long as you have them in your pouch of course!

Easy Loot - Not technically a setting, but Story & Easy modes allow you to loot without having to remove components.

BREAKDOWN THE BASICS

BEGINNER'S TIP

Need a specific machine part? Temporarily change the difficulty to Story or Easy. Beware though - the more machines you kill, the higher the chance that an Apex Machine will appear!

Combat: There are a variety of combat styles in *Horizon Forbidden West*. There's melee combat with a spear and range with bows and a host of other weapons. A good place to start is understanding the different damage types and their effects on enemies.

There are three main types of damage plus a variety of elemental damages:

Impact: Basic damage done by the spear and normal ammo.

Tear: Tear damage is required to remove components from machines. You'll need to use non-elemental ammo for this.

Explosive: This does a LOT of damage but can also destroy components.

Elemental: There are six types. Inflicting elemental damage to an enemy causes an elemental status effect based on the type. Once the status is inflicted, you can't double up so don't waste ammo.

Melee attacks have a very small chance of removing machine components, so if you need a specific machine part target it with ranged tear damage until it detaches.

The stealth scanning mechanic is an important one to use frequently! When you stealth scan an enemy in this mode you will be able to see weaknesses, removable components, attributes, and more.

SKILLS
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SKILLS

Skills

The skill tree reinforces the wide variety of playstyles with which you can approach the game. Are you largely a stealthy player? Ranged and trapping skills might be up your alley, for example.

Warrior Skill Tree: The primary focus of this tree is melee combos and passive damage boosts for the spear as well as Weapon Techniques for the close-range Warrior Bows. The Active Skills really impact how the spear handles so explore this if you enjoy getting up close and personal.

Trapper Skill Tree: Set and craft traps faster and easier, and acquire defence against your own traps. You'll access Weapon Techniques for the Ropecaster and Tripcaster, and passive boosts for food effects.

Hunter Skill Tree: This tree is all about variety! You can boost concentration, valor surge buildup, and weapon stamina. You can also craft ammo with fewer resources, do more damage with the heavy weapons obtained from machines, and learn Weapon Techniques for the Hunter Bow and Boltblaster.

Survivor Skill Tree: This is a useful tree regardless of combat style because it helps you, well, survive! Think passive health regen, defence, and medicine boosts. Deal more damage while critically injured, and acquire Active Skills for the Shredder Gauntlets and Blastsling.

Infiltrator Skill Tree: That stealth approach we mentioned earlier? Here it is! Deal more damage in stealth, decrease discoverability, increase Smoke Bomb capacity, buff Silent Strike, and gain Weapon Techniques for the Sharpshot Bow. Hellooooo sniper!

Machine Master Skill Tree: Become the ultimate machine overlord! Obtain passive boosts and additional behaviour options for your mounts. The Valor Surges in this tree help you fight machines too, as do the Spike Thrower Weapon Techniques.

Valor Surges are an important part of the skill tree. There are twelve Valor Surge actions in total, two in each skill tree, each with three levels. Word of warning though - the higher the level, the longer it will take to charge up!

- **Critical Boost**: Increase your chance of getting Critical Hits as well as the overall damage that Critical Hits inflict.
- **Melee Might**: Attaches a special component to the spear that boosts Melee Damage.
- **Elemental Fury**: Increased elemental resistance, as well as your elemental attack buildups and effects.
- **Trap Specialist**: Increase the effectiveness of traps and tripwires.
- **Ranged Master**: Increases the damage and stamina of ranged weapons.
- **Powershots**: Boosts the damage for a specific number of shots for Bows, Boltblasters, Ropecasters, and Spike Throwers.
- **Toughened**: Take a potion that heals you instantly and gives temporary resistance to status effects.
- **Overshield**: Deploys a shield that absorbs any damage. It reactivates once destroyed as long there is Valor available.
- **Stealth Stalker**: An invisibility cloak activates, however, if you aim a ranged weapon or use a melee attack, the cloak will briefly disappear.
- **Radial Blast**: Attaches a component to the spear that triggers an electrical shockwave around Aloy once it hits the ground, shocking nearby enemies.
- **Part Breaker**: Deal more damage to machine parts and weak spots.
- **Chain Burst**: Damage multiple machines in close proximity to the one you are attacking. Knockdown chance is also increased.

BEGINNER'S TIP

Regardless of your favoured skill tree, Part Breaker (Machine Master tree) is a smart Valor Surge to acquire! Components are necessary to both upgrade and purchase gear.

Machine Strike Mini-Game

In each of the towns you travel through, you can play a mini-game called Machine Strike. It seems a lot more complicated than it is, but you will need to persevere a little bit before you get to the point where it becomes enjoyable. Here are a few hints to help you hack it!

- **Machines gain bonuses** from the board terrain. Take a look at the board you'll be playing on and choose your machines accordingly!
- **Positioning is key**. You can't attack at an angle! Height plays a role in ranged attacks as well. Boost ranged units' damage by keeping them elevated.
- **Focus your fire**! Eliminate one unit quickly rather than damaging multiple units slightly. You don't need to take down all the enemy units to win, so fight smarter not harder.
- **Sometimes losing health** is inescapable. Rather use up your actions and gain tactical ground!

Crafting

Crafting is fairly simple in *Horizon Forbidden West*.

Via the crafting tab, you can modify weapons and outfits, as well as construct ammo, potions, and traps from resources you've harvested.

There is also a quick craft option for ammo.

Environment & Movement

The map is much larger than the predecessor, *Horizon Zero Dawn*, and features some breathtaking locations based on real-life places.

Travelling

When you're not grappling, ziplining, or running across the beautiful landscapes with the wind blowing through your hair you can use Fast Travel to get from point A to point B - but only as long as you've been there before. You can travel between Campfires you've discovered on the map for free, or you can travel from any location to a Campfire using a Fast Travel Pack. These packs are consumed on use and can be crafted.

There are also four machine mounts that can be unlocked throughout the game:

Items

Weapons

There are a number of weapons at your disposal in three main categories: ranged, melee, and heavy.

Your melee weapon is the spear, which can be modified and upgraded through the crafting system and skill tree.

Ranged has a bit more variety. From the close-quarter combat Warrior Bow to the sniper-esque Sharpshot Bow, these are your long-distance weapons:

Hunter Bow | Sharpshot Bow | Warrior Bow | Ropecaster |
Boltblaster | Blastsling | Shredder Gauntlet | Spike Thrower

BEGINNER'S TIP - Fire Hunter Bow is a must-have early-game weapon. It inflicts some serious damage and is also pretty affordable.

Heavy weapons are weapons that can be picked up from defeated enemies and shot off of machines. Your movement is significantly slowed when carrying one of these and, once all ammo is used, the weapon becomes completely useless and can be discarded. There are twenty-one heavy weapons in the game.

Outfits

Clothing and armour provide boosts to resistances and augment abilities once upgraded. Upgrades cost Metal Shards and various machine components and can be completed at a Workbench.

Uncommon Outfits are the lowest level outfits and can be upgraded three times.
Rare Outfits are a step up from Uncommon and can be upgraded four times.
Very Rare Outfits feature at the later stages of the game and can be upgraded five times.
Legendary Outfits are the final tier, granting the best resistances and perks. They can be upgraded five times.

BEGINNER'S TIP - The Nora Sentinel Outfit is great in early game stages thanks to its relatively high resistances. It can be purchased from the Stitcher in Barren Light.

CONCLUSION

Exploring the dangerous, yet alluring Forbidden West won't be without challenges. Like Aloy, you have your own guide to help you get started on this quest to save the world (again)!