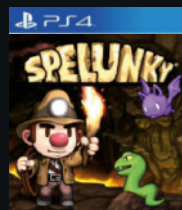


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INFO

PUB MOSSMOUTH
DEV MOSSMOUTH
 PRODUCTIONS
RELEASED 2013
GET IT NOW PSN,
 £11.99

NEED TO KNOW

- 1 Spelunky 2 was announced at Paris Games Week 2017.
- 2 Beat the game, and there's a secret fifth world: Hell.
- 3 Find shotguns under gravestones marked 'Ash'.

Grab some mates and a few extra controllers and you can go spelunking together, in both co-op and competitive modes.

Roguish charm

Every month we celebrate the most important, innovative or just plain great games from PlayStation's past. This month, we steal golden idols and dodge the resulting boulders in one of PlayStation's most influential indie games



Spelunky

While it might present itself as a game about raiding long-forgotten tombs and exploring temples of doom, at its heart Spelunky is really a beautifully elaborate slot machine. Each time you fire up a new game, you pull the lever, and out comes an entirely new world, one full of exploding frogs, shrines to ancient gods, and, of course, heaps of glistening treasure.

Spelunky was one of the games that helped popularise procedural generation, the method Hello Games would later use to create an infinite number of planets in *No Man's Sky* and Codemasters uses for *Dirt 4's* Your Stage tracks. What this means in Spelunky is you never quite know what you'll be facing. The enemies and obstacles, the weapons and tools you'll have to overcome them, and the shapes of the levels themselves – they all change each time you play.

Vitality, every time you die you'll be sent back to the beginning, with all-new catacombs to explore. These two ideas – randomised levels and perma-death – were borrowed from roguelikes, a fairly obscure sub-genre of RPGs inspired by 1980s *Rogue*. But by pairing them up

with the Mario-esque 2D platforming that dominated indie games at the time, Spelunky made roguelike concepts accessible to a wider audience. In doing so, it birthed the roguelike-like, or roguelite, a sub-sub-genre into which slot indies like *The Binding Of Isaac*, and the forthcoming *Dead Cells* (see p46).

UNDER ITS SPEL

The unpredictability of procedural generation keeps the game endlessly fresh, but the constants (your abilities, how each enemy type behaves, the rough size of a level) create just enough predictability that you quickly start playing the odds. Find yourself at the exit more quickly than expected? You can decide to risk going back to explore a new corner of the level. Doing so might reward you with a vital bit of loot, or a chance to gain an extra heart by rescuing one of the game's damsels in distress (who, brilliantly, can be changed in the settings to appear as pugs). Equally, though, head back and

SO YOU DIE, BUT IT WAS SUCH FUN YOU SPIN THE WHEEL ONE MORE TIME.

you might stumble into the nest of a giant spider, or a room filled with spikes and traps.

In these moments you're betting on what surprises the rest of the level might hold, but also against your own ability with the controller. Because in Spelunky, even the most dire situation can be overcome with a mixture of patience, skill, and luck. The basic tools you have at your disposal – whip, rope, bomb – combine in fascinating ways, meaning there's normally more than one solution to any problem. Say you can see a friendly pug up on a ledge, too high to reach by jumping. You could use up one of your precious ropes in rescuing it. Or – you look around the environment, and spot a rock on the ground – could you maybe dislodge it with a well-aimed throw?

Feeling confident, you bet on your skill and throw the rock... only to miss. It ricochets back at your head, pushing you off a nearby cliff and onto the tip of some waiting spikes. Ouch.

So you die, but it was such fun you can't help spinning the wheel one more time. This time, surely, there won't be so many of those damned spiders. This time, maybe one of the shops will stock the jetpack that would've saved you from the spikes. This time, you won't make the same mistake. Except, of course, you do.

That's Spelunky: a machine which eats up all your greed and overconfidence, and spits out failure. A fedora-wearing one-armed bandit. We can't wait for its recently-announced sequel to rob us of our spare time all over again.



■ They look cute, but avoid these damn dirty apes.



■ Even the haiku-style intro is randomly generated.



■ Enjoy retail therapy. Never cross the shopkeepers.