

1 February 2007

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[Resident Evil 4](#)

Fourth time's a charm

Capcom is back with a punch and no, I'm not talking about any new fighting game that would rival with King of Fighters 2007. Horror survival games have always been a niche in the gaming universe and the producers have taken advantage of it by creating some spine-chilling titles. Silent Hill and Resident Evil have been battling for the title of "most frightening game ever produced" for years now and I still can't think of a proper winner. Especially when we're dealing with such exquisite number four titles, Silent Hill 4: The Room and Resident Evil 4. I'm not here to praise Konami's work, but rather to acknowledge Capcom's merits for creating such a great game. Things have changed a lot since 1996, when the first Resident Evil title surfaced with its tense atmosphere and troubling imagery. We never seem to have enough of RE and there's already a sequel coming up for the next-gen consoles, but I'm sure you'll get stuck at some point while playing the above-mentioned title so feel free to check out the [cheats](#) section. **Story** Yeah, Leon's back! I'm talking about Leon S. Kennedy, the hero of Resident Evil 2 and one of the few men that made it out of Raccoon City alive. This time he's back to get the president's daughter back, as she's been kidnapped by some mysterious group. The events in Resident Evil 4 take place in a mysterious area in Europe, where there are lots of Spanish-speaking folks. While at first your presence makes them go berserk and attack you with torches and pitchforks, you'll see that they are the least of your worries. An angry mob is nothing compared to an angry troll, a huge shark or zombies that keep coming back even if they have lost their head. Leon has come a long way from being a countryside cop and now he's a federal agent. At some point in the game, Leon gets kidnapped by some cult named Los Illuminados (The Da Vinci code, anyone?) and it seems that they had something to do with the president's daughter kidnapping. The girl's name is Ashley and she's a playable character as well, but not for long, as she won't fire bullets or do the stunts that Leon is forced to do. Mister super-agent will be injected with a virus, but I won't tell you more, as it would spoil the fun of finding out the whole plot yourself. Every Resident Evil game so far offered us some great feminine characters that were even featured in the movies made out of the games. This installment doesn't feature any famous actress, but still, there's a playable chick to do the rampage with. Her name is Ada Wong and she'll appear out of the blue using her grappling gun and helping Leon out. It might be a cliché, but the two will fight in the beginning, but eventually join forces in an attempt to save Ashley. Fascinating story? It's not much, but for the Resident Evil aficionados, the plot will be a true delight. At least they changed the setting and the characters' language. Those Spanish-speaking zombies can really make your day and kill your night if you're the sensitive type. **Concept** Each title of this never-ending series has brought something new. Resident Evil 2 allowed you to play with many characters and had tons of difficult bosses and challenges. The third installment brought the angry Nemesis and finally, enemies that followed you even if you closed the trademark Capcom doors in their faces. Resident Evil: Gun Survivor was a first person shooter...that was its only innovation, as it disappointed, being the weak link of the series so far. This fourth installment is so packed with new concepts that both fans and noobs will appreciate RE 4 for what it really is. PS 2 was not Capcom's first choice, so this is a port from the Gamecube version, but nevertheless a superb achievement. The camera problems have been finally solved thanks to a very useful over-the-shoulder and behind the player camera that makes the whole aiming process really easy. It's a shame that you can't move your player while aiming, but that would imply having an auto-locking concept and things shouldn't be that simple in a horror survival game. You might go wondering in a

zombie-infested village, but there are many traps to slow you down while killing the undead villagers. Dynamite traps are pretty basic: two charges linked with a wire, you cross it and you're dead. That also applies to the zombies or peasants so if they're dumb and forget about their own traps, they'll be dead meat in no time. A more unpredictable type of trap is the...bear trap that will not only slow you down, but also take a lot of your life. What's funny is that you'll hear the enemies talking once you've triggered the bear trap. "Esta en la trampa", that means "He's trapped!" or rather "He's dead!" because I don't quite see how you could make it out alive when an army of zombies feasts on your body while you're trapped. Like in Resident Evil 3, no door can save you from your doom and you'll see the enemies opening doors and chasing you just to have a taste of your delicious brain. As you might have noticed, Capcom have been following the trend by implementing many games modes and minigames, to keep you busy and prolong the game's lifespan. Aside from the story mode, there's a Separate Ways mode, a Mercenary mode and a movie viewer. In Separate Ways, you play as Ada Wong, one of the cutest protagonists to ever star in Resident Evil. She's a spy and you can really tell, by her athletic moves and the way she uses that grappling gun. This mode is more of a bonus, adding 5 to 6 hours of gameplay to the already long story mode and it fills the gaps left by the original storyline. RE 4 manages to do something that's remarkable for the games produced nowadays: it gives the impression that it's a difficult game, being in fact a pretty normal one with many savepoints and tons of checkpoints. The difficulty comes from the sudden attacks of zombies and some of the greatest boss fights I have ever seen. When and if you ever die, you'll be reseted to a checkpoint, the nearest one. There are even some button mashing minigames that involve pressing random buttons to run from a rock rolling downhill or swimming towards your boat. Say "bye-bye" to the opening doors animations, because they have been replaced by a real time change of scenery. Backgrounds have changed more than ever and you'll face rain and thunders, explore caves, swim, visit a village or a castle and a lab. Like in the previous titles, there are many weapons, costumes and characters to unlock in order to give you a more pleasant second, third or millionth replay of this game. Resident Evil 3 had a Mercenary Mode that featured a buy option that's also present in this title. There's a mystery man that appears all the time, ready to sell you weapons, buy rare items from you or upgrade your tools of destruction. Toy around with rocket launchers, 9mm pistols, riffles, the classic shotgun and upgrade their rate of fire, power or ammo quantity. You'll have to arrange your items according to the inventory size, that's pretty big when you compare it to the first two titles of the series. Weapons take up too much space, I can tell you that right from the start, but let's face it, how can Leon carry a rocket launcher, two riffles and run from an army of zombies? Back to the Mercenaries mode, it will be a challenge against time that allows you to unlock four other characters if you collect 30.000 points. Four locations available in the Story mode can be found in this mode too. If you want to take a breather and enjoy some quality cutscenes, select the movie viewer option and feast on beautiful and scary FMVs and some Easter eggs. **Gameplay** If you're here for mindless shooting, change the channel! Resident Evil 4 is a quality title with a 20 hours gameplay and some of the best zombies to ever feature in a game. Never relax when a cutscene begins! Keep the joystick nearby, because there will be some awesome events during the FMVs that will require your skills and attention. Usually it's all button combos, button mashing or just timing your button presses. Forget the times when all zombies looked alike and playing the game meant seeing the same corridors over and over again, with different camera angles. You'll explore so many locations and you should check out the map, it's really huge and filled with treasures and checkpoints. AI is a true challenge, even if you've been playing all the RE games on the Hard Mode and those guys seem to attack and react according to your combat strategies. Shoot them in the face and they start twitching and fall to the ground. They'll call for backup, grab your foot or jump from above and attack you. Some throw dynamite, peasants throw axes, it's a whole riot generated by our blond hero. One of the most frustrating moments of the game happened when I was dispatching several foes with

my mighty shotgun and some sneaky zombie came from behind and cut my head off with a chainsaw. Violence and gruesome content? That's nothing new for the best horror game around and you should prepare to be terrified by the variety of creatures you'll encounter. Headless zombies will have tentacles coming out of their bodies and you'd better shoot those guys from the distance, because they will surely hit you with the newly-achieved limbs. Shoot a man or woman (this game doesn't discriminate) in the knee and he/she will fall to the ground and you'll be able to run to the foe and kick him till he drops dead....or undead. It puzzled me to see that even dead enemies have some fighting spirit left in their bodies and they will grab you even if they don't have heads. Usually, you'll shake the "grabbers" off by moving your analog stick to the right or to the left. Similar to the previous Resident Evil games, the music changes when you've cleared the area or when you're being attacked. Adrenaline starts pumping when you hear those beats and the zombies' hair-raising taunts. Capcom's not very keen on crosshairs as there were none in any of the RE games so far. The fourth installment is not an exception and you'll aim with the aid of a red laser beam coming out of your weapon. It might look natural when you're using a pistol or a rifle, but it's strange to use a laser aim with a rocket launcher or a plasma gun. Let the sniper in you loose for a few moments while using the rifle with the scope on to take out enemies from the distance or break chains that hold the boxes you need. Change zoom, aim and fire! Some things never change, I'm talking about good things, don't worry. Every game of the series so far has featured herbs as the primary life healing item. Herbs are back with their combinations, so mix a green herb with a red one to get an item that heals you completely. If your injury is bad, you'll see Leon walking slower or holding his arm and dragging his feet. Set zombies on fire or be set on fire or blown away by an explosion, as there's some really great physics in Capcom's latest release. Shoot dynamite and it blows, shoot the enemy holding the dynamite and it blows, let him throw it ...guess what? It blows! Considering that there's a lot of shopping to do if you want to stay alive, you'd better keep an eye out for pesetas or various gems that can be sold for a high price. You'll find cash hidden in boxes or barrels, which you can break by pressing the L1 button that will make Leon pull out his knife. If you want to make a fun game out of a scary one try shooting or hitting the cows and chicken (not the cartoon) and notice that they'll fight back. Otherwise, stick to the zombies and complete the many missions!**Video**Blood and gore! Resident Evil producers have the habit of spilling tons of ketchup throughout the games that are part of the series. Check out the impaled man in the center of the village and the fire that surrounds him. You'll see some of the most realistic fire effects and great AI behavior while they're dealing with Leon. The over-the-shoulder-camera helps a lot, especially during the combat sequences or when you're dodging traps. Some of the most horrible creatures are featured in Resident Evil 4 and if Silent Hill 4 didn't give you nightmares, this game surely will. You'll surely enjoy the boss fight that will involve harpooning a huge shark-like monster while driving a motorboat. Backgrounds look great having dark colors, thunders, rain and all the elements needed to create the a-la-Stephen King atmosphere. Weapons behave in a realistic way and you'll feel the recoil of the TMP weapon or be blown away by an explosion. Zombies fall from high above, but still...they melt when they die. At least they're not dressed all the same way and they don't have the same standard death animation. Don't expect much interaction with the surrounding environment as the only things you can do are pushing ladders, boxes, breaking them or barrels and collecting items. The lake looks particularly good and you can almost feel the breeze while riding the boat on a foggy weather. When will we ever get rid of those glittering pickups? The producers must find a way to stop implementing items that are placed under our noses and on top of that, shine like a Christmas tree. Gamers are not that dumb!**Sound**Listen to the heart beat! Can't hear it? It's because there are zombies all around and they prefer to chat in Spanish, rather than biting your neck. Creepy sounds that include the noise made by the blowing wind will accompany you throughout this horror adventure. The shotgun never sounded so nice and it will be a true fiesta when you'll start shooting large groups of zombies. They will scream

and growl while saying their predefined lines. Speaking of lines, the dialogs in RE 4 are really disappointing and the characters will seem to be talking about nothing for hours. No one seems to be interested that the president's daughter was kidnapped or that a deadly virus is about to spread all over the globe. Sometimes using your acoustic senses will help you stay alive, because zombies are quite great conversationalists and they will scream and threaten you even if they come from behind like some sort of a surprise attack. Creepy music? Checked! However, the soundtrack is nothing special, as it's the average collection of scary tunes that raise the hair in the beginning and become boring in the end.

MultiplayerPacked with content, Resident Evil 4 doesn't really need a multiplayer mode. Maybe we'll see one on the PC version that will come out soon. **Conclusion**It was worth waiting all these years to get to play such a masterpiece. This game has got it all: atmosphere, good AI, challenging levels, long lifespan, many guns, big guns, blood and gore, scary backgrounds ... everything. Capcom has the recipe for success and maybe Konami will learn something from them since Resident Evil 5 is in the making and we've heard nothing about Silent Hill 5. A winner? RE 4 surely is and you can't call yourself a gamer if you haven't played at least one title of the series. I recommend the fourth installment, because it's Capcom's greatest achievement, although you should be cautious if you're one of those faint-hearted Alone in the Dark fans.