

Ori and the Blind Forest, visually sumptuous yet littered with frustrating pricks.

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Every now and then a game comes along that captures you completely with its visual style and its touching narrative. Ori and The Blind Forest is one of those games.

Amazingly spell-binding to look at and with a haunting soundtrack, Ori and the Blind Forest is a platform game in vein of old-school Metroidvania but don't be deceived: It's also fiendishly hard at times and has difficulty spikes that will have you tearing out what hair you have left.

The game opens with the spirit-like Ori arriving in the titular forest, following the destruction of a magical tree. Ori is taken under the care of a gentle bear-like creature but over time the forest dies and decays, forcing Ori and his spirit guide Sein out to confront the evil that has befallen the land.

Ori and The Blind Forest plays like a traditional 2D platform game but is Metroidvania-like in that the game world is one giant map, unlocked as Ori progresses. The forest is also a deadly place, with no shortage of poisonous enemies, spiky plants and platforms to navigate as Ori completes his



quest.

Like most platform games, Ori starts off relatively weak in terms of how far he can jump but as he unlocks new powers thanks to absorbing the essence of long-dead spirits he can jump further, meaning he can reach new areas, unlocking more of the game world. Ori himself can't attack foes but Sein, his spirit guide, can, firing projectiles towards foes, both animal and plant.

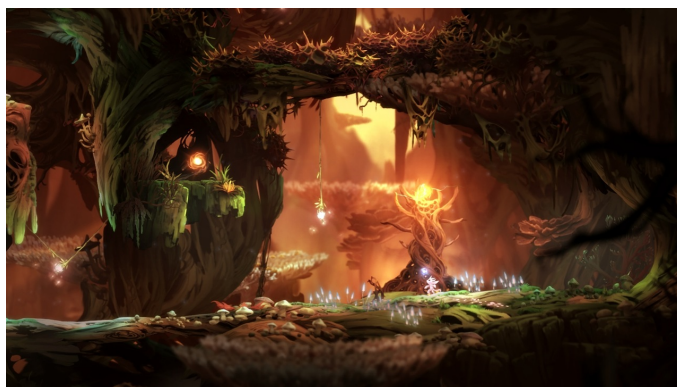
Visually, Ori and The Blind forest is a feast to your eyes with its sumptuous environments and the way light is diffused and layered around the world. It truly is a stunning game.



For all its good things, though, Ori and The Blind Forest can be unforgivingly frustrating at times. It's not uncommon to replay entire sequences time and time again because you mistimed a crucial jump while trying to avoid a row of spikes or a prickly bramble bush. At times, I was close to giving up I'd died so often on the same section, be warned: There are some yell-at-the-TV-in-a-sweary-voice-and-throw-the-controller-across-the-room moments! The game's early easy difficulty belies how difficult things will get later on, especially when you have to chain together jumping and bounding in quick succession to avoid deadly lasers or other dangers.

Part of the frustration I had with having to replay the game's most difficult sections has a lot to do with game's save system, which lets you save anywhere you like provided you

have enough save orbs. The orbs are plentiful enough around the world but still, it's a minor frustration.



As gorgeous as it looks, Ori and The Blind Forest's difficulty spikes mean it'll be the sort of game that many people will play for a bit then when things get really, really tough – prompting them to start spouting expletives at the TV and threatening to do harmful things to their controller – then put it down and not come back to it.

And that would be a shame because Ori and The Blind Forest is a hauntingly beautiful game worth playing and one that harks back to the platformers of old when games expected you to work for your rewards.

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