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gameplay loop. Bad North is absolutely one of the best strategy games on mobile: a playful exterior and aesthetic, which belies a surprising degree of tactical depth. Give our Bad North review a look. Rebel Inc. Following in the footsteps of its predecessor, Rebel Inc. shares the same excellent design pedigree. As the newly appointed administrator of a region that's just suffered a major war, your job is to try and help the population rebuild, while also keeping local conflicts in check. It's full of tough choices and challenging tactical game-play as you struggle to pin down enemy insurgents and prevent them from doing too much harm. If you're struggling to get a handle on the game, try our guide to Rebel Inc. tips and tricks. Dealing with the concept of reconstruction is never an easy feat, and the subject matter could be considered slightly controversial given the recent events that have inspired it. But Ndemic has treated the topic with as much care and attention as they can, even consulting with real-world experts on the subject. For more in-depth analysis, see our Rebel Inc. review. Plague Inc. If someone heard the name Plague Inc. they might assume this game was about defending humanity against a pandemic. How wrong they would be. Considered by many as the superior prequel to Rebel Inc. (though Rebel Inc. is still proper good), Plague Inc. has you create a pathogen, and work to spread it across the world, ending civilisation as we know it. Topical, eh? The game is a unique mixture of strategy and realistic simulation, and it's definitely worth checking out, no matter your strategy tastes. Kingdom Rush: Vengeance The latest entry in the acclaimed Kingdom Rush tower defence series has caused no small amount of controversy, which is likely to continue with its inclusion in this list. It all depends how bothered you are by the game's slightly-too-persistent micro-transactions. They are the only blemish on what is otherwise a stellar real-time strategy experience. The in-app purchases are completely optional and unnecessary, but they're just a tad too pushy. But if you're willing to look past that, you'll find another excellent tower defence game, and one with plenty of humour and content to last you a decent amount of time. Dominations This game deserves to be loved and known for the quality of play it provides, as well as its relatively tasteful monetisation. Dominations is essentially Civilization meets Clash of Clans, with empires spanning the Iron Age to space age, with wonders to build, raids to conduct, and all the usual trappings. There is a certain likeness to established powerhouses, but the devil is in the details, and Dominations gets them spot-on. Playing it to a satisfying conclusion without shelling out serious bucks will take patience, but the emulation of all of recorded human history and conflict is pretty satisfying to play through. Like all your strategy with a dash of history too? Our best mobile war games list has your back. Iron Marines The iron marines are a space-frothing, world-saving team of elite squads tasked with putting out fires and defeating hostiles wherever needed. The elevator pitch for the game would be Starcraft but not? There is a home-base which usually has to be fortified and defended, additional refineries to secure more resources, and a handful of units. From these simple, intuitive elements, the game ekes out a good sense of micromanagement, and delectable real-time tension. Its enemies have unusual abilities and synergies, and its difficulty is no joke, especially on the higher levels. Yet the game also retains Ironclad Studios' sense of long-term planning and strategy present in its tower defence titles. Reigns: Game of Thrones Considered by many to be the best version of Reigns, this game adapts the classic game formula into the setting of George R.R. Martin's ruthless fantasy world. Reigns: Game of Thrones is not only the best mobile Game of Thrones adaptation, it also brings a wonderful degree of complexity to what is, otherwise, a very simple game system. You may only be swiping left or right, but in Westeros's atmosphere of betrayal and court intrigue, even these minor decisions can have massive consequences. Subterfuge Exactly as advertised, Subterfuge is a subtle, long-term game of expedient alliances and stone-cold betrayals, filled with the irrefutable logic, and the uncertainty shrouded in fog of war. A turn just means giving subs and bases a command which will take hours to fulfil, so while it is real-time like warfare is real-time, in Subterfuge the theatre of war sees its stage advance slowly. Its scale is just grand enough to be deeply satisfying, but be warned that it takes some serious time investment to get a game fired up. The leaders provide asymmetrical player powers, but even these super-units can be captured and bartered. Barring these modifiers and special cases, the bases and subs are more or less identical. The game is simply a question of position, resources, and force, but these factors are always shifting because of partial information and precarious alliances. Rymdkapsel Space-base-building and defence are Rymdkapsel's specialities, alongside some spatial puzzling a la Tetris, and 'exploration'. Its minimalism is more than just stylistic, going instead to the core of every action, option, and goal. Perhaps the most satisfying bit is the constant packing problem for expanding the base. New buildings can be of any type, and can be placed anywhere the player chooses, but also must have predefined dimensions. A tightly knit base might come across as more defensible, but reaching and researching far-flung moonoliths gives permanent global passive bonuses. The game is a logistics and timing puzzle that for all its stripped-down design, has a really keen sense of efficiency, and management. Fallout Shelter Launched at the exact time as Fallout 4's announcement, Fallout Shelter began a tradition in mobile of publishers dropping games with no warning that has perpetuated even today. But over the past few years, Bethesda has also developed it into a fun little simulation game, including mini-dungeons, as well as seasonal events. In the game, you play as the Overseer of a newly founded vault; the bombs have just fallen, and you have to set survivors to work, managing needs such as power, food, and water, but also exploring the wasteland for loot. Tropico In Feral Interactive's wonderful port of Kalyppo's classic strategy game, you rule! Become the self-styled dictator of a Caribbean island nation, and build a society based upon your whims. Tropico features the same setting, the same strategy play, but also the same humour that the series is so well known for. All of that PC goodness, packed into your mobile. Clash of Clans It's hard to understate the important role that Clash of Clans has played on the mobile platform as a whole, spawning both a sackful of copycats, and a successful card battler re-imagining of its formula: Clash Royale. In this tower defence, you must build your town, and rally a force of heroes, warriors, and wizards to defend it. The multiplayer scene is also still pretty active, with leagues of players across the globe still battling for supremacy. Rome: Total War "Gods... I hate Gauls" the immortal words from perhaps one of the most beloved strategy games of all time. Rome: Total War was brought to mobile in all its glory by Feral Interactive, who has since also ported the expansion sequels; Barbarian Invasion, and Alexander. Total War's highly successful formula mixes RTS strategy with turn-based campaign play, giving you the absolute best of both worlds. The Escapists 2 Have you ever felt like busting out of prison? Yeah, me neither. But if you ever do, the Escapists 2 offers a wonderful chance to break out of a variety of prison-based sandbox maps. You know what they say, when in prison, do as the prisoners do. You'll attend roll call, do prison chores, and gain accomplices, all the while plotting your dastardly jailbreak. Clash Royale Released some time after Clash of Clans, this game represented a re-imagining of the formula, as you collect cards and use them to build a battling deck with which to face opponents. Just like the original, Clash Royale also features a pretty heavy emphasis on multiplayer, allowing you to join leagues, and face off against opponents around the world to earn trophies. It may differ to Clash of Clans, but there's just as much fun to be had. Kingdom Two Crowns In this side-scrolling micro-strategy game, you play as a monarch atop a steed, who must travel their kingdom, securing it from greed and hostile forces. Kingdm Two Crowns is brilliantly original, and considering it is just a side-scroller, manages to do so much with relatively little. In some ways it reminds us of Reigns in terms of its wonderful simplicity, albeit with slightly more of a boots-on-the-ground perspective. Definitely one of the best Android strategy games. The Bonfire 2 This RTS-survival game sees you build a settlement, and then defend it from monsters who attack during the night. It's a little similar to Kingdom: Two Crowns, as you balance building your town, and looking after the defences to fend off any monstrous incursions. As your town gets bigger you can even contact other settlements, and cultivate friendly relations. For more info, see our Bonfire 2 review. Xenowerk Tactics Firaxis' XCOM set the bar for turn-based, squad-level strategy games in general, and still remains a highlight on mobile that few have managed to challenge. Xenowerk Tactics, a sequel to the twin-stick shooter Xenowerk, probably won't give XCOM a run for its money, but it's a decent tactical strategy game, and one making use of more modern design tools. Placed in charge of a corporate-owned private military force, your job is to go in and clean up after an experiment goes horribly wrong. There's squad management, base development, and tactical battles, which, while still hectic and satisfying, can sometimes feel a bit more arcade-y than pure strategy. There's a really tense tug-of-war between the need to secure your objective, and the need to preserve resources, especially when those resources are your veteran troops. Definitely worth checking out if you're looking for games like XCOM on mobile. Ticket to Earth While an excellent turn-based strategy game, much of Ticket to Earth's appeal and potential rested on the assumption that Robot Circus would finish the final three chapters of the game. The developer certainly took its time, but nearly three years later episode four was finally released as a free update in October 2019. With a unique take on turn-based tactics, a genuinely engaging story, and plenty of challenge to boot, the finally-finished Ticket definitely deserves your attention, and can be considered one of 2017's silent stunners. Egypt: Old Kingdom Clarus Victoria is back with a second entry in its turn-based strategy series based on different historical periods of Egypt. The first game focused on the prehistoric history of the area, while this new game focuses on the 'Old Kingdom' period, which lasted around 400 years, ending in 2,100 BC. Back then, the capital of the nation was Memphis, and it is here that the player must work to try and develop their civilisation. Resource management is key, as you also try to assimilate the other Egyptian tribes through either diplomacy or warfare. It's a niche-style strategy game on a very niche topic, but a breath of fresh air, and an excellent pick for those looking for something a little bit different. Euclidean Skies Euclidean Skies is a significantly different game to its predecessor, and the raw ambition it shows makes it all the more compelling. Even the art style is different; more vibrant and aggressive, bringing the world to life in a way that's unexpected, but also fantastic. This is a must-buy for fans of puzzle tactics games, and while some of the charm is lost in the shift away from Euclidean Land's simplicity, there's plenty of character in this boisterous new chapter. Six Ages: Ride Like the Wind Some strategy gamers will absolutely love Six Ages' blend of forced immersion. Fans of King of Dragon Pass, which this serves as a spiritual sequel to, will already be familiar with it. But Six Ages features a smoother interface, and a fresh setting in a new culture. Forgoing the traditional control and power fantasies of strategic empire-building is a hard habit to give up. But for those willing to make the sacrifice, Six Ages holds a wealth of wonder that few games can match. It wants to tell you a tale of gods and humans, of mysteries, and the mundane, while still taxing your tactics. It's a bold goal, and the narratives that it weaves are unlike anything else in gaming. If you like strategy, text-based narrative games, be sure to also check out our Silmaris review. Darkest Dungeon Even years after its release, Darkest Dungeon remains resurgent as one of the most inventive, and seductive, turn-based dungeon crawlers. All you need to do is look at the gorgeous art style, the wonderfully rendered characters, and the host of eldritch horrors that they face in their descent through the manor's many dungeons. Just like the forbidden knowledge of its Lovcraftian subject matter, Darkest Dungeon tempts you into just one more run, then proceeds to kick you in the teeth for it. If you enjoy building a party of unique rogues and reprobates and sending them into a dungeon in search of riches, only to meet grisly deaths and insanity, this is the game for you. Red Hook announced recently that it is still working on Darkest Dungeon 2, so there's no better time to jump into this wonderful nightmare. XCOM: Enemy Within Still the golden standard for turn-based tactical gameplay, XCOM: Enemy Within offers extreme, squad-based combat, constantly challenging your ability to scrape victory from defeat. Players make decisions in both the overworld and the in-between scenarios, deciding which soldiers to recruit, and what tech to research, which is every bit as important as the choices you make in the heat of battle. The game has the hallmark lustre of a AAA production, and pushed to the brink storyline: conventions which work in its favour. Keep your squad intact, do the mission, and save the world, piece by piece. Polytopia Taking the crown for best Civ-lite, Polytopia shines as a simple, yet satisfying approach to civilisation building. The game works to miniaturise that genre experience, with tribes that are separated by a single technology, and a map that has been foreshortened to a grid of 256 squares. Units and tech are the same for everyone, but the simplicity of this means a shorter list of decisive, veing choices. There is no diplomacy system, but victory is determined by points and not necessarily conquest. The game's blocky, loose art-style, and simple interface make it an easy game to learn, but a hard one to put down. Undoubtedly one of the best Android strategy games. Invisible Inc. The future came and went, and it has been cruel to all but a select few supra-national, extra-territorial megacorps. Your ragtag bunch of spies and specialists scour the globe for intel and supplies so they can make one final run: to wipe their identities from the omni-vigilant database, and live off the grid in peace. Each run escalates if the agents are detected by guards, cameras, or drones, yet the stealth aspect of the game is only one kind of risk calculation among many. Invisible Inc's AP and power systems mean that even successful runs can be tight, and sometimes making a clean escape is a failure if the team did not steal enough resources. The game's generous learning curve belies an experience in which knowledge can lead to perfect play. Imbroglío Of all Michael Brough's excellent, sparse designs, Imbroglío has the most player-driven customisation and controlled random inputs. Here is ample proof that roguelikes can offer as much strategic challenge as the classics. Each character has their own ability, and weakness, and the 4x4 grid on which the game unfolds is filled with tiles doubling as weapons. Swiping towards an enemy will activate that tile and fire its ability, with every slain enemy adding experience to the weapon responsible. The goal of the game is to collect treasure, which heals your character, and cause the walls of the grid to change configuration. Enemies spawn quicker and quicker as the turn count increases, so the whole affair is a race against time to level-up the sixteen tiles, while staying healthy, and collecting treasure at a steady pace. Even with its large number of weapons and characters to unlock, Imbroglío is accessible, rewarding both sustained interest, and focused strategic approaches. The Banner Saga Though many would see The Banner Saga as an RPG first and a strategy game second, both those aspects play an important role in the experience. The world is ending... seriously! The sun has stopped in the sky, stone monsters are invading, and nobody really knows what to do except run. So you run, making hard decisions along the way, and occasionally fighting for your lives in turn-based combat. The Banner Saga is a fantastic Norse-themed narrative strategy game, that will truly test how far you're willing to go to survive. Civilization VI Though Civ VI is only available on iOS, this turn-based strategy game from the classic 4x series, is well worth a look. Take the role of your favourite historical leader, and martial a civilisation to greatness, building cities, researching technologies, engaging in diplomacy, and just generally crushing any who oppose you. Civilization has endured so long due to the amazing consistency of its game format, and Civ VI is no exception. Check out our Civilization 6 tier list while you're here as well. War of the Visions: Final Fantasy Brave Exvius Following in the similar footsteps of Fire Emblem: Heroes, War of the Visions is a turn-based tactical RPG, that will see you collecting heroes and battling to save a beleaguered nation. Taking a good deal of influence from the turn-based combat of Final Fantasy Tactics, the game also contains a fair deal of gacha-esque mechanics, allowing you to gather heroes and create the perfect roster to suit your tactical needs. Star Traders: Frontiers As the captain of an interstellar star-ship, Star Traders: Frontiers lets you take the wheel on your own destiny. Want to be a pirate? Okay. Want to be a trader? That's fine. How about a bounty hunter? No problem. Star Traders is a fantastic open world RPG, which is also buffed by pretty great turn-based combat. Well worth a look-see. Fire Emblem Heroes Bringing together all the best familiar faces from the famous strategy series, Fire Emblem Heroes lets you a build a band of fighters, mages, and archers to wage war against opponents in turn based combat. The game is basically Fire Emblem's take on the gacha genre, letting you unlock characters from across the setting, and while it is initially quite easy, the longer you play, the more it factors in difficulty. Final Fantasy Tactics: War of the Lions Though an oldie to some extent, Final Fantasy Tactics: War of the Lions is a great little turn-based tactics game on mobile. Originally launched in 2007, mobile received its very own version a few years later. If as with Banner Saga, you enjoy the deep investment of narrative RPGs with a complement of tactics-based play on the side, this game is the perfect fit for you. Heroes of Flatlandia If you want a turn-based strategy game with plenty of units, a lovely little map, and a solid fantasy setting, you could do far worse than Heroes of Flatlandia. With four distinctive races to play as, a range of magic and special abilities, and online multiplayer, it's a solid choice if you've got a little time on your hands. Warhammer Quest: Silver Tower This tactical RPG is based within the Warhammer setting of Age of Sigmar, and sees you gather a party of champions to take on the many trials of the Silver Tower. While you can equip your heroes with armour and weapons, what Silver Tower specialises in, is short tactical micro-battles, letting you dip in and out of the game at will. See our Warhammer Quest: Silver Tower review for more info. XCOM 2 Collection The XCOM 2 Collection on iOS was one of our mobile games of the year for 2020, and Feral's port of the classic tactics title is truly excellent. In our XCOM 2 review we called it "a great way for new players to discover what makes the series special", and whether it's the high difficulty, the action-filled setting, or its smart tactics play, the game really is a summary of all that is great in XCOM. The game finally received an Android release in July 2021, allowing even more people to play and enjoy it. FTL: Faster than light The game that spawned a thousand clones, FTL: Faster Than Light is an excellent top-down spaceship simulator roguelike. Basically, as with Crying Suns, you're in command of a starship on an important mission to save the galaxy, but along the way you happen upon all sorts of dangerous encounters. How you approach each of these is what makes FTL so clever, as you balance resources on your ship to prolong your survival. When you do die, however, it's for real. FTL is as punishing as it is smart. Bloons TD 6 Join millions of other players as you craft your perfect defense from a combination of awesome Monkey Towers, upgrades, heroes, and abilities. Play with friends in up to four player co-op, challenge yourself by taking on fearsome boss bloons, and battle through multiple maps in this fun, vivid strategy game. Elvenar Sometimes a strategy game allows you to enjoy the thrill of leading an army into war, but other times they're all about building and developing an empire of fantastical cities, and that's exactly what you do in Elvenar. The fantasy setting gives it a unique twist, setting it apart from the wealth of modern day city-building games that are available to mobile gamers. In Elvenar, you have three main objectives: to complete quests, to explore, and to research. There's an endless supply of quests to complete, with some of them based around progressing the game's story, and others being generic tasks which loop over time. Research will help your city to grow bigger and stronger, while exploration helps you to find new lands to cultivate. If you're looking for a new free-to-play game to be your new addiction, Elvenar might be an excellent choice. And those are all the games we have! If you're really into your simulation strategy, our list of the best mobile war games might be for you. Also, be sure to check out our best mobile card games if you like a little synergy-based play, and read about Scrambly if you want to start making money while playing mobile games.