There’s never been a better time to play Diablo IV

When we reviewed *Diablo IV*, the latest installment in the long-running action roleplaying game series last year, we said it was off to a hell of a good start. But ARPGs live and die by their endgame loops, and it was far too early at the time to accurately assess the game’s true staying power.

Sadly, after that confident first step, like so many loot-hunting games before it, *Diablo IV* fell flat on its face. I’ve seen plenty of boneheaded updates to live-service games, but *Diablo IV*’s first major patch, released a couple of months after the game’s release, was still pretty shocking. By that point, a consensus had emerged that the endgame was a bit barren, and getting to the game’s level cap of 100 was a tedious slog. But that’s the great thing about live-service games, right? Tweak some numbers, throw in a couple of fun high-level activities, and, baby, you’ve got a stew going.

Sadly, the game’s developers at Blizzard had other plans. The patch notes for that first update read like someone had systematically gone through the game and removed anything that could be considered fun. Almost every character build had been mercilessly nerfed, and worst of all, the game became even slower. Fans were incensed, and *Diablo IV* floundered like this for its first three seasons. I mostly lost interest.

On the release of the game’s first expansion, *Vessel of Hatred*, we’re checking in on the state of the game—and we’re pretty happy with what we’ve found.

Game details

Developer: Blizzard
Publisher: Blizzard
Platform: Battlenet, Steam, Playstation 4|5, Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One
Release Date: Oct. 8, 2024
Price: $39.99

Loot reborn

There were many problems with *Diablo IV*‘s endgame, but the most pressing concern was the loot. There were too many possible “affixes”—random properties on pieces of gear—and they were way too specific. You’d have a sword that gave you, like, extra critical hit chance to enemies below a certain health threshold or a helm that gave you a chance (of a chance) of healing on hit. Players started calling these hyper-conditional affixes “damage on Tuesdays” effects.

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