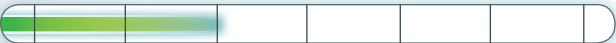




WALKTHROUGH

This huge chapter is the heart of the guide, offering a considered blend of step-by-step guidance with in-depth advice and analysis. For those who wish to complete a first playthrough with a bare minimum of assistance, it can be used sparingly to find quick-fix solutions for tough battles, character development advice, and valuable tips on new gameplay features whenever they are introduced. Equally, though, it's also perfect for those who wish to plot the most optimal route through this huge adventure.

GAMEPLAY SPOILER LEVEL: **Low**



STORY SPOILER LEVEL: **Low**



STRATEGY & ANALYSIS

Designed primarily with later playthroughs in mind (but also doubtlessly a great temptation for those who seek first-time perfection), the Strategy & Analysis chapter exposes the hidden mechanics that drive Final Fantasy XIII. From practical advice (such as advanced battle tactics and character growth) to fascinating trivia, it combines expert advice with a wide variety of insights into how assorted gameplay systems actually work. Be warned: unless directed to visit sections of this chapter by page references in the Walkthrough, you may find that it reveals more than you care to know during your first run through the story.

GAMEPLAY SPOILER LEVEL: **High**



STORY SPOILER LEVEL: **Low**



INVENTORY

This chapter offers nothing less than an unabridged guide to every collectible item in Final Fantasy XIII. It also features complete lists of goods available for purchase from retail networks and – perhaps most importantly – demystifies and deconstructs the hugely important weapon and accessory upgrade system.

GAMEPLAY SPOILER LEVEL: **Medium**



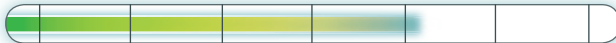
STORY SPOILER LEVEL: **Low**



BESTIARY

From stock assailants to fearsome bosses, unusual opponents to extremely rare monsters, the Bestiary chapter offers a phenomenally detailed account of all enemies in Final Fantasy XIII. Need advance warning of a particular enemy's principle weakness, or the probability of obtaining a coveted component from a specific opponent? Such information, and *much* more, can be found in this authoritative reference section.

GAMEPLAY SPOILER LEVEL: **Medium**



STORY SPOILER LEVEL: **Medium**



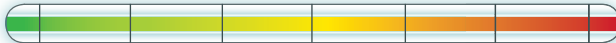
EXTRAS

Finally, the Extras chapter offers a round-up of features not covered elsewhere, such as a recap of side-quests, a checklist for Achievements and Trophies, and additional secrets. For this reason, we strongly advise that players avoid this section of the guide until they have completed their first playthrough.

GAMEPLAY SPOILER LEVEL: **High**



STORY SPOILER LEVEL: **High**



VERTICAL TAB

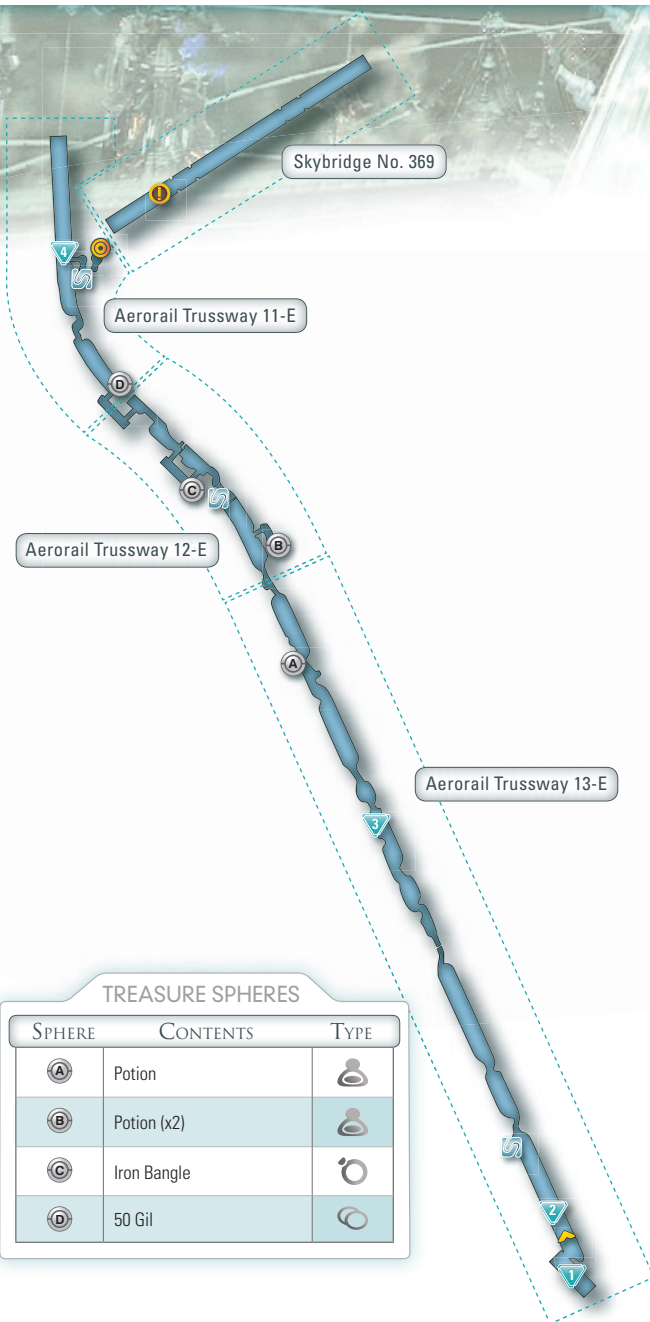
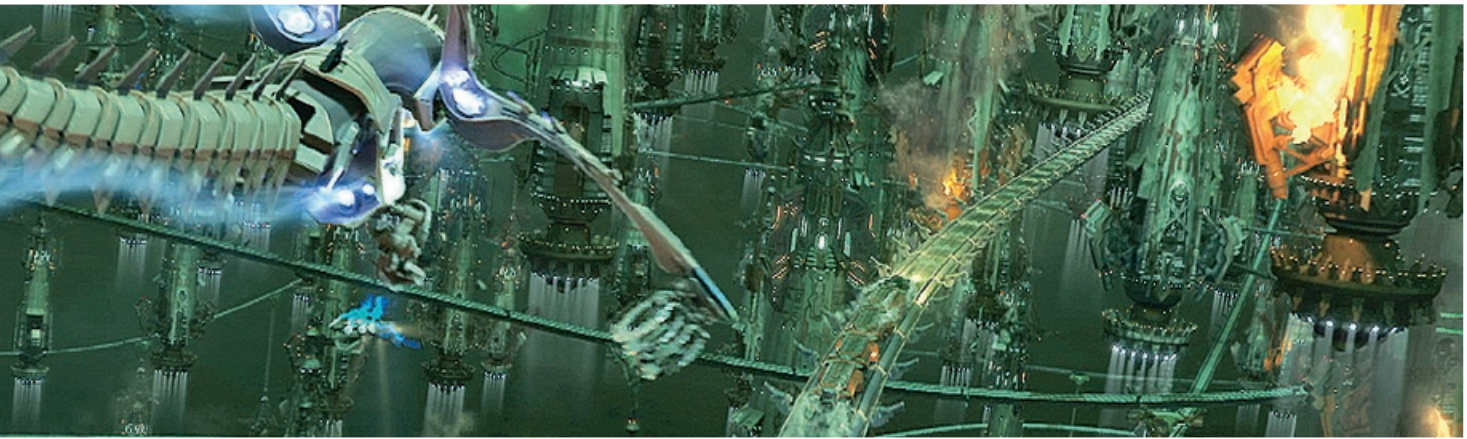
The vertical tab on the right-hand margin of each double-page spread is a navigational tool designed to help you find your way around the guide. The top section lists individual chapters, while the lower section highlights which section of a chapter you are currently reading.

INDEX

If you are looking for specific information, our alphabetical index is just what you need. Simply search for the keyword you're wondering about, and turn to the relevant page number.

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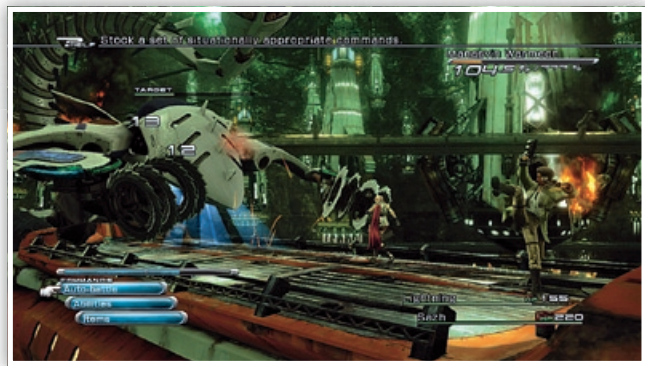
THE HANGING EDGE



TREASURE SPHERES		
SPHERE	CONTENTS	TYPE
A	Potion	Item
B	Potion (x2)	Item
C	Iron Bangle	Accessory
D	50 Gil	Item

ENEMIES		
NAME	NOTES	PAGE
Manasvin Warmech	More aggressive in second form.	233
PSICOM Warden	Will fall in three hits or less.	228
PSICOM Enforcer	Reasonably tough enemy for area.	228
Pantheron	High HP, but easy to dispatch.	232
PSICOM Aerial Recon	Reasonably tough enemy for area.	229
PSICOM Marauder	Acts as a "sub-boss" encounter; easy to Stagger for a fairly quick kill.	229

1 The Manasvin Warmech may seem imposing, but worry not: this opening battle is merely an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the basic functions of combat in Final Fantasy XIII. Take the time to view the ATB tutorial, then use the Auto-battle command to pummel the annihilator. After a brief intermission, the fight will resume with the Warmech restored to full health – and with new and more damaging attacks at its disposal. Rapid use of the Auto-battle command (Fig. 1) will enable you to whittle down its HP gauge before it can knock out Lightning.



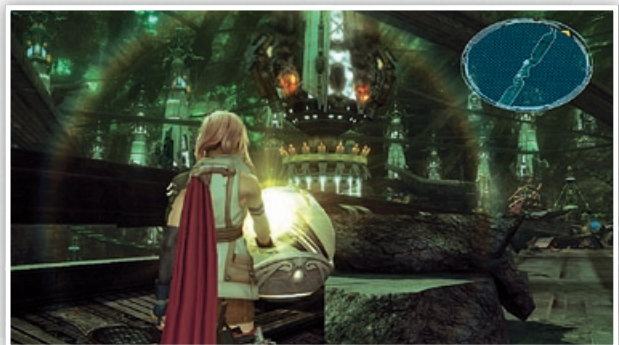
1

2 Run over to the Save Station, and select Save to create a new slot and store your progress. Move along the Aerorail platform, following the compass marker on the mini-map until you reach two soldiers, then run over to them to initiate combat. This may happen automatically if one of them makes contact with Lightning first. The two PSICOM Wardens are very weak, and will fall in no more than a few swift attacks. Just beyond them lies a seemingly impassable obstruction (Fig. 2). However, the nearby blue, swirling marker indicates that Lightning and Sazh can easily leap over this. Simply run into it to begin the climb and reach the other side.



2

3 Fight the next group of soldiers (this time including more resilient PSICOM Enforcers), then continue along the platform until you see a bobbing metallic device. This is a Treasure Sphere (Fig. 3): approach it and press $\otimes$ / $\triangle$ to obtain its contents. All Treasure Spheres are marked on area maps displayed throughout this walkthrough, so unless there is a specific need to talk about one – such as enemy guards, an ambush or notable rewards – we'll usually assume that you will diligently loot each one without further instruction.



3

4 Fight your way to the end of Aerorail Trussway 11-E where, after a cutscene, you will encounter three Pantherons and a PSICOM Warden. This is arguably the first battle where there is a very real danger of Lightning being knocked out if all four enemies focus their attacks on her. If you notice her HP gauge slip into the low yellow area (and especially so if red), quickly select the Items menu and use a Potion. Remember: you will invariably be taken to the Game Over screen if the party leader (that is, the character currently under your command) is incapacitated during combat. Judicious use of restoratives will always take less time than restarting from a prior checkpoint.

Once the battle is over, leap onto the nearby platform, then activate the control console to proceed. When you reach the PSICOM Marauder and his two cohorts, we strongly recommend that you carefully study and digest the excellent tutorial on the Chain Gauge and Stagger systems. The onscreen instructions will tell you all you need to know about this important aspect of combat in FFXIII at this stage of the story. For now, it's enough that you know that building Chain Combos by maintaining a steady flow of attacks (and inflicting the temporary Stagger status – Fig. 4) is the key to beating most enemies. We'll return to the subject to examine it in greater detail when all of its features are unlocked in the game.



4

ACCESSORIES

The third Treasure Sphere you encounter contains an Iron Bangle – the first accessory you receive in the game. Accessories are special pieces of equipment that confer a variety of bonuses on the wearer, from special resistances to improved attacking capabilities. In this instance, the Iron Bangle increases the user's total HP by 50 – a boost that you should give to party leader Lightning straight away. Visit the Equipment menu to place it in her single accessory slot.

USING THE BLITZ ATTACK

Blitz is a physical attack that inflicts damage on all enemies within a limited radius. It costs two segments of Lightning's ATB gauge. The early battle against two Pantherons and a single PSICOM Warden demonstrates how it is best used. As they are locked in close formation once combat begins, Lightning can inflict damage on all three in one hit, draining more total HP across three enemies than two standard Attack commands would on a single target. However, a Blitz assault on a solitary opponent is wasteful – though slightly stronger than a single Attack command, it is definitely less powerful than two. The Auto-battle AI is usually efficient at recognizing situations where Blitz is appropriate.



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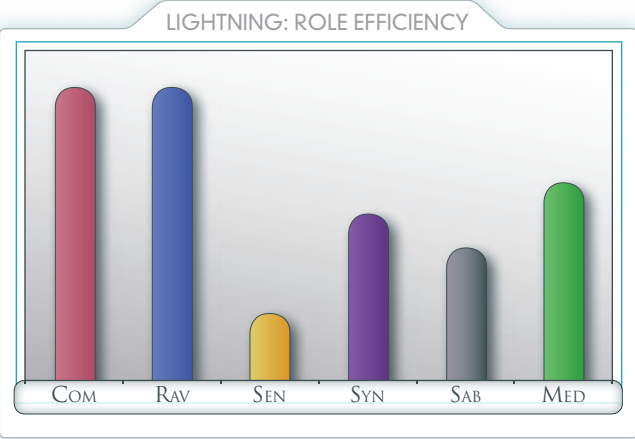
SIDE-QUESTS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT



LIGHTNING

- ◆ **Primary Roles:** Ravager, Commando, Medic
- ◆ **Secondary Roles:** Saboteur, Synergist, Sentinel



The purpose of these diagrams is to offer a general indication of each character's relative strength in all six disciplines. They have been calculated with complex formulas that take the most important attributes for every role into account, including HP, Strength, Magic, abilities and weapons.

OVERVIEW

Lightning is a great all-round character, a versatile aggressor with a useful sideline in combat medicine. With Odin as her Eidolon and the Thundaga spell becoming her one area-effect magic through Ravager development, her nickname is entirely appropriate. She's very much

attuned to that element, and works especially well as a Ravager when confronted by Pulse Automata and certain beast types.

DEVELOPMENT PATHS

You will probably find that you use Lightning as a Commando at first, then make more of her Ravager potential later in the adventure. Once unlocked, her unique Ravager ability, Army of One, is an excellent way to raise the Chain Bonus to 999% during a Stagger – but even before then, Chaining is her forte.

Indeed, Lightning's true strength is in Chain-building as either a Commando (Chain-fixing) or Ravager (Chain-boosting). Her versatility makes her a good bet for strategies that require changes between all-out and more cautious offensive Paradigms (Relentless Assault to Delta Attack/Diversity, for instance). Naturally, though, the disadvantage of being an all-rounder is that she's not the most effective character in any of her duties.

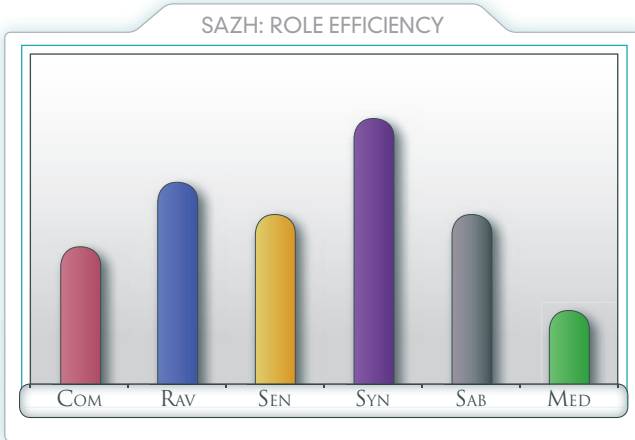
In a pinch, she makes a very handy back-up Medic – for example, as a secondary healer in Combat Clinic, or in a Paradigm where she temporarily watches over allies (such as Evened Odds).

SECONDARY DEVELOPMENT

Not particularly strong as either a Synergist or Saboteur, Lightning has a pared-down skillset in both of these roles. Worse still, she makes a terrible Sentinel, only possessing the ability to draw enemy attacks and attempt to dodge rather than counter.

SAZH

- ◆ **Primary Roles:** Synergist, Ravager, Commando
- ◆ **Secondary Roles:** Sentinel, Saboteur, Medic



OVERVIEW

Sazh's HP growth through parameter crystal acquisitions is steady and generous, so he transforms from a rather weak fighter into a much tougher prospect by the end of the game.

The important thing to note about him, though, is that his basic attributes are fairly low but can be boosted significantly through weapon upgrades, so the equipment you give him can make a profound difference – choosing the right gear will affect him more than other characters. He also has weapons with some highly interesting additional effects (such as Stagger Maintenance).

DEVELOPMENT PATHS

With an Eidolon whose attacks can be bolstered through Sazh's enhancements, it's clear that his most effective role is designed to be as a Synergist. This is the one discipline where he has all the requisite abilities for profitable specialization. The fact that Sazh has access to Haste long before other characters is very nice during earlier chapters; later on, he is also suited to providing elemental enhancements and protections. If you intend to turn Sazh into a Super Specialist, this is definitely his best role.

As a Ravager, Sazh can count on Firaga as a good area-effect spell against many plants and animals, and he also gets Aeroga – so this is clearly his best secondary role, building Chains for the real heavy-hitters. His special Cold Blood attack, in particular, turns him into a one-man Chaining machine. Your choice of equipment here can make a big difference.

Sazh's main problem is that he is a lousy Commando, which means that he never shines when called upon to inflict decisive damage. He can only realistically replace Lightning if you wish to maintain a balanced party, but lacks her outstanding flexibility. In short, he is a highly "technical" character with great potential – but identifying situations where his prowess can be exploited without encountering irksome drawbacks can be a real challenge.

SECONDARY DEVELOPMENT

As a Saboteur, Sazh only obtains the single-target version of every ability – but by the later stages of the game, you really need the speed and convenience of debuffs that debilitate entire groups. As a Medic, he's just as hopeless as Snow in needing Phoenix Downs or the Renew technique to revive KO'd colleagues. Thanks to his high HP, he's not a bad Sentinel, though he doesn't have the self-sufficiency of Mediguard.



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