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Before I start I just want to make it clear to all reading that, first and foremost, I'm a single-player gamer. That's what it's all about for me, that's what I lay my hard earned down for and I generally consider any online content to be a garnish to the main campaign's steak and chips.

Don't get me wrong, there have been some stunning examples of developers putting thought behind the online component of their latest software. Recent titles that spring to mind are well-balanced racers such as WipEout HD and Need For Speed Hot Pursuit, the co-operative joys of Portal 2 or Resident Evil 5 and the downright inspired use of connectivity that Demon's Souls offers. But, more often than not, I just find online to be boring, broken or both. This is just my opinion however and I'm fully aware that a lot of people like to relax to a Call Of Duty deathmatch, a kickaround on FIFA, a Call Of Duty deathmatch, a bit of Halo or a Call Of Duty deathmatch.

But, back in late 2009, Uncharted 2: Among Thieves was released and, accompanying it's absolutely stellar single player campaign, was a multiplayer offering that simply got everything right. From standard Team Deathmatches to wonderfully thought out co-operative

mini-campaigns and everything in between. They were like little bite-sized chunks of the main story complete with all the action, humour and general coolness that we've come to love about the Uncharted series.

This coming November we'll be off on another globe-trotting adventure with Nathan Drake when Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception is released and, beyond trailers and E3 reveals, developer Naughty Dog have just given us their biggest tease yet. A multiplayer beta packed with modes galore and other assorted goodies. I've been playing it for the past 24 hours and here's what you can expect if you decide to sample it yourself. First, a rundown of what's on the playlist…

Team Deathmatch

Probably the most popular mode from the last game. Two teams of five battle it out for 20 minutes or 50 kills, whichever comes first.

Free For All

Classic deathmatch, but new to the series. Ten people in an every-man-for-himself fight to the death.

Three Team Deathmatch

Another new mode with three teams of two hunting each other down for 20 minutes or 20 kills. Features the new 'Buddy System'.

Hardcore

Randomized deathmatches with, as the menu reads, 'No Boosters. No Medal Kickbacks. Just your skill.'.

Co-op Arena

A ten round sample-platter of what some of the co-op modes will have to offer including Siege, Gold Rush and Survival. You and two others against the world.

That's quite meaty in itself but what other surprises are there? What's new? Well, the maps are for starters. Two are available with this download, the French chateau you've all seen from the first trailers and an airstrip located in a desert. Both are excellent areas for all modes (the chateau is my particular favourite) and feature real-time changes in environment such as collapsable walkways, or interactivity such as the ability to close a door on someone chasing you down, or taking a zipline out of harms way. How about a full customization feature for all playable characters? That's right, everything from the colour of their bootlaces to what kind of hat you want your avatar to wear can be yours to decide. Drake sporting a pair of mirrored shades? Sully in a fedora? Yup, that's all possible.

Of all the available modes I found that Three Team Deathmatch was the standout. It's basically the best of both worlds as it's a competitive mode with a co-operative slant and every match was a tense affair. Coupled with the new Buddy System that gives you benefits to sticking with your partner I can see this getting some serious playtime when the full game is released.

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