

World war z: can you defy the zombie hordes?

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Based on the film of the same name, Saber Interactive is currently working on World War Z, which will conjure up to hundreds of opponents on the screen simultaneously. In a newly released trailer, the so-called dynamic swarm simulation is introduced.

A long time ago, the managers of Saber Interactive announced that a video game based on World War Z is currently being worked on. The game is currently under development for consoles and PC and is intended to give players the feeling of being in a world where death lurks around every corner. According to Saber Interactive, the sometimes gigantic zombie hordes that characterize the movie World War Z will also find their way into the game.

In the game, players will be dealing with hundreds of different zombies rushing in as a horde to break through the defences. The dynamic swarm simulation, an intelligent intensity determination, various zombie mechanisms and an advanced gore system combine to create the ultimate zombie shooter experience. Players can team up with up to four friends or alone with AI teammates to survive the fight against the relentless waves of the undead.

The developers even built their own game engine from scratch - the Swarm engine. This is able to place up to 500 individually animated and acting undead in a horde, which not only reacts individually to the player but also forms a swarm intelligence. Special attention is placed on a special phenomenon, which was already to be seen in the film.

Poster of the World War Z movie released in 2013.

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The zombie pyramid

Normally you would think you are safe if you have a difference in altitude between yourself and the undead, but not in WWZ. The zombie horde has such incredible power, that they can simply pile up until they reach their destination. As with a cheerleading team, a pyramid of bodies is created, which the zombies use as ladders. Now, your last line of defence is by brute force of arms to try and bring down their tower.

Above all, even looking at zombies chasing after you in bloodlust from a distance, already makes one's knees go soft. However, players are not as defenceless as they might seem. Developer Oliver Hollis explains, that you don't just have to hit a zombie horde with a machine gun. There are fortresses and retreats where you can entrench yourself to survive the wave, while the game also offers different classes to choose from.

Zombie horde attacking player.

Sabre Interactive

Sabre Interactive has been active as a game developer for 15 years, its debut first-person shooter Will Rock in 2003 and is also responsible for the FPS titles Timeshift and Quake Champions. Big fans of Max Brooks World War Z, Sabre Interactive quickly secured the license rights from Paramount Pictures to tell their own story in the zombie universe. The game will employ an episode format, with different locations and protagonists. At release, 2019, there will probably be three episodes: Moscow, New York and Jerusalem, which are all locations from the movie released in 2013.

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In Moscow, for example, the group of survivors has penetrated further into the city due to a lack of food and resources and then immediately encounters several waves of zombie hordes there. The game reminds a bit of a Left 4 Dead in third-person view, simply because it is a co-op shooter with zombies and very much fast paced. However, the developers have also added more tricks that make the game significantly different from Left 4 Dead.

Defend yourself against zombie hordes in Moscow.

Defence against the hordes

Weapons, for example, do not only occur in one iteration, but are available in different thicknesses and designs. Depending on how much the player plays with a gun, additional features of the weapon can be unlocked with experience points. Players can briefly prepare for the massive zombie hordes at certain locations and, for example, build up defensive elements such as a .50 calibre machine gun or a mortar.

Sabre Interactive has also incorporated a character progression into World War Z that advances from episode to episode and is transferred to the new protagonists. Each episode also features four new characters, each with their own special abilities.

Zombies piling up as a pyramid.

Gameplay mechanics

According to the developers, the five to six hours game is trimmed to a replay value, which means that weapons, ammunition, hordes and player spawn positions within the level are randomly distributed at each reboot. How much ammunition is to be found or with which weapons you must prevail against the mass of undead, is also generated each time, depending on how you fought in the round before. In addition, certain story elements are only revealed more clearly or even after several runs.

An algorithm is able to monitor how you behave in the background and will always try to push you to the edge of your feel-good zone. Depending on how you act in the game, whether you prefer using a certain weapon, perks, or new equipment, will be unlocked. Still, there is only one way to fight back the hordes:

Zombies attacking in Moscow.

Pure force of arms

Players don't really need to worry about sophisticated tactics, as there's hardly any time for that. Instead, it is much more important to stockpile enough ammunition and powerful weapons to survive the next round. You can immediately notice, that the game focuses on a high entertainment value on purpose, when you can throw multiple hand grenades after another into a pile of zombies and see them flying around like dolls.

Visually, World War Z, makes a neat and harmonious first impression, with many details in the game world - even if the levels would look better with

more interactions, where you can use the environment to get rid of the undead.

In any case, the game also seems to provide players with more strategic approaches. Instead of loudly shooting your way through the game, you can also choose to act quieter and more reserved to attract as little attention as possible. Thanks to adaptive spawn control, you'll be rewarded for being quiet and dealing with far fewer zombies who want to nibble the flesh off your bones.

World War Z will be released in 2019 for the PC, Xbox One and PlayStation 4.