

RESIDENT EVIL 2

GENRE(S): Survival horror, Third-person shooter

AVAILABLE ON: MAC, Nintendo Switch, PC, [PlayStation 4](#), PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X

DEVELOPED BY: Capcom

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The idea of a *Resident Evil 2* remake was born as soon as the *Resident Evil* remake first arrived on the Nintendo GameCube in 2002. However, at that time, series creator Shinji Mikami did not want to get involved with anything else besides *Resident Evil 4*, and wanted all capable hands on deck. After both Mikami and *Resident Evil 2* director had departed from Capcom, and whoever was left worked on pushing the series forward in the ways they saw fit instead of looking back. Thus, it seemed the sun would never shine on a new take on survival horror's greatest classic. Around the same time the *Resident Evil* remake and *Resident Evil 0* finally went multi-platform – to great success – Capcom announced they were finally going to make a move on *Resident Evil 2*, but it was clear from the start that this time, they would not just upgrade the game to higher audiovisual standards. They would reimagine the whole thing and use the previous remake, the original game's horror atmosphere, *Resident Evil 4*'s general gameplay and the RE Engine introduced in *Resident Evil VII* as building blocks to create the perfect *Resident Evil* game. With a game still as good as the original *Resident Evil 2* serving as its most essential foundation, how could it go wrong? In theory, there's just no way. In practice, even less; the original *Resident Evil 2* was the golden standard of survival horror in 1998. The *Resident Evil 2* remake is the golden standard of survival horror today.

Over the course of one night, two months after the mansion incident on its outskirts, Raccoon City itself turns into hell on earth as Umbrella Inc.'s T-Virus spreads over the city like wildfire. A motorcycle-riding tomboy named Claire Redfield arrives in the city late at night in search of her brother Chris, who she hasn't heard from in quite some time. Meanwhile, a new recruit at the Raccoon City Police Department,

named Leon S. Kennedy, arrives to his new workplace to find it infested with zombies. Claire and Leon team up to survive the viral outbreak, search for other survivors and escape the city.

Looking back on the *Resident Evil* remake, there we had a somewhat different experience than the original for sure, but still a game that you could easily compare to the original, it was clear where it all came from and as proven, it was easy to learn for anyone who had played the original game. Well, comparing this remake of *Resident Evil 2* to the original game is like comparing a Porsche to a horse carriage – and this does not, I mean NOT mean that the original's as good as dead. It's still a fantastic game and one of the greatest video game products of ITS TIME. The remake succeeds on every possible level and fulfills every possible expectation, even those that are not directly tied to the franchise. It brings an already GOAT level game to the modern times, changing everything about it but the core basics and storyline, and does it with absolute grace, never succumbing to the curse of leaning too much on the action unlike so many "horror" games today. Ironically, it was the *Resident Evil* franchise's turn to more action-oriented gameplay that inspired others to follow suit, but rest assured: *Resident Evil 2* remembers where it came from. The horror of the game is more constant, relentless and aggressive than in classic survival games, but still most definitely horror, instead of an endless, repetitive swarm of the same non-surprising, frustrating encounters that passes too easily for horror nowadays.

The story is the same, but it's full of both minor and major tweaks that make it more believable and scientifically accurate – long story short, it makes a hell of a lot more sense all the way from storyline twists to the whole damn environmental design. Apart from 200% better voice acting, the main characters are quite the same they always were to honor the original game, but the side characters have notably more depth. For example, douchebag Ben's glorious two minutes of screen time in Leon's scenario tell us a lot more about the character than the five in the original; in turn, Chief Irons in Claire's game is given a LOT more script space to come off as a lot more than just the mandatory corrupt city official. Ada's original backstory as "the girlfriend of a guy named John", as well as her ridiculous "I'm just a woman" speech are completely trashed in favour of a much more plausible explanation to her presence

in Raccoon City; the character is more believable altogether and much more in line with the rest of her colourful history within the *Resident Evil* canon. I'm just scratching the surface of the surface here, I'd rather not make this a 30-page essay.

The game follows the basic third-person shooter rules of *Resident Evil 4* – with much less action of course – and utilizes the engine of *Resident Evil VII*, which allows fluid, frictionless movement and much more dynamic item and weapon management, and environmental interaction than any classic horror game veteran is readily accustomed to. No more slowly opening doors, just fast, smooth movement through the hallways which takes a great load off from all the backtracking that's bound to happen especially if you have no idea what you're doing. The order of things is very similar to the original; get to the police station, get out of there, travel the sewage system to get to NEST – yeah, the Raccoon City underground lab has a name now, and I guess they wanted to name it something similar to HIVE but not quite as such to once more make the point that the game series timeline has nothing to do with the film series. This time, in the between we have whole new areas to explore within and outside the police station, and even sorts of boss fights in store for both Sherry and Ada. It's not just like the police station has purposefully been built on top of everything like in the original, or the other way around, it's all much more realistic.

There are also some slight callbacks to the previous remake. Similarly to that one, zombies don't necessarily die before what's left of their brains have been completely destroyed, or their bodies burnt to a crisp. However, since critical headshots especially with a handgun are very rare, they do the player a solid by not waking up faster and more lethal – instead they come back just the same they were before, but watching them rise time and time again isn't any less panic-inducing, and that one zombie you thought you offed an hour ago will scare you positively shitless when he jumps the corner at you as hungry as ever. The game is full of such surprises. Also, the game brings back the self-defense weapons from the previous remake, including knives and grenades. This time, you can use them in standard combat as well, but the knives wear down more after each use until they break, and the grenades – oddly enough – don't do as much damage when you shove them in enemies' mouths in comparison to when you

throw one at 'em.

Apart from the zombies, Lickers, the packs of Cerberus dogs, and of course the cavalcade of familiar bosses, the remake introduces a couple of completely new enemy types; amphibious, giant G-Virus mutants living down the sewers, and Ivy Zombies, that are literally like undead, humanoid plants very similar to the Regenerators from *Resident Evil 4*. These new rascals are obviously specifically designed to take advantage of the game's manual aiming system, 'cause they have very specific weak spots you can shoot for massive damage even with a standard handgun. These spots are just very small, so your aim's got to be spot-on.

When it comes to the game itself, I'll have to mention the original's most memorable enemy – sorry, William – none other than Mr. X. I once said that the thing that made this guy so outstanding was his way of disappearing just as suddenly as he appeared, which was usually at the most serene moments. He broke through a wall to test your bowels, but was gone as soon as you exited the room. Well, the legend says he was never meant to be that way; instead, he was meant to be more of a constant pain in your ass like Nemesis, and didn't go away until you either stunned him or got far enough from him. In my review of the original *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*, I shared some harsh criticism on the monster itself and its relentless behaviour which I considered frustrating and distracting rather than truly horrifying. You probably have a pretty good guess where I'm going with this – yes, here's the only thing wrong with the whole remake. Mr. X is constantly on your trail from a certain point onwards; right from the beginning up until the end in the B scenario, regardless of the character you're playing. Luckily most of the time his arrival is telegraphed by his heavy footsteps and a musical cue, and it's fine to run in the opposite direction unless you're going somewhere specific. It's really annoying to take the long route to shake him off. Shooting him isn't worth anything as he never falls down, he just kneels for a moment or two.

In addition to the usual achievement tracking system, there's also a much larger list of achievements within the game that win you different unlockables, and 15 well hidden Mr. Raccoon statuettes to destroy

across both scenarios. There's so much to do here beyond the four times you need to play through the game to get a complete grasp on the whole story from both perspectives – I use the words "need to" very loosely, 'cause this is an extremely addictive experience. And, of course, what would *Resident Evil* be without extra game modes? What would *Resident Evil 2* be without *The 4th Survivor* and *Tofu Survivor*? How complete would any remake be without something a bit more?

Made in the style of the two already familiar *Survivor* modes, where a character is tasked with travelling from point A to point B with a limited inventory and hacking through an overwhelming mob of enemies, *The Ghost Survivors* revolves around four individuals, who die in the main story but find themselves in a unique what-if scenario. Three chapters of this mode are unlocked in the beginning of the game, since they feature characters that died in the original game as well. A fourth one is unlocked after beating the first scenario, featuring a whole new character. *The Ghost Survivors* is the ultimate challenge the *Resident Evil 2* remake has in store; these characters are so damn weak, completely ill-equipped against the horrors of this kind of hostile environment, and finally, faced with enemy variants not seen anywhere else in the game, so you'll have to learn to deal with them through the hardest possible lessons. Fun. But hey, you get what you asked for.

I'm so glad they had the patience to wait to completely rebuild this game instead of just doing an alpha. *Resident Evil 2* is a model example of what game developers can actually accomplish with a remake when they pour their hearts into it. Like I said, the original game was one of the greatest of its time, and that's something the remake follows faithfully. It's a triumphant death march no survival horror fan can afford to miss.

9.5