4 things to do with your Nintendo Switch on Thanksgiving weekend

Nintendo’s latest device, the Switch, is perhaps the most flexible gaming machine ever created. Both a console *and* a portable, it allows you to play games in a variety of contexts — which means there are plenty of ways to utilize it over Thanksgiving weekend. You can play games together, all alone, or simply be a spectator. Here are a few options for that post-turkey time.

Trade football for e-sports




Photo by James Bareham / The Verge

The NFL is the traditional sport of Thanksgiving, but professional football isn’t exactly a game for everyone. What if you want a game that’s a little shorter and less complex? Something with more color and style? In that case, you might want to boot up a copy of *Splatoon 2*. Nintendo’s ink-stained competitive shooter is a great spectator sport. A match lasts just a few minutes, and the game is incredibly simple to understand; whichever side covers the level in the most paint, wins. There’s no checking out Wikipedia to see how a tiebreaker works.

Even better, Nintendo is releasing a massive update for the game today, which includes a deluge of new hairstyle and clothing options to deck out your squids with, as well as more music and a handful of quality-of-life improvements. And starting tomorrow, the game will receive a new map: set in a squid-themed big-box store, just in time for Black Friday.

If post-apocalyptic paintball isn’t your style, there’s also the recent Switch version of *Rocket League*. It’s essentially soccer, but with cars in place of people. This makes it both easy to follow, *and* strangely entertaining to watch.

Work as a team

One of the great things about the Switch is that it’s a dead-simple machine for multiplayer. Even if you just have a single tablet and the packed-in Joy-Con controllers, you can still get in some co-op action. Naturally, there are a handful of games designed with this feature in mind.

Your best bet is likely *Snipperclips*, which recently received a hefty expansion with some challenging new puzzles. The game puts you and another player in the role of pieces of paper, who need to snip each other into different shapes to complete an array of goals. It’s cute and charming, but also devious; solving puzzles necessitates working together closely, and it’s very easily to accidentally snip your partner and ruin everything. But when you actually pull things off, it’s incredibly satisfying.

Meanwhile, *Super Mario Odyssey* offers a very different style of co-operative play, one that’s well-suited for introducing newcomers to the game. In two-player mode, one person is in control of Mario, while the other takes on the role of his sentient hat, Cappy. Mario still does most of the work, but Cappy can help out by tossing himself at enemies and other points of interest. It’s perfect for younger players or those who can’t deal with *Odyssey*’s many treacherous jumps.

Ignore everyone





Photo by James Bareham / The Verge

Being around your family for the holidays can be fun — but you'll likely need to escape at some point. With a big, meaty game played in portable mode, the Switch is ideal for this. The most obvious candidate to play is *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*. Its sprawling rendition of Hyrule is easy to get lost in, and offers up all manner of places to explore. Plus, you can do some virtual cooking while you wait for the real food to arrive.

But if you've already exhausted what Link's latest adventure has to offer, there are plenty of other options. The recently released remasters of *Skyrim* and *LA Noire* feel great on the Switch, while role-playing gems like *I Am Setsuna* or *Disgaea 5* will make the hours melt away. And if you need something a bit more relaxing, you can't go wrong with the soothing farming game *Stardew Valley*.

Get out some aggression

Being around family, especially during the holidays, can be stressful. And there are few better ways of relieving stress than punching things. Nintendo's fighting game *Arms* utilizes the system's motion controls, so – with a controller in each hand – you can swing your arms around to simulate knocking the stuffing out of your opponents.

It's a surprisingly family-friendly experience – don't expect *Mortal Kombat* levels of blood or gore – with a roster of charming and diverse characters. *Arms* can be played solo, but includes multiplayer options for up to four people, so you can get everyone involved in the celebratory pugilism. If nothing else, it's a great way to work off that second helping of turkey.