



Close But No Chocobo: Why Final Fantasy Explorers ≠ Monster Hunter

► by Henry North

I've been playing Final Fantasy Explorers, the recently released action RPG from Square Enix, almost non-stop for a few weeks now. I purchased the game expecting it to be a Final Fantasy-flavored clone of Capcom's popular Monster Hunter series, but after extensive play I can definitely say that it was not quite what I was expecting. Here's why.



FFE & MH have the same, but slightly different, genres- While both games may be considered action RPGs, Final Fantasy Explorers takes many cues from the Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles series and is more like a "MMORPG lite" experience, whereas the Monster Hunter games tend to focus more towards being an action game than an action RPG.



FFE & MH worlds are set-up completely different- In any Monster Hunter game, the areas you travel to are normally separate from each other and have distinct themes to them. In Final Fantasy Explorers, you traverse one very large map and can travel from the beach to a desert or from a volcano to an ice cave all in one quest.



FFE allows you to customize your mission- After a certain point in the game, all missions gain the ability to be made easier or more difficult by adding new elements to the quests, such as making the enemies tougher, reducing the time limit you have to do the quest, or preventing you from using items. In Monster Hunter, every mission you go to is straightforward: either collect an item, kill or capture a monster, or deliver an item without any way to customize the experience.



FFE is more than just a hack & slash experience- You can become any number of jobs in Final Fantasy Explorers, ranging from knight to black mage to alchemist, and each of the jobs have unique ways of fighting and strategic set-up for each of their attacks (such as

having to know the area of effect on certain abilities, otherwise you will miss the attack completely). In Monster Hunter, you may switch between weapons of varying styles, but generally you won't have much issue bashing or slicing monsters unless your weapon runs out of sharpness or ammo.



FFE allows for customizable companions- Even though Monster Hunter gives you a partner or two depending on which game you're playing, the most you can usually do is to change their equipment; they still fight in the same general patterns. Final Fantasy Explorers gives you the ability to capture some of the various monsters you encounter throughout the world and fight side-by-side with them. These monsters tend to vary a lot in both appearance

and their skillsets, so you can always have a different team on every quest.

Even though I love the Monster Hunter series, I am entirely grateful that Square Enix didn't try to play it safe and make a carbon copy of an already existing IP. The above are just a few of the differences between the games; Final Fantasy Explorers has many more neat and interesting features that it brings to the monster fighting subgenre of action RPGs. Final Fantasy Explorers is a really enjoyable game and I highly recommend it to anyone who is a fan of Monster Hunter-esque games or the Final Fantasy series in general.