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An Exhaustive Guide To Getting Started In Final Fantasy XIV Online

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A lot can change in nine months.

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In December 2021, *Final Fantasy XIV* reached the zenith of a surge of popularity so huge and so sudden that it was forced to suspended sales of its Starter and Complete Editions in a bid to ease server congestion. Access to the game's free trial was also suspended, and even the creation of new characters was brought to a halt as servers reached max capacity.

With the introduction of the Oceania Data centre in January, *Final Fantasy XIV* is back to business as usual and ready to welcome new players.

Entering such a large game can be a daunting experience, but don't worry, we're here to help. This guide will help new players take their first steps in this amazing game. Also, lore hounds, you can relax: we've done our best to keep this guide as spoiler-free as possible.

Downloading the game

An enduring joke in *Final Fantasy XIV* community is that figuring out how to buy the damned thing is one of the game's greatest challenges. This is because there are a few things that need to be put in place before you can play, and it takes a bit of messing around.

Final Fantasy XIV uses an online platform called the MogStation to drive major transactions. Players use the Mogstation to buy game time, adjust their subscription, and hire additional retainers. The Mogstation is generally considered the best place to buy the game, rather than a third-party store like Steam. This is because the Steam version uses a separate FFXIV

Launcher. It also creates a headache around DLC. If the original *A Realm Reborn* (ARR) expansion is purchased on Steam, all subsequent expansions must also be bought on Steam. Save yourself the trouble. Buy everything through the Mogstation and keep it all in one place.

As of March 2022, Steam players are now required to link their accounts to the Mogstation. It will only need to be done once. This is an extra layer of security designed to prevent people from having their accounts stolen.



An issue familiar to many Australian players is the “unable to download patch files” error. One way to circumvent this error is by using a VPN to access overseas file servers long enough to pull the update down. There’s some debate about whether adjusting your DNS settings makes a difference, but there’s not enough concrete evidence one way or the other to support it. The error was originally believed to only affect Telstra users, but players have encountered it across numerous ISPs.

With any luck, the [new Oceania data centre](#) may mean we’ve seen the last of it.

Free trial

Think of the free trial as a kind of sample platter. It lets you taste a little bit of everything without getting too full.

There are some restrictions for players on the free trial version. These restrictions, while sometimes annoying, are designed to prevent people from cheating. Free trial players cannot join or be invited to Free companies, for example. They are unable to trade items or add people to their Friends list.

That, a subscribed player can add a free trial player to *their* Friends list. They can also start a party for the free trial player to join. Crafty groups of free trial players will occasionally ask paid players to create a party just for them so they can adventure together. Whatever works, right?

Game set up

With the Oceania data centre up and running, Materia will be the server Australian and New Zealanders players should select. On Materia, there are five worlds. These worlds are Bismarck, Ravana, Sephirot, Sophia and Zurvan. Don't stress, you can travel between these worlds easily enough.



Ravana is the most popular and has a large community interested in raiding. If you're interested in high-level combat scenarios, this is the world to select.

Sephirot might as well be Hollywood. This world has been claimed by Oceania region content creators. Anyone can go there, but it seems to be where the streamers and content creators have made their home. If you're coming in because you enjoy a particular streamer, this is the world to join. It may be possible to bump into a few *FFXIV* celebrities.

Sophia is the closest we have to a perfectly normal server. It's welcoming to new players and is very queer friendly. There is a joke in the community that Sophia is the unofficial ERP

server. Don't believe those people, they're just having you on for a laugh.

Of course, players don't have to observe the strange customs of each world. You can still do your own thing around whatever may be happening on the server. Just because the community makes these decisions doesn't make them so.

Anyway, once you've decided on a world, it's time to start your character.

Creating a character

Race and clans

Creating a character means making many decisions. If we're honest, most of these decisions have nothing to do with anything beyond roleplay.

The first decision is picking a race, and there are eight to choose from. There is no statistical difference between them. No race is more powerful or specialised than any other. The choice is entirely cosmetic.

Once you've picked a race, you'll then have the option to then pick a clan. Each race has two clans.

Hyurs

Hyurs are your standard humans. Their clan types are the Highlander and Midlander. Highlanders tend to be more on the muscular side whereas Midlanders are lithe and known for their inventive prowess. Hyurs are included in the free trial.



That's the Midlanders on the left, and the Highlanders on the right.

Elezen

Elezen are a tall, slender elf race. The Elezen are split into two clans, the Wildwood and the Duskwights. The Wildwood Elezen are known as The Greens for their love of the forest. The Duskwights prefer life underground and dislike society. Elezen are included in the free trial.



Elezens: Wildwood and Duskwights

Lalafells

Lalafells are a very childlike and cheerful people. Their clans are the Plainsfolk and Dunesfolk. The Plainsfolk were a farming clan that settled in La Noscea, while the Dunesfolk took to being merchants in Ul'dah. Lalafells are included in the free trial.



Lalafells: Plainsfolk and Dunesfolk

Mi'qote

Mi'qote are, yes, cat people. They are divided into Seekers of the Sun and Keepers of the Moon. Seekers have vertical pupils with light coloured Iris' while Keepers have larger eyes

with vibrant iris' with round pupils. Mi'qote are included in the free trial.



Mi'qote: Seekers of the Sun and Keepers of the Moon

Roegadyn

Roegadyn are a large, muscular race. Tall as an Elezen and twice as wide, their clans are the water-loving Seawolves or the fiery Hellsguard. Seawolves will have a blue-green tinge to their skin, whereas the Hellsguard has a red one, both representing their origins. Roegadyn are included in the free trial.



*Roegadyn: Seawolves and Hellsguard. So big they break the formatting of the page.
Inspiring.*

Au Ra

The Au Ra were introduced in the *Heavensward* expansion. The Au Ra are dragon people with scaly tails and horns. They often have distinct scale patterns on their hands, necks and faces. Their clans are the Raen and Xaela. The Raen are distinguished by their light colour scales and horns. Their sister clan, the Xaela, are proud of their dark scales and nomadic heritage.

Au Ra are the final race included in the free trial. None of the following races are in the paid version only.



Au Ra: Raen and Xaela. Notice the colour of their horns and tails

Viera

The Viera are a race of rabbit people. They are separated into the clans of Rava and Veena. The Rava and Veena are very similar, with the choice only affecting the default skin colour. Any skin colour can be changed to how the player wants it no matter what they choose.



Viera: Rava and Veena. The bunny boy is also a Veena.

Hrothgar

The Hrothgar are cat boys, but the big cat boys. They often look like lions and tigers. Their clans are Hellion and The Lost. This has nothing to do with appearance and is based on whether they have a queen to serve or not.



Hrothgar: Hellion and The Lost

More decisions

Phew.

Ok. I know that was a lot to get through. But we're not done yet! Next is deciding a name. Luckily, *FFXIV* has a random name generator that can give you a name based on the race and clan you chose. Your character must have a first name and a last name. This threw me when I first signed up. I planned to just call myself "Scree" as usual.

It will ask what your character's Nameday is. This is the *FFXIV* version of a birthday. To make things confusing it uses the moons and suns of the Astral or Umbral era. Again, this is just a flavour thing. These dates have no statistical impact on your character or the game at all and are only really used for roleplaying.

Speaking of things with little significance in your day-to-day life, it's time to pick a god! There are twelve gods in the Final Fantasy XIV pantheon referred to, imaginatively, as The Twelve. Again, your choice of deity has no bearing on the game or story. Here's a quick rundown on each.

The Twelve

Halone, the fury, is the goddess of war. Her affinity is Ice. She is bitter rivals with Nophica.

Menphina, the lover, is the goddess of love. Her affinity is also Ice. Keepers of the moon worship her.

Thaliak, the scholar, is the god of knowledge. His affinity is water.

Nymeia, the spinner, is the goddess of fate. Her affinity is also water.

Llymlaen, the navigator, is the goddess of navigation. Her affinity is wind.

Oschon, the wanderer, is the god of vagrants. His affinity is wind too.

Byregot, the builder, is the god of the arts. His affinity is lightning.

Rhalgr, the destroyer, is the god of destruction. He also commands lightning.

Azeyma, the warden, is the goddess of inquiry. Her element is fire. Seekers of the sun worship her.

Nald'thal, the traders, is the god of commerce. His element is fire too.

Nophica, the maiden, is the goddess of abundance. Her affinity is earth.

Althyk, the keeper, is the god of time and space. His affinity is earth.

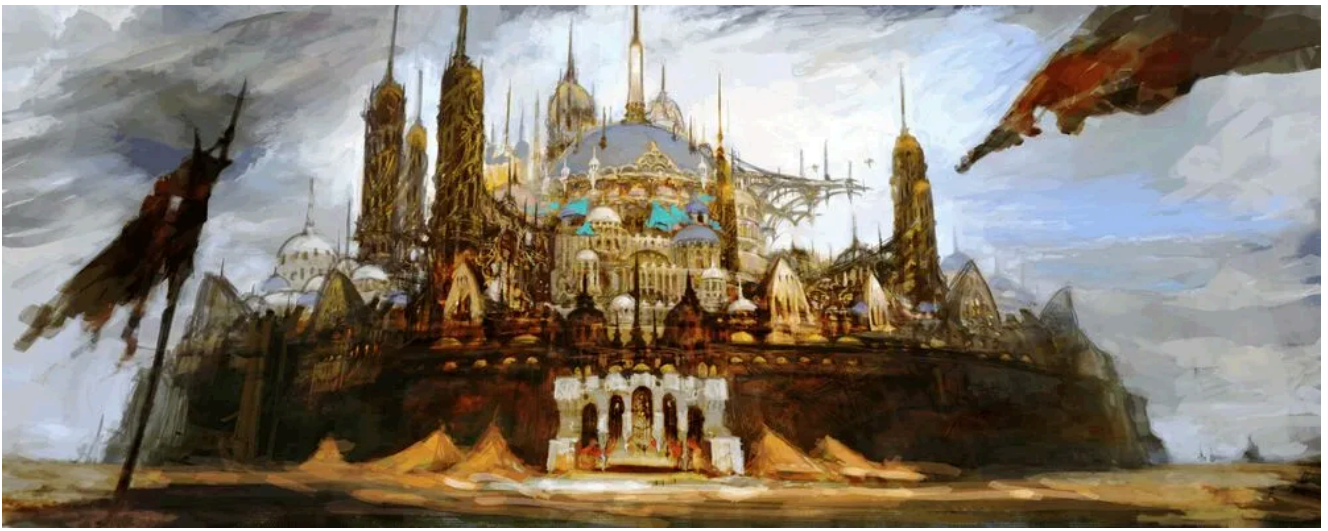
The in-game calendar is based on these deities, and they are referred to all over Eorzea. Players won't be missing out if they don't know who they are. Again, it's mostly for roleplaying and the lore hounds.

We come now, at last, to your final decision. This is a major choice, and it *does* have an impact on the game. It's time to choose your starting area.

The City-States

Final Fantasy XIV has three main city-states players can visit from the jump. The desert city of Ul'dah, the forest city of Gridania and the sea city of Limsa Lominsa. Each city has its own vibe and personality, and you can gauge which one is a good fit for you when you're on the ground and exploring. But why your choice of a city actually matters is that only certain class trainers are available in each. As a rule of thumb, decide on a class before picking a city. The reason for this is that you will be stuck in that city until around Level 10.

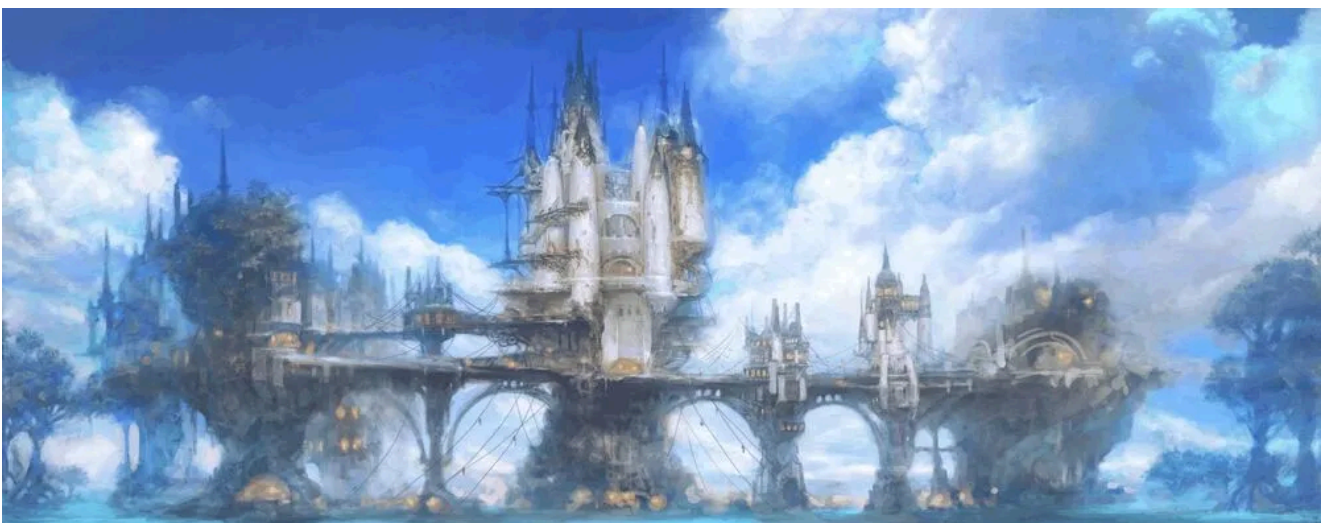
Let's break down what you'll find in each city:



In Ul'dah, players will find the Thaumaturge (magic DPS), Gladiator (Tank) and Pugilist (Melee DPS) trainers. These trainers turn into Black Mage, Paladin and Monk at Level 30.



In Gridania, players will find the Archer (ranged DPS), Lancer (melee DPS) and Conjurer (healer). These become Bard, Dagoon and White mage at Level 30.



Finally, in Limsa Lominsa players will find Arcanists (magic DPS) and Marauders (tank). Arcanists are special as they split into two classes at 30, becoming the healing scholar or the damage dealing summoner. Marauders turn into warriors and Rogues to Ninjas. Rogues (melee DPS) can only be picked up at level 10 as another class meaning they're never a starting class.

Classes are changed simply by equipping a weapon once that class has been unlocked. A player can change class at any time except for Dungeons and in combat. There is no penalty for picking up all the classes, so there's no reason to not try them all.

Transportation

In the early, your only real mode of transportation is your own two feet. Walking around and getting a lay of the land first is a good idea. It helps a player understand the layout of the town. Attune to the shards you find on the way, and movement will be easy. Luckily with Endwalker's release, a quality-of-life change now shows a player where the shard they're teleporting to is on the map.



The Aetheryte in [spoiler], you'll know when you find it.

As the world starts to expand, a few other options will come into play. Aside from the large three main cities, at least one town in an area will have its own Aetheryte. Players can teleport this way, for some Gil, the in-game currency. On the release of the recent expansion, charges for Aetheryte travel have changed. It often costs more depending on how

far away a character is moving from the Crystal Tower. It's not usually an issue until the Stormblood expansion though.

Sometimes areas will have more than one town but only one Aetheryte. Players can use Chocobo Porters which allows a player to get from one location to another without worrying about getting lost or being attacked. Chocobo porters are automatic, so it's best to let them do their thing until you get to your destination. These also use Gil.

Going between the three main cities before attuning to their Aetherytes requires the use of airships. There are also normal sea ships to get to places as well. Both these options cost Gil as well.

Players will get their own Chocobo after Level 20 by doing the "My Little Chocobo" quest, but it won't be able to fly until after the final main scenario quest. Luckily, mobs are very easy to outrun. Other expansions will require finding Aether currents to fly, but *A Realm Reborn* is automatic.

What next?



Mentor icons

Final Fantasy XIV has a mentor system in place. Any avatar with a crown next to their name is a mentor and can invite a player to the Novice Network.



The smith at the Hall of the Novice in Western La Noscea

Aside from the Novice network, there is also the Smith, who players can recognise by the sprout symbol above their head. The Smith helps new players get acquainted with the game and the roles that are in it. It's connected to the Hall of the Novice which helps players become accustomed to their roles.

The Smith is usually found in the adventurer's guilds in each of the main cities. Also, there is the Innkeep and arms mender.



The Carline canopy in Gridania, it's designated Adventurer's guild. There's The Quicksand in Ul'dah and The Drowning Wench in Limsa Lominsa.

The Innkeep allows a player to retire to a room. Here they can store special weapons and gear, glamour items, play mini-games (if unlocked), listen to orchestrion rolls or check out the never-ending story. This allows a player to go over things that have already happened in the game, in case they were missed the first time or want to pick a different dialogue option.

The arms mender will fix a player's gear. There is one in most towns. After doing a few dungeons, a player should probably seek one out. In main cities, they can be found in the shopping district or the adventurer's guild.



The main scenario and blue quest icons, your new best friends.

A general rule of thumb when starting the game is to do quests with a blue/purple background, as opposed to the yellow ones. The main story quests have the meteor logo, so it's easy to distinguish them. The blue/purple quests mean they unlock something special. It could be a dungeon, an emote, or a minion. They are always worth doing.

It's also worth having two classes to do the main story quests as one class will rapidly out level the quests they are doing. Especially as new characters will have the Road to 80 buff which grants players bonus EXP until that class reaches 80. This affects all classes, so if one is at 80, the bonus will still apply to any under 80.

Often rewards from quests will be a choice of gear or Allagan bronze, silver or gold pieces. These special pieces can be sold for varying amounts of Gil. If a player's inventory is filling up, it's often a good idea to select the Allagan pieces as they can stack up to 99.

Grand Companies

Each of the main cities has a Grand Company. The game will ask you to pick one. It is easiest to just pick the one in the character's starting city. It is possible to change Grand Companies at any time, but the character will drop to the lowest rank and have to work their way up again. All rewards and quests are the same. The only difference is the name and colours, (and which NPCs are in them).



The Maelstrom, the Twin Adders and the Immortal Flames.

Free Companies

Free Companies are player-run guilds. A free company is a player-run community. They will often run content, grow rare vegetables, help new people, actively recruit and own a house. If a person is new, they will often become bombarded by FC invites. Joining a Free Company is not compulsory, but there are many benefits including doing harder content and extra experience buffs. Mine is called Chonk.

Levelling

Before deciding how to level, if a player is part of a Free Company, they can often apply an experience buff. It affects everyone in the Free Company and it lasts for 24 hours. These buffs are often for 5%, 10% or 15% more experience for fighting.

Food gives a 3% experience bonus for 30 minutes, or an hour if two serves are consumed. It also boosts certain stats, but that's secondary to the exp buff.

Leves

There are four main ways of levelling a character. These are Quests, Leves, Fates and Dungeons. Dungeons are often locked behind story progression and Quests often aren't repeatable. Until a character reaches the first dungeon in the game, the main method for levelling is Fates and Leves.

Leves are similar to quests. You accept the job, go to the area marked on the map, and activate them. They are often hunter-gatherer quests or "murder so many of this particular type of enemy" quests. There are also escort quests, a tried-and-true mission design that *FFXIV* somehow managed to make even more boring.

The player has to regularly stop to beckon the escorted NPC toward them, and it only works over a short distance. I would recommend avoiding these quests at all costs because they will make you question your decision to install the game at all. Leves regularly drop armour and accessories as rewards.



There are Grand Company Leves, crafting and gathering Leves and normal battle Leves

Fates

Fates are special timed events that occur naturally on the map. A player can join by just entering the zone covered by a given Fate. If the player is 5 levels above the fate level, they can use Level Sync to drop down to a Fate-appropriate level to participate. Unlike Leves, where it's often a single person doing a quest, Fates encourage players to work together for a single goal.



Fate type icons

There are six fate types: Slay Enemies, Notorious Monster, Gather Items, Defense, Escort and Chase.

Escort doesn't appear until *Heavensward*, and Chase doesn't show up until *Stormblood*. The Slay Enemies is to murder a certain number of enemies until the Fate's bar fills. The second Fate type is to defeat a boss in the area. The Gather items Fate type requires players to gather a certain number of items (Often 20) and hand them in. The fourth is a simple tower defence game. The final Fate type is the area boss. It has the Boss Fate symbol but the timer is 30 minutes instead of 15 and the music is different. These should be avoided as they are designed to be done with many people and often will kill new and unsuspecting players.

There's actually a second, special Boss Fate. These also have a time limit of 30 minutes and don't appear on the main map. They are special/epic/token world boss fates. These start at level 50! Keep an eye out for them if you're looking for something spicier.

If levelling alone using Fates, just stick to the Slay Enemies, Gather Items or Defense type Fates. Often the Boss Fates will require two people to complete. They're not impossible to

solo, but they are difficult. Staying at the edge of the Fate and attacking single enemies, or summoning a Chocobo companion can make them easier to complete.

up to here

Dungeons

The first dungeon is unlocked at level 15, and it also unlocks the quest that gives players the challenge log. Each dungeon is comprised of a tank role, healer role and two DPS. I would suggest as a new person to do it as a DPS as the role's main duty is to just kill things. At the beginning of the dungeon, no matter the role, let the other players know you're new. It's usually best to do it in party chat. The reason it's best to say it, even though the game tells people that someone is new in the dungeon, is that a lot of people have alternate characters. Unfortunately, it's assumed a player is aware of what to do unless they say otherwise.

A player does not need to be a DPS though, they can be a tank or a healer, but it is more stressful. Tanks take the lead and usually need to know where to place enemies as well as the way through a dungeon. Some tanks will do large pulls (gather lots of mobs) and that is incredibly stressful on a new healer. Don't be afraid to say you're not comfortable. Some will ask, some won't. If you don't communicate it's easy to wipe. And if a wipe does happen, it's no big deal, just try again.



The introduction to the first dungeon Satasha.

Each dungeon will have its own story and gimmick. Satasha, the first dungeon, the boss can summon adds (additional enemies) that need to be interrupted to stop them spawning. This

is part of why saying you are new is important. It won't always be the end boss. It may be the first or the middle boss that has a special mechanic. These dungeons will have hard versions of them later on, continuing the story of the previous dungeon after the main scenario has been completed in ARR.

On top of all this, you can even ask for a full run. This means going into every area so that the dungeon's map is filled out. It only needs to be done once on a character, but it gives an experience bonus for doing so. It's easy to tell when it's been accomplished as the game will tell the player "Mapping the realm:" achievement will come up. Yes, in Final fantasy xiv, Achievements actually have a purpose. They usually give EXP, Gil, titles, minions and even mounts!



A map of the first dungeon Satasha. That bit with all the offshoots? It means many players don't have the achievement!

As the story progresses, dungeons will become more straightforward in terms of the map, but this doesn't mean they get easier, just means it's easier to get the achievement.

Gear drops from the first three dungeons, Satasha, Tam-Tara Deepcroft and copper Bell mines, are all the same. If a player is the same class as a gear drop, they can roll need on it. Need will always beat a greed roll. If the player doesn't want it, they can pass on the item. If they want it but it's not for their current class, greed is the best thing to press.



This player has passed on both items. Why were all the images of this on the internet in Japanese only?!

How need, greed and pass work is that each of the players will roll on it. If three players roll greed on an item and one passes, the player with the highest roll obtains the item. It's completely random.

Daily roulette

After a player has unlocked at least two dungeons, the daily roulette becomes available. At first, only Levelling will be available, but as the story progresses, there will be access to Trials, Raids and Main scenario. What the duty roulette does is it picks a random dungeon from the ones a player has unlocked. This gives an EXP bonus when done for the first time a day. There is also a bonus for being an adventurer in need. This can be a great way to help extra classes to level up.



The duty finder. Plus Chonkcobo

In the duty roulette, there is also a Guildheist option. These are small sections that teach players how to prioritise during fights. Often it will use an example of how to take down a large mob when there are many smaller ones around. This stuff is also useful outside of dungeons, so it's worth doing.

Challenge Log

The challenge log is incredibly useful. It's similar to Achievements except it resets weekly. It's great to help gain MGP at the gold saucer, or to help level your character and Chocobo companion. The challenge log has multiple categories, there's one just for dungeons. For Australians, it resets on Tuesday at 6 pm AEST (7 pm AEDT).



Look at that exp reward! Just for five fates!

The hunt

The hunt is an *A Realm Reborn* end game content. A player doesn't have access to the hunt board until they are level 50 and have reached a certain standard with their Grand companies. So why mention it here? Because the enemies can spawn in any beginner area. If there is a level 50 enemy with a red marker by its name, do not approach it and stay away. If it is blue, it's safe to go past, but don't click on it. Unless you wish for a quick death.



Some amazing person compiled this graphic that has B, A and S rank marks. I wish I could credit them. Avoid these guys.

Gathering and Crafting

Yeah, sure, gathering and crafting are available in-game, but I would suggest leaving them until the main story is finished. In fact, there's a special area in the Heavensward expansion called the Firmament that makes levelling the crafting and gathering classes easy. It allows the entry of crafters and gathers at level 10.



The three gathering classes. One of these is not like the other.

Crafting and gathering are enjoyable, but the class quests can be frustrating at level 20 and onwards. These quests often require high-quality items, sometimes with Materia attached. These are often easier to make at higher levels. Gathering and crafting will take up a lot of inventory space and often it's impossible to only do one crafting class as they often need items from other classes. It is its own game, inside the game.

The community

The *Final Fantasy XIV* community is pretty great. They are welcoming of newcomers and happy to help. If you do see someone being awful, there is a good chance that they're actually violating the Terms of service. Abuse is not tolerated by the Square Enix team. Do not be afraid to report them. There is nothing wrong with speaking up, and often someone will. There is also the ability to blacklist another player as well. Make sure you check out the Subreddit, it's an incredibly wholesome, supportive place.

Fun times at the gold saucer

Sometimes if a player is fate farming, another player may invite you to a group. It's okay to decline. Fates are often easier in parties and can help improve contributions. If three players doing a fate complete it, what they get is independent of the input of the others. If they are in a party, however, they will most likely get the highest rating, meaning more experience.



Another instance is if a player dies, they can use /sh (or shout) to request a resurrection. Often people in the area will respond with OTW or OMW. (On the way or on the way respectively). Flagging the dead players' coordinates helps too. For PC players it's shift + right-click on the map (doesn't work on the minimap though.)

It's a pretty good community!



The hunt can get a bit, uh, crazy.

And that's the end of my revised guide to FFXIV for beginners. I have tried to accumulate all the things that I, and others that I have played with, wish they knew before starting the game into one easy guide.

It really is a fantastic game with many facets. A YouTuber described it best when he said it's an RPGMMO, rather than an MMORPG, because everything is secondary to the story, and it is a great story. A Realm reborn and ARR post content is a bit of a slog, but it is setting up a massive lived-in world, one that allows the later expansions to shine.

I look forward to seeing you on Zurvan!

One last thing: Join us!

There is an unofficial Cross-world Linkshell available on the Community Finder. Send me a letter or DM on FFXIV at "Sid Thelump" on Zurvan before the listing expires this month, and I can invite you! We'd love to have you in our Kotaku AU Guild.

[Recruiting KotakuAU Members \(Community Finder\) | FINAL FANTASY XIV, The Lodestone](#)

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