

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TEARS OF THE KINGDOM

...is absolutely a great game, and playing through its predecessor *Breath of the Wild* to play and enjoy it is absolutely not necessary. But, if you have played *Breath of the Wild* – lucky you – you will discover a very familiar experience in *Tears of the Kingdom*. Perhaps even too familiar. I'm quite sure I'm not the only fan on the planet that thought going into *Tears of the Kingdom* would be a cakewalk fresh off the heels of the previous game. Although the world map is exactly the same, the core gameplay's exactly the same, *Tears of the Kingdom* focuses on completely different things and being able to effectively beat the game to 100% has completely different prerequisites. Just to make sure you won't stumble on your own pride like I did, multiple times, here are some pointers on how to truly get ahead and win in *Tears of the Kingdom*, so you wouldn't have to start the massive game over and over again until you get everything just right.

THE WORLD MAP IS THREE TIMES LARGER THAN IN *BREATH OF THE WILD*

Yes, that is quite correct. **Hyrule** is of the same size as before, and the exact same Hyrule you spent hundreds of hours raking through in *Breath of the Wild*, but two new layers have been added to the mix: the **skies of Hyrule**, as well as a murky series of underground tunnels known as **the Depths**. Also, there are **hidden caves and wells** to explore on ground level. As soon as you make it to Hyrule – you start from the skies – you should focus on that for an extended while, I'll get to some exceptions in a bit. But here's why:

- The skies are not really that dangerous, but exploring the skies effectively requires the paraglider, which you won't get until reporting back to Zelda's servants in Hyrule, and almost just as importantly, a LOT of stamina, a variety of tools – and the knowledge on how to use them – and finally, help from the character Tulin, whose spiritual form accompanies you after the Rito Village storyline quest. There are 32 Shrines in the skies, only 4 hidden caves; it's possible to find every cave in the skies if you follow the direct path in the beginning of the game.
- The Depths ARE dangerous. Not only does every enemy type in the game lurk somewhere in the Depths – including bosses once they're dealt with in the main game – getting hit by anything in the Depths infects Link with gloom, kind of a poison that prevents health regeneration one heart at a time. There are no Shrines or

caves within the Depths, but there is invaluable loot hidden all around. You should not waste too much time on exploring the Depths in the early goings of the game, but you also should not avoid it too much.

TAKE THE DIRECT PATH IN THE BEGINNING

The game starts from **Great Sky Island**, where you have three Shrines to conquer, to get the very basic abilities in the game, just like in *Breath of the Wild*: these abilities are **Ultrahand**, **Fuse** and **Ascend**. After using all of these abilities to make progress in the story, the game "surprises" you with one more Shrine, and one more ability before you are able to actually get started: **Recall**. On the way, you might be tempted to stray from the path and explore the vast island, but that's just a waste of time at this point. Follow the natural path. After getting Ultrahand, you are directed to the next place by using Ultrahand. Do that. At the next one, you'll best get forward by using Fuse. You'll get back to your starting point by using Ascend, and you'll get to the last Shrine with Recall. Don't waste your time thinking about how to get forward some other way, just follow the path, it'll do you good – BUT, do not forget to talk to everyone on the way, learn the different aspects of gameplay, and collect all resources that you possibly can. Try out new recipes at every open fire and pot you see, right after collecting some new food materials. Don't forget the lost Koroks. You can easily spot at least two by following the most direct path.

AFTER REACHING HYRULE

At this point, you are at a familiar place, and during your epic dive from the Temple of Time, you surely spotted a few Shrines and a few interesting lights or smoke signs on the way down. LEAVE THEM BE – and follow the path the game's laid out for you.

- Go to Lookout Landing and report to Purah.
- Go to Hyrule Castle – or what's left of it on the ground – and use your abilities to get to Hoz. (You can do that one Shrine on the way if you want, that one in city square, but don't bother going to the other one you see.)
- After watching the cutscene, return to Lookout Landing and talk to Purah again, and not only will she officially start the series of main quests (Regional Phenomena), she will also point you to some really important sidequests which you are able – and recommended – to do as soon as possible, so listen carefully what she has to say.
- Take a rest in the underground shelter, and the **Skyview Towers** will have unlocked when you return to her

once more. These are exactly the same as the towers in *Breath of the Wild*; however just one of them requires climbing, the others are unlocked after solving a corresponding task or puzzle.

SOME SIDEQUESTS ARE NOT AUTOMATICALLY UNLOCKED

Many important sidequests in the game, including most sidequests in your main headquarters of Lookout Landing, are unlocked after fulfilling certain prerequisites – and there are three important things you should do as soon as possible.

- **"Camera Work in the Depths"** (given by Josha) unlocks the camera. Don't be scared of going into the Depths – if you follow the direct path of the quest, you shouldn't come into contact with any enemies. It's a short quest that demonstrates the Depths and how travel back and forth works, do that and you'll have early access to the camera, assuming you're interested in filling the **Hyrule Compendium**. The camera is also an important part of several sidequests, and could also serve as a notebook for you.
- Go to **Rito Village** as soon as you can. You don't have to start the main quest with Tulin right away – it's recommended you have at least 8 hearts and 2 extra stamina vessels anyway – but yes, this is the first Sage quest you should do, because the worth of Tulin's ability considering aerial travel in this game cannot be measured. But, there are a few reasons why you should come here even if you're not planning on going on with the main quest:
 - The **Lucky Clover Gazette** is located in place of the old stable on the other side of the chasm. Here you'll start the sidequest **"Potential Princess Sightings"**, which continues in chapters in EVERY STABLE in the game. If you've started it early, you won't have to backtrack through every stable just because of this one quest. The reward for doing the whole thing is the **Froggy** armor set, a whole new one that allows you to climb on slippery surfaces.
 - The clothing store holds the **Snowquill** armor set; wearing just one piece helps you bear the basic cold quite a bit (there's a total of three cold regions on the ground alone) and you won't have to spam up your inventory with a thousand chili recipes. Strangely enough, the tunic is the cheapest piece, as is the case with every armor set in the game.
 - There is a **Goddess Statue** at the base of the main stairs, and an easy Shrine to work as your fast travel point behind the rock that Rito Village is built on, so getting back to the village in a time of need won't be such a chore it admittedly is the first time.

WHAT ABOUT THE PAD UPGRADES?

Well, that's the main reason you will want to do the Tulin quest as soon as possible. Robbie won't leave Lookout Landing before at least one of the Sage quests is complete, and one more Depths-related request by Josha is fulfilled, resulting in the discovery of the last basic ability, Autobuild. Robbie is the only one who can unlock those upgrades for you – including Hero's Path, which started as DLC for *BotW* and has since become one of the most essential parts of the *BotW* / *TotK* experience.

RESOURCES. RESOURCES. RESOURCES.

If you're planning to merely complete *TotK* and ESPECIALLY if you're going for anywhere near 100%, the importance of even the most trivial resources cannot be emphasized enough. Since ranged combat is about 80% more important and varied in this game than in its predecessor, **arrows** are absolutely essential and if you don't buy them every chance you get, that's saving money in the absolute wrong place and at the wrong time. Special foods and armor, and armor upgrades, relating to **stamina**, **strength**, **defense** and **climbing**, and in later parts of the game, stuff that protects you from **gloom**, are also extremely important. Collecting **Zonaite**, building **Zonai devices** and upgrading your **Zonai power cell** are particularly essential for a round trip of the skies, just as important as having Tulin around. TAKE YOUR TIME gathering up all the stuff you possibly can, don't leave anything behind.

THE STABLES ARE TREASURE TROVES

...Especially if you're a horse enthusiast. Every stable in the game has at least two sidequests to offer, one hidden well, one Shrine, at least one Korok in the immediate vicinity of the stable, and finally, **Beedle**; as annoying as he still is, he's invaluable because of his ever-replenishing stock of arrows and sometimes frustratingly rare insects. There's also a special recipe available – depicted as a poster on the wall – and more often than always that recipe corresponds to your needs in that particular environment. Almost every favor you do for the stable and every transaction directly made with them – not Beedle – gains you a Pony Point, which you can eventually trade in for different rewards. It's mostly horse gear and different horse-related services, but also, some cloth to customize your paraglider, and most importantly, access to the Malanya bed, which grants you the same sort of extra stamina and health with every rest as any special bed in any of the big city hostels. In addition to one-time sidequests, there are a total of three sidequest

lines which take you back to most stables in the game.

- **"Potential Princess Sightings"**, as mentioned earlier, which literally has you interrogating stable personnel and guests about some recent, very strange encounters with Princess Zelda
- **"Serenade to a Great Fairy"**, which actually starts as a part of "Potential Princess Sightings"; you'll need to reunite a downtrodden traveling band and thus unlock the Great Fairies, and if you've played any *Zelda* game, especially *BotW*, you'll already know just how important this one is
- **"Bring Joy to the Stables"**, which cannot be started before you've done at least one of the Sage quests. This has you using your camera to add a unique painting to each stable

THE LOST WOODS & THE MASTER SWORD

The new initial entry to the Lost Woods is quite tricky to find, unless you know where to search: the Depths. Those entering the Lost Woods too early on in the game in hopes of getting the Master Sword and instead getting their asses kicked by a surprisingly tough boss, let me save you the trouble: the Master Sword is not there. However, one of the three ways to obtain it is.

- Method 1: Defeat the boss to save the Great Deku Tree. He will then track down the Master Sword, but it's still up to you to retrieve it.
- Method 2: Find all of the Dragon's Tears, and retrieve the Master Sword from its resting place.
- Method 3: Just find it yourself. If you've found certain Dragon's Tears, you might have a quite good hunch where it is.

There's one thing in common with all three methods; just like in *BotW*, you need at least 12 hearts to be able to pull the Master Sword out of its proverbial stone.