The Touryst is a bite-sized, open-world vacation game

It can be difficult to find time to finish a video game, especially if you only have a few hours a week to play. In our biweekly column Short Play we suggest video games that can be started and finished in a weekend.

I was really into playing open-world games when the genre was still new. While I didn't complete *everything* in those early *Assassin's Creed* games, or in the original *Crackdown* or *Infamous*, I did spend a lot of time doing pretty much everything the games had to offer. These days, however, I find it pretty difficult to devote enough time to finish the main quest line of an open-world game, never mind the additional stuff. But *The Touryst* scratches that itch, only in a much shorter time frame.

[embedded content]

The Touryst is a platformer / adventure game where you play as a tourist visiting an archipelago of vaguely Pacific-inspired tropical islands. There you can sunbathe on the beach, attend a sunset dance party, scuba dive, visit a jazz club, go spelunking for diamonds, or investigate the mystery behind the ancient alien ruins on each of the islands.

That last one represents the main quest line and how the game progresses. It's also why you aren't just relaxing on the beach at the first island for your whole vacation. In order to figure out the mysteries of these alien ruins, you are tasked with visiting them and finding a strange energy core hidden within each one. Gameplay-wise the ruins offer a set of puzzle / platforming challenges across a set of rooms. Each is based around either something your character can normally do, like pick up and precisely throw certain objects, or a unique

mechanic like platforms that float and move based on where you stand on them.

A few of the puzzle rooms have some frustrating precision platforming (mainly toward the end of the game), although most of the rooms have a trick to getting through them which makes it more of a puzzle. For example, one room requires you to cover up some lights to open a door, but a weird alien snake will keep unblocking the lights. Eventually, you'll figure out that if you stand in a specific location, the snake stops moving, allowing you to throw rocks to cover the lights.

You progress through the game by completing these ruins, but you'll actually be spending most of your time taking part in open-world gameplay tasks disguised as vacation activities. *The Touryst* may not technically be an open-world game, as each island is discrete from the others and requires a man in a boat and a loading screen to move between, but there are so many disparate activities that it feels like one. These activities are also further gamified with explicit missions attached to completing them. For instance, you could go to an arcade and play a few '80s- and '90s-inspired arcade games, but if you happen to talk to the person outside you'll get a mission to get the top score on all of them.

The Touryst would have been a fun game if it was just solving platforming puzzles in mysterious ruins. But the open-world-like exploration and activities make the islands feel more like actual places as opposed to just set dressing. It really captures the feeling of stumbling onto an adventure while on vacation.

The Touryst *was created by Shin'en Multimedia. You can get it on Nintendo Switch for $19.99. It takes about four or five*

hours to finish.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/1/19/21065744/the-touryst-review-nintendo-switch-open-world-quests