

INTRODUCTION

Before you continue, please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the structure of this guide. Despite the dizzying array of options and opportunities in a single Dragon Age II playthrough, we have attempted to create a guide that doesn't merely offer a prescribed path through the adventure, but also enables you to make your own decisions – to play in the manner that you see fit.

WALKTHROUGH

With Dragon Age II defined by its huge number of quests, many of which have short or long-term consequences, a conventional start-to-finish walkthrough would be a sprawling jungle, crawling with bewildering caveats and qualifications. For this reason, we have instead chosen to present what we regard as a rewarding and enjoyable path through BioWare's absorbing and expansive adventure.

In short, you can regard our walkthrough as an "optimal" Dragon Age II playthrough, charting an efficient and rewarding path through all essential main plot missions.

Players who would like to complete optional activities will find page references to the companion Quests chapter, while those who simply wish to see the story through to its conclusion can do just that. Follow our guidance, prompts and suggestions closely, and you'll experience a successful and enjoyable first playthrough.

As a general rule, left-hand pages in the Walkthrough chapter offer concise guidance on what you must accomplish in each main plot quest. Right-hand pages focus on tactics and strategies, feature introductions, analysis and optional tasks.

STRATEGY ANALYSIS

Once you are ready to understand the game on a deeper level, the Strategy & Analysis chapter is where we examine the mechanics that underpin the entire Dragon Age II experience.

As most players will want to learn more about certain key game features (such as combat tactics, abilities, or leveling up and associated concepts) during a first playthrough without having the story ruined, we have divided this chapter into two sections: an opening "spoiler light" section, followed by a second part that covers features that are strongly linked to narrative events in Dragon Age II (such as companion relationships). We strongly advise that players leave the latter part well alone until they have finished the story at least once.

INVENTORY

This chapter not only provides details on all preset items in Dragon Age II, but also reveals where to find unique objects (including armor upgrades for companions and Backpack expansions), and a guide to how the "random" item generation system works.

EXTRAS

The Extras chapter is home to reading material only suitable for consumption after completing the game, including story recaps (for both Dragon Age II and predecessor Origins) and a glossary of major events, characters and concepts.

Extras also includes a dedicated guide to all Achievements and Trophies in Dragon Age II. Players who take pride in acquiring such accomplishments should be warned that this is also (alas, unavoidably) packed with story spoilers. We do, however, offer prompts on "missable" accomplishments of this ilk throughout the Walkthrough and Quests chapters.

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QUESTS

This chapter has information on every quest in Dragon Age II, and details the repercussions of all major actions or decisions. During a first run through the game, readers can follow page references from the Walkthrough chapter to complete optional tasks or study alternative solutions to critical main plot quests. On any subsequent playthrough, this chapter can be used for reference as you experiment with different resolutions to the many interlinked stories.

The majority of quests are divided into five categories: main plot, secondary, companion, side quests and (in a few select instances) Premium Content.

The Quests chapter is split into sections that correspond with Dragon Age II's three-Act structure. Each of these begins with a flowchart that offers a visual representation of how to unlock the core quests in that Act.

The main plot sections act as an addendum to the Walkthrough chapter, detailing alternative approaches to situations within mandatory quests critical to the main storyline.

The secondary, companion and side quest sections offer more detailed descriptions and walkthroughs for their respective quests, with guidance tailored to suit the level of assistance most players will need.

MAPS

To save you the trouble of scouring every corner of each new environment for collectibles, the Maps chapter reveals the location of every notable container or item you can get. To find a location visited during your current quest, just refer to the tab system of the Maps chapter, or to the guide's Index. Given the sheer number of areas in Dragon Age II, and different permutations of frequently visited locales, grouping all maps together is by far the most practical and user-friendly solution to make them easy to access.

BESTIARY

Dragon Age II features a huge variety of combat situations. This chapter examines each type of enemy, offering information on their abilities, strengths and weaknesses – and how you might adapt your strategies to counter or exploit these to your advantage.

As with the Strategy & Analysis chapter, all spoiler-heavy contents (story-related enemies) appear in the final section of the Bestiary.

INDEX GLOSSARY

Last (but, given the need for easy reference in a tome this large, by no means least), our comprehensive Index will enable you to find the information you need in an instant. All entries are color-coded to help you to avoid spoiler-heavy sections of the guide until you are ready. We have created a short glossary for those who have yet to play Dragon Age: Origins, or are otherwise unfamiliar with RPG mainstays.

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