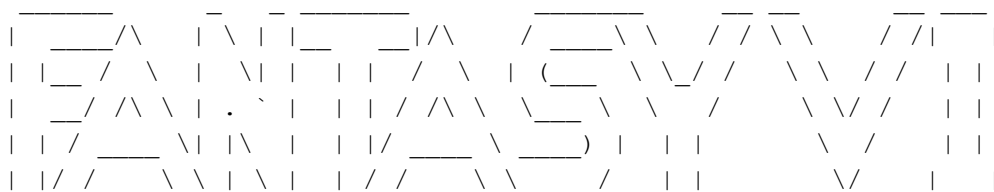
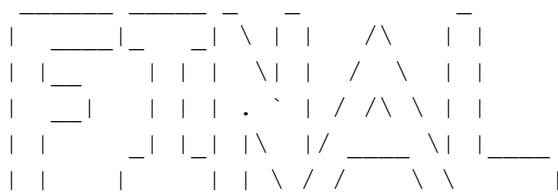


Final Fantasy VI Advance FAQ/Walkthrough

by Relle

Updated to v1.00 on May 12, 2007



FAQ/Walkthrough

by Relle

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1. Introduction
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I am, of course, a huge fan of Final Fantasy, and especially of this game. I remember playing it a few dozen times over and over, at first legitimately, then using a Game Genie so as to give everyone Leo's Shock command and everyone an Illumina sword. Fun times, fun times...

Anyway, with the coming of FF6 to the GBA, I had to give it a shot. And since I wrote a FAQ for FF4 (yet I skipped FF5...I may have to go back and replay it) I figured this would be appropriate. As always, spoiler free, though by this point the amount of people who've never played this game are probably in single digits. No spoilers either way.

Oh, and in case anyone's wondering, all movie and pop culture references, Star Wars and otherwise, are entirely intentional.

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2. Updates
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1.00 - Done. Dragon's Den fully completed, and I wrote a little something for the Soul Shrine.

0.90 - So in case anyone's wondering, my huge delay was not due to WoW like some of my other guides, but more because the thought of training up all 12 party members' magic for Kefka's Tower pretty much killed my desire to play the game. Then I found a codebreaker code for max AP and got going again. So...yay cheating. Anyway, Kefka's Tower is complete. Next up is the Den of Dragons.

0.80 - Almost done. Working on training up everyone so they're ready for Kefka's Tower.

0.65 - Working my way down the list of characters to find.

0.50 - World of Ruin.

0.40 - Almost to the Floating Continent.

0.15 - Made it through Zozo.

0.10 - Just started. Finished up through the path split.

3. Frequently Asked Questions

Q. OMGWTFBBQ, I thought this was FF3?!

A. No. FF3 for the SNES was merely the third Final Fantasy in America. As pretty much everyone by now knows (OMG, useless FAQ entry!) this is the sixth entry in the Final Fantasy series.

Q. What's been changed from the SNES version?

A. The usual bonus dungeon, a few new espers, new dragons to kill, and the script's been revamped somewhat. Also, the sound's a little off due to the GBA hardware, but not by much.

4. Walkthrough

4a. World of Balance - A New Hope

4a-1. A Slave Unchained

Enjoy the opening credits and music, I love it. This part of the game is basically on rails. You only have one path you can take, mainly because the Magitek armor prevents you from entering any buildings or going down any narrow alleys. You'll be attacked by various no-name defenders of Narshe, all of whom are very weak. It doesn't matter which beam you use, they all die in one hit anyway. For large groups, just use Terra's Bio Shock ability. If your HP gets too low, use the healing ability all your party members have.

When you reach the save point in the mines, use it if you're feeling frisky. A little further onward is the first mini-boss. He's not really deserving of a boss section. Just attack the head, and if you wind up attacking the shell (which can happen due to the active battle system) heal up the damage and move

on. Terra's Magitek Missile ability can do the most single-target damage at this point. Afterwards, watch the cutscenes. When you wake up in the house, don't talk to the man quite yet. Instead, leave the room and examine the clock by the entryway to get an elixir. Now talk to him, and it's running time!

Once back in the mines, you'll have to deal with random battles, but they're very easy. Just use Cure if you get low on life. Past the save point, go right for a phoenix down, then across the bridge to the left. Grab the sleeping bag from the nearby chest and keep going north till the guards catch up.

Watch that first step. Many cutscenes follow, then you'll have control of Locke and two groups of Moogles. Switch between them using the select button, and just position them so they block off the choke points. As the guards come into contact with your forces, you'll have to beat them in battle (very easy fights, you get four party members per team). Try to let two of your teams take out the regular guards and save the third for the battle against the guard leader.

The leader is actually rather tough, because his charge attack can do 100+ damage, which is pretty much a one-shot at this stage in the game. Use items if you really have to, otherwise keep pounding him till he falls.

Afterwards, you'll automatically end up at the entrance to Narshe. Don't leave yet, however. Talk to the guy in front of the building and follow him in. Check all the rooms for chests and you'll get a sleeping bag, a potion, and a monster-in-a-box (just a wolf). After, leave Narshe entirely and head south. When you reach the desert, go southwest to find Figaro.

4a-2. Fiiiiigaro, Figaro, Figaro...

Sorry, I've been wanting to do that since 1994. Anyway, once in the castle, go up three screens and take the left door to find a gold needle in a chest, along with a shopkeeper. The right door has a potion and an antidote, and a shop that sells tools for Edgar. Buy what you like (Edgar comes with an auto crossbow so leave that one alone), as you may need the items soon. Go up either of the stairs to the left or right to get a phoenix down, then head back and take the center door. Speak to Edgar for a quick scene.

At this point you can explore the castle more fully, but there's nothing of any great importance besides some people to talk to. If you want to advance the game, take the left door on the castle ramparts (the outdoors portion of the castle) then take the stairs down and enter the tower on the left side of the castle. Talk to the old maid there to learn about Sabin, then return to the throne room and talk to Edgar.

When you regain control, talk to the two soldiers, then Kefka. Follow Locke afterward to your room for another series of scenes (you can talk to the chancellor without talking to Kefka, though it doesn't make a whole lot of sense as far as the dialogue goes).

More cutscenes, then you'll be in a fight with a couple Magitek armors. They're easily dispatched with Edgar's auto crossbow and regular attacks from Locke and Terra. However, use Fire with Terra for an in-battle dialogue (which is rather amusing). Afteward, you'll be on the world map, on a chocobo. Follow Edgar's directions to the cave (it's a little hard to find in chocobo mode due to the viewpoint, you may have an easier time on foot) and head in.

From the entrance, take a sip from the recovery spring and head through the door

to the right. Here, take the stairs to the left to find an ether. Go back to the previous room and head down the right path twice to find another ether. Walk left to find another set of stairs, but first go past them to snag a phoenix down. Now go up those stairs and follow the path to the exit.

South Figaro is directly to the southeast. Examine the uppermost barrel near the entrance for a potion. From there, head down to find a couple boxes and a barrel near each other. Check them for eye drops and an antidote. Enter the nearby pub and talk to the ninja to properly introduce (sort of) Shadow. Go downstairs and speak to the guy, then follow him as he delivers cider to the relic shopkeeper. Buy yourself a pair of sprint shoes while you're there. With those equipped while you hold the B button (or have auto-run enabled in the configuration menu) you'll be speeding through the game!

Your next stop should be the weapon and armor shop, which is in the northeast corner of town. The barrel between it also contains a potion. Buy up whatever you can afford, which should be everything on the list. After, go up the ladder to the right of the shops and follow it around to the left to the end. The lower right barrel of the three contains a teleport stone.

Once you're geared up and rested (if necessary) head for Mt. Kolts, to the northeast of South Figaro.

4a-3. And Our Party is Complete

Walk along through a couple screens till you re-enter the mountain, then walk around the rock to the south to find a chest outside with a main gouche. Go back in and head north across the bridge. Once outside again, follow the shadowy figure to the next screen. Here, take the first door you see to a chest with a tent, then head through the one to the left. After that it's a straight path to the save point. Use it, and the tent you picked up if you're low on HP/MP.

After this it's another straight run to the non-shadowy figure.

+++++

Boss - Vargas + 2x Ipooh
HP - 11600
Weaknesses - Poison
Immunities - None

You can't even touch Vargas without taking down his two Ipooh bears (ha-ha, Square...) so do a group-wide Fire attack and auto crossbow to take them both down quickly. Afterward, you just have to damage Vargas enough so that Sabin will appear. You do have to stay alive, though, so be sure to use Cure after each of his Gale attacks. Also try to steal the Mythril Claws from him, though it's not entirely necessary.

Once Sabin does appear, Vargas will blow away the rest of your party, leaving just Sabin. When you regain control, select Blitz and press left, right, left and "A" to perform Raging Fist, which will automatically defeat Vargas.

+++++

Hurray, a full party at last! Head out of the mountain (there's only one path) and once on the overworld, go north to find the Returner base. Speak with the guy blocking your way to be led around, but don't talk to Banon just yet. Go

back to the first room near the entrance and open the chest here for a phoenix down. In the main part of the base, the guy behind the counter will sell you items. Check the pot to the north of him for a green cherry. Now go into Banon's room and get the hi-potion from the chest. Save if you want, but talk to Banon eventually.

You'll have control of Terra after the scene. Talk to Locke, then leave and go across the bridge that was being blocked before. Feel free to loot all the chests, and pick up the antidote and ether in the pots behind them. Now talk to everyone in the Returner base, with the exception of the innkeeper and the shopkeeper. Afterward, talk to the guy at the entrance and he'll send you to Banon. Talk to him and refuse to join three times. You'll then receive a Genji Glove, and the game will continue as per normal.

After all's said and done, go down to find the raft that'll take you down the Lete River. Make sure to set Banon to the back row as fast as possible, the monsters will pretty much exclusively target him. Just use his Pray command every round and you'll stay nice and healthy.

At the first intersection, go left to (eventually) reach a save point. Before hopping back on the raft, note that at the next split point, choosing to go up loops you around to the same spot. If you set the cursor position in the config menu to "Remember", you can have your entire party attack everything while Banon heals every turn, thus keeping everyone healthy and letting you level up endlessly just in this one part of the game. Bear in mind, though, that if you do level up this way, it can impact the difficulty, so if this is your first time through, it's better not to level up too much this early. Also bear in mind that this particular trick was done with a turbo controller back in the day, so it may be a little monotonous on a GBA (not to mention a drain on the battery).

Anyway, choose to go left at the second fork when you're ready to move on. After another save point, you'll encounter one of the more annoying (and amusing) recurring bosses of the game.

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Boss - Ultros
HP - 3000
Weaknesses - Fire, Lightning
Immunities - Absorbs Water

This guy's rather simple. Terra's Fire, Edgar's auto crossbow and Sabin's Aura Cannon attack should all be employed for maximum damage. Banon, of course, had better be healing. Ultros' tentacle attack will do around 200 damage per strike to a single target (he can do it to your whole party, but the damage is quartered) so as long as Banon's being a good little resistance leader and praying a lot, this should be cake.

And by the way, Ultros talking about tentacle sex with Terra = win for Square.

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After you sink the squid, cue more cutscenes. After, you'll be able to take control of the various heroes and see what happens with them. You have to do all three, and in no set order, so skip ahead to whichever one you're on first.

4b. World of Balance - Separation Anxiety

4b-1. Terra and Edgar's Incredible Adventure

The raft will eventually land you right near Narshe. Head in, but the guards at the gate won't let you pass. Instead, go back to Locke's secret passage in the rock wall to the left and examine it to be let in. At this point you'll have to make your way through the mines to the house where Terra was first named. It's mostly straightforward.

When you get to the room with the light path, you'll have to follow its course or be surrounded by lights. Press A when the yellow light is in front of you to escape a battle. Anyway, from the entrance, walk:

2 Up
1 Left
1 Up
4 Left
3 Up
3 Right
3 Up
3 Right
3 Down
1 Right
3 Down
3 Right
7 Up
4 Left
3 Up
1 Left
1 Up

And you're done. From here, head up and right and take the small door along the way. Enjoy the various moogles, but take the runic blade from the chest in the area, it'll help later. Go back and head right and down, and you should be on a familiar path. Follow it to the safehouse, and this part of your trip is complete.

4b-2. Locke and Celes' Excellent Espionage

The nearby house has a save point in the basement if you need it. Also note you won't get into a battle with any of the guards unless you talk to them, though you will need to beat some of them, as they block your way (but not the heavy armors, they'll just kill you).

Start out by going left and up the stairs, then into the item shop. Talk to the merchant standing by the clock and Steal his clothes in battle. With his clothes, go into the rich man's house south of the item shop and bop on down to the basement. The kid blocking the path will get out of the way now that you're a "merchant." Go outside by the back door and walk left till you hit the river, down till you hit a wall, then left across an invisible bridge. Enter the pub and walk into the basement. Steal the merchant's clothes (or just beat him) to acquire the Cider, and take it back to the old rich man via the same route. If you want, you can go up the stairs by the weapon and armor shops, fight a green-armored soldier and steal his uniform as well.

Go back downstairs and talk to the kid. The password is "Courage." You'll

be shown a passage to the mansion on the other side of town. Check the clock in the basement for an elixir, then go up to the second floor. Enter the first door you see and head to the upper left corner of the room. The secret passage is marked quite plainly by the windy sound effect, but if you can't hear it, it's behind the bookcase near the bed.

Once downstairs, you have the option of removing your disguise or keeping it. Keep it if you've got it, as when you enter Celes' cell, whichever disguise you're wearing will inspire a different reaction. From the hallway where you're asked about the disguise, keep going straight down into the wall, then walk right to find a secret dungeon. You'll get a hyper wrist and hermes' sandals for your time, two very nice relics.

Anyway, take Celes out of her cell and go into the next room. Loot the gil from the various chests and wind the clock in the back to reveal a secret door. At the first path split, go down for Celes' iron armor. At the second, go up for a pair of chests with more equipment for Celes. Return to the second split and go straight down, then left for an earring in a chest. Now head right and up the stairs to blow this popsicle stand.

From this point it's the very beginning of the game in reverse. You just have to return to Narshe the same way you came to South Figaro. However, at the end of the tunnel, you'll run into a slight obstacle. Make sure you restore yourself at the turtle spring first.

+++++

Boss - Tunnel Armor
HP - 1300
Gil - 250
Weaknesses - Lightning
Immunities - None

As Celes says, use her Runic ability to draw the Tunnel Armor's spells, and just attack with Locke. After a few rounds it'll stop casting spells, so use Celes to Cure when necessary and beat it up. Once it's near death, it'll use Magitek Laser, which hurts a lot. Celes can Runic it away, but there's no real warning, so it may end up hitting you anyway. Just heal past it and destroy the thing.

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Once it's dead, rather than have you trudge all the way back to Narshe on foot, the game automatically ends this segment.

4b-3. Sabin and Cyan's Bogus Journey

As you wash ashore, enter the tiny house nearby on the world map. Here you can recruit Shadow, but there's one big caveat: he can leave your party at random, and won't return. This can be a bit of a pain later on, when a third party member would really help. Even so, buy up a ton of shurikens from the guy on the chocobo if you can afford it. Speak to the crackpot inside the house if you like, then move on.

Your destination here is the white dot on your map directly south of the house, though you have to walk around the shore to get there. In your way is an imperial camp, and a few cutscenes.

Eventually you'll take control of Cyan. While you can attack and remove the various soldiers besieging the castle, they don't give much and all you need to do is kill their commander. The easy way to do it is select Bushido, then wait for the bar to go up to 4. One Flurry attack and he'll be dead.

The scene will shift back to Sabin and Shadow. Despite you wandering around in plain daylight, the soldiers won't attack you unless you talk to them first. You may as well let them be, they barely give any gil and no EXP.

Enter the tent to the right and examine the chest. Choose to hit it rather than kick it, then open it after the scene for a star pendant. Now go south across the bridge for a pair of scenes and a short battle with Kefka. Follow and talk to him twice, then enter the tent to the northwest and open the two chests. Now talk to Kefka again and fight your way through the next two battles.

When you gain control of Cyan, go to the throne room, then enter the room to the right to find...well, more tragedy. Soon you'll have Sabin and Shadow again. Talk to Cyan as needed to kill off the various soldiers. Afterward, you get to fiddle with Magitek armor again! Make your way back to the entrance of the camp, and blast your way through the enemies as appropriate. After you reach the entrance, you can safely cross the bridge on the world map and enter the forest to the south.

In the Phantom Forest, head forward till you reach a three-way path split. Take the upper right exit and continue on till you find the train. Go ahead and board, then check the door when it starts moving. Uh-oh...

Contrary to what Sabin says, start out by going to the caboose to the right. Here you'll find a ghost wandering around and the conductor in the small room, along with a save point. Talk to the conductor if you want and check the room for a funny scene with Cyan. Outside, talk to the ghost who will, oddly enough, join your party. This little guy can Possess monsters (not other ghosts), which will instantly kill them, but also remove the ghost from your party forever.

Anyway, head through the next two cars. None of the ghosts will attack you until you talk to them, but they can be in the way, and they're easily killed. In the third car, you'll have another ghost who wants to join you, and a ghost who will inexplicably sell you items. Leave and enter the next car, and your exit will be blocked by a ghost. Defeat him, then climb to the top of the car to escape the legions of undead.

When you regain control, enter the next car and pull the switch to detach the rest of the train. Pull it again to open the way to the rest of the car. In here, the center ghost (roughly, they wander) will join you if you have room.

In the next car, you can sit at the center table for another funny scene, which will also restore your HP. Go around the car from the outside and re-enter from the rear to pick up the earring in the chest. Enter the next car and go into the first room. Check the chest to get a visit from Siegfried, the less funny running boss. Strictly speaking, that is. He dies in one hit.

Head to the next car and enter the second door you see. The leftmost chest contains an Apparition, which is easily defeated. Take the rest of the loot and head for the next car. If you're still carrying a ghost with you, now's the time for him to leave. The next car contains a save point, which you should use. The last car is the engineer's compartment. Flip the left and right switches so that they're pointing down, then exit and flip the switch on the smokestack to stop the train...sort of.

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Boss - Phantom Train
HP - 1900
Weaknesses - Fire, Lightning, Holy

Immunities - Absorbs Poison

There are two ways of doing this: the real way, and the cheap way. The real way involves actually killing the train, which is not very difficult. Simply blast it with Aura Cannons, shurikens, and Fang attacks (assuming you still have Shadow). It only has one big attack that hits your whole party, and it doesn't use it that often. It shouldn't even take you down to half HP.

The cheap way is to use a phoenix down on the train. Instant win. I'm not kidding, bring the ghost train back to life and you will somehow not get run over and squashed into paste.

+++++

Anyway, when you regain control, talk to Cyan and just wait till the screen fades to black. Back on the overworld, head around the mountains to the east and enter the cave to the north. Walk up to the waterfall to trigger a cutscene. If Shadow's still with you, he'll leave you now. Chicken.

Next up will be one long battle against groups of 2-3 monsters, ending in a fight against Rhizopas, who can be downed in one set of Fang and Aura Cannons. You'll end up on the Veldt. Make your way southeast to Mobliz.

Upgrade your weapons and armor, then visit the item shop and buy some meat. Now go to the house west of the item shop with the injured soldier. Bring him the letter on the table, then go to the house next door and talk to the postman to send a letter to Maranda. Check the clock next to him for an elixir, too. Talk to the pigeon on your way out. Now go to the relic shop. Go to the back room and sleep in the bed, then walk back to the soldier's house and read him his girlfriend's letter. Send the record, talk to the pigeon, sleep, etc. Repeat this till you stop seeing letters on the guy's table.

When you're ready, go back out onto the Veldt and fight till Gau appears. Use the meat on him and he'll join you. At this point you should fight a few battles and let Gau Leap so he'll fill out spots on his Rage table. You don't have to give him meat after he's officially joined up with you, he'll just show up and automatically hop back in your party after a battle.

When you're done Leaping around, follow the coast south of Mobliz and around the mountains till you reach the Crescent Mountain. The entrance is around the left side. Watch the scene, then go up and around to the right to find the diving helm.

Whee, Mode 7 underwater adventure! In this bit, you're in active time, so you have a limited window in which to change directions when given the option. It doesn't really matter as far as the destination goes, you'll arrive at the end eventually. However, choose to go right at the first split to get an X-potion (and a short break). From this point on it doesn't matter how you proceed, you'll crash-land at Nikeah.

The only purpose for this town is to finish buying all the things you missed in Mobliz. However, there are two things you absolutely must do. The first is get the elixir in the clock at the inn. The second is talk to the dancer at

the pub. She'll introduce you to Humpty and Dumpty!

When you're ready, head to the dock and talk to the man on the boat. He'll take you to South Figaro, and this chapter will come to a close.

4c. World of Balance - The War Begins

4c-1. The Empire Strikes Back

Yeah, yeah, you knew that title was coming. Anyway, once you finish all three parts of the split, everyone will arrive in Narshe and it'll be war! When you regain control of Terra, you can swap places with your other friends on the line, allowing you some last minute gear switching and healing. When you're ready, talk to Banon.

Next up, you'll need to divide your members into three groups. If you're going for balance across all three, put Sabin and Cyan in one party, as they can one-shot enemies easily and be fairly self-sufficient. If Sabin knows his Rising Phoenix blitz, he should be able to decimate entire parties of enemies by himself. Terra and Celes should be in different parties, since they're the only people who can use Cure, and the other three are just your preference.

Now, like in the beginning of the game, you have to use all three parties to block the Imperial forces by duking it out over the snow. There's three choke points where the Imperial forces have to pass, and since I suck at ASCII, I'll just give directions:

1. The first and southmost choke is south of your leftmost party. Follow that path till you come to a split where the snow breaks off left and right. Stop there and wait.
2. The second is to the east, and blocks off the middle of the three paths leading to Banon.
3. For the third, go east from the starting point till you find a little 2x2 rock in the snow. Just position yourself so you block the path to Banon.

From here, it's a waiting game. The first choke point will see most of the action, while the third will see more battles later on. The soldiers will come in two waves, one main force and another smaller one after most of the green troops are dead. As long as you stay put, they shouldn't even get close to Banon.

When the fighting's done, take your strongest party and walk up to the soldier running back and forth. This is a Hell's Rider, which should be a boss in and of itself. It has a single-target attack that deals 250-300 damage and has about 1200 HP. After that, it's just you and the clown.

+++++

Boss - Kefka
HP - 3000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - None

Celes is very good for this fight solely for her Runic power. Kefka can use the rank 1 spells like Fire and Blizzard, but he can also sometimes use Blizzara, which will do a lot of damage. He can also cast Poison, which will do 150 or so damage off the bat and (of course) poison the target. So having Runic for this fight drastically cuts down on Kefka's killing power.

+++++

Afterward, more cutscenes! Now why do we never get to pilot THAT in a Final Fantasy game? Anyway, after you regain control, you can now explore Narshe properly. As you leave your base, go south along the upper level to find a house with tons of goodies! Aside from that, take the elixir from the elder's house (the one left of the relic shop, up the stairs). There are new weapons and armor in the shops, but don't buy anything yet.

One thing to note: you can purchase Shadow's services very soon, but only if you have three people in your party. Bear in mind he can leave semi-randomly like in Sabin's scenario, and if you take him, you can't go back to Narshe and change your party, or he leaves. So if you want Shadow with you for the next part, make sure you have three people tops, along with 3000 gil.

4c-2. We're Going...Under the Sand?

Points to whoever gets the movie reference.

Head down to Figaro. When you arrive, put Edgar in the front of your party to get a nice little 50% discount from all the shops! Make sure to pick up the new Drill tool for Edgar from the shops, among other things. Sleep at the castle inn to advance the story (with a touching cutscene!) Then, talk to the old guy in the engine room to sink the castle and send it near Kohlingen.

This place is mostly backstory-centric. Visit the house north of the entrance and go down to the basement. Examine the woman in the bed for a scene about Locke and Rachel. Now go to the house in the northwest corner of the village to find out the whole story. Afterward, go around to the back of the first house and get the green beret from the chest. Now visit the inn/pub. Shadow will be sitting at a table to the right. You can hire him back for a mere 3000 gil if you have space in your party. Otherwise, there's nothing else.

Eventually you'll run into Jidoor, the one town in the world rich enough to have an auction house. Unfortunately, it's closed right now, so just buy up new equipment here (this stuff's better than what was in Narshe and Kohlingen). When you've got the gear, start walking along the northeast coast (or buy a chocobo for 250 gil to get there fast) and you'll arrive in Zozo.

Two things to note about this place: one, it's raining, when it's perfectly sunny outside. What's that about? Two, you can run into random battles anywhere and everywhere while in Zozo. One more thing: if you have Locke in your party, try to steal from the Harvester enemies. You will (rarely) get the Dragoon Boots relic, which lets any character who equips it use Jump instead of a normal attack. Also, the HillGigas enemies will (again, rarely) have Atlas Rings on them.

That being said, first go into the pub, which is near the entrance. Head to the top floor and go out the right exit. The right door one floor up has a chest with an ether. Go back down to street level and walk north to find the inn. As you walk in, set the clock to 6:10:50 to reveal a path leading up to Edgar's most powerful weapon: the Chainsaw. Ohhh yeah!

Now head south from there to the relic shop. The guy inside says there's definitely not a girl at the top of the building. We believe him, right? Sure we do.

Head up to the next screen and follow the line up to the outside. Follow the stairs up, but ignore the first open door and go up a couple more floors to find a Brigand's Glove for Locke. Return to the open door and jump across to the next building twice. Enter the door and go up the northern of the two stairs. Check the two top pots for an ether and a hi-potion, then go down and exit. Tromp up the stairs and hop across the two buildings, then comes another long walk up several flights of stairs. At the end you'll find a small room with a burning fist weapon for Sabin, and the boss.

+++++

Boss - Dadaluma
HP - 3270
Gil - 1210
Weaknesses - Poison
Immunities - None

This guy is weaker than the ordinary fights around Zozo simply because he has no big attack to take you down. Edgar's Chainsaw typically does 700 or so damage, plus 500 or so from Sabin's Aura Cannon. That combined with regular attacks will take him down to nothing fast. When he's near death he'll summon a pair of monsters to protect him, but all you need to do to win is kill him, so one good Chainsaw and his friends die automatically.

+++++

With that out of the way, enter the tallest room in the tallest tower and find the pink princess. Much talking ensues, and you'll have your first four magicite, and a free trip back to the entrance. Next stop, Empire territory!

4c-3. It's Not Over Till...

At this point in the game I always leveled everyone's magic till everyone knew every spell available...but that was back in 1994. Learn whatever magic you can, however, and try to have everyone other than Celes learn Cure, at least.

Anyway, when you're ready to move on, go back to Jidoor and enter the big mansion at the north end of town. Talk to the Impresairo to get things moving. Apparently Celes is not an opera floozy, she just enjoys practicing her scales.

After the opening score, you'll regain control of Locke. Head to the dressing room (the exit's down and to the right) and talk to Celes. Check the score as Locke says, though I wrote it down below. As soon as you walk onto the stage, you'll have a very limited time in which to choose the next line when prompted. After about three seconds you'll automatically sing what's selected, so be careful. If you mess up, you get booted to the world map and have to start the opera over again. The lines you need to sing are below.

1. O my hero, my beloved
2. I'm the darkness, you're the starlight
3. Must my final vows exchanged

As soon as the last line is sung, quickly talk to Draco and follow him around (no, you don't actually have to dance). When he turns into the flowers, pick them up and take them to the balcony. The scene will automatically conclude.

Again with Locke, go back to the balcony, but pick up Ultros' letter along the way. Present it to the Impresario and...apparently Ultros can predict to the minute the time it takes for him to push a four ton weight off a rickety wooden scaffold.

Two very important things to note: one, your time decreases both in battle AND when you're in the menu, so don't waste time swapping out espers! Two, make sure you have sprint shoes equipped. That being said, five minutes is four minutes more than you need to get to Ultros. Not that difficult, the only thing that really drains your time is lengthy battles.

Anyway, from when it starts, go right and up to find the stagehand who'll get you onto the catwalks. Listen to what he says: the three other switches only waste your time, so pull the rightmost one. The entrance to the catwalks is on the opposite side of the balcony, so head on over and traverse the narrow wooden planks (that can support a 4-ton weight...) and try to avoid battles with the rats. When you reach Ultros, the real battle begins.

+++++

Boss - Ultros
HP - 2550
Weaknesses - Fire, Lightning
Immunities - Absorbs Water

While you've grown stronger, Ultros has become weaker. He's barely worth a boss section because it takes all of three rounds to take him out. He doesn't even have any big attacks besides maybe Acid Rain, which doesn't do much damage to begin with. Oh well, maybe next time he'll come prepared.

+++++

Much cutscenes ensue, and sadly, you don't get to fly the airship yet. Now we strike the Empire head-on!

4c-4. Of Machines and Magicite

Albrook has some new gear for you. Check the pot in the weapon shop for an ether and an elixir in the clock in the pub/relic shop. When you're done, you'll find the Empire capitol northwest of Albrook.

Vector may be an Empire town, but it's not as hostile as Zozo. Directly left of the entrance will be a small house with an old woman. Tell her you're not loyal and defeat the guards that arrive and she'll heal your party. You can also use the inn (which is free) but the innkeeper will randomly steal 1000 gil from you during the night.

Head northeast from the entrance till you find a couple guards and a red-topped soldier. Nearby will be an old man and a couple boxes who will set you on the path to the Magitek research facility itself.

Head left and crawl through the pipe to be deposited near a chest with a Flametongue sword. Wait for the hook to move near the ledge and hit A to hop

on and ride it to the other side. Walk right and take the right pipe down to an ether. Return and take the left pipe to proceed.

Pop open the chest and hop the conveyor belt to the right. Open the two chests here and ride the next set of spinners. Walk up the stairs to the north, then walk into the pipe on the right wall. Halfway down you'll find a couple chests, and if you keep walking down inside the pipe, you'll end up where you started. From there, head southeast to a hook hanging over a hole. You can't do anything with it, so take the chest over to the left and walk up the stairs above that. North of here you'll find another chest with a gold shield. Return to the previous room and the hook over the hole.

Take the left passage down and follow it around to get a tent and a golden helm in the shadows. With that all done, return to the hole and the hook and walk up and right to the conveyor belt being fed Magitek armor. Take a ride to find Kefka, of all people. No fighting this time. When you regain control, hop on the conveyor belt he threw the two espers onto. Shiva says nothing, but before you talk to Ifrit, enter the room to the north of him and rest/save your game. Now, speak to Ifrit and it'll be a battle!

Shiva and Ifrit are, of course, weak against their opposing elements and will absorb their native elements. They pretty much exclusively use Fire and Blizzard spells, which don't do a lot of damage. When you do enough damage to Ifrit, Shiva appears, and vice-versa. After enough damage has been dealt to each of them, the battle will automatically end. Speak to both of them to turn them to magicite and gain their strengths.

Rest, save, and head into the room Shiva was blocking. More stairs...yugh. Stroll along till you run into a rather pale guy blocking your path. While he is, in fact, a boss and should be worthy of a boss section, he's so pathetically easy it isn't worth the effort. A couple Chainsaws, a couple Thundaras, and whatever attacks from your other party members will annihilate him.

In the next room, just wander up and flip the switch. You'll double your magicite stores automatically. After the scenes, follow Cid down the elevator. Use the save point and talk to Cid to advance the game. Unlike the trip through the underwater trench, you can't go down any of the side paths here. The game just rushes you along through the mines automatically. Make sure no one has an icebrand equipped, as all the monsters (including the boss) will be healed by ice magic. At the end, you'll find another of the Numbers.

+++++

Boss - Number 128
HP - 3276
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - Absorbs Ice

With only three party members (all of whom may not know Cure yet depending on how much AP farming you did) this can be a little tricky. The two arms it has will continuously grow back after a couple rounds, but even that much is a nice reprieve. The arms will usually go down in one attack, so if you have Thunder magic available, use it.

+++++

As soon as the boss is dead you'll pop out back in Vector. Run for the hills and you'll end up back on the airship fighting...cranes? While they play the boss music, they're not that tough. A couple single-target special attacks like Fang, Aura Cannon and Drill will take down one, and you can focus on the other.

Feel free to get acquainted with Setzer's Slot command as well. If you can manage to get 7-7-7, it's instant death for the cranes. Much cutscenes follow, and you still can't pilot the airship yet...what a gip.

4d. Interlude - The Esper World

At this point you take control of Maduin. Walk north to find a fallen woman. Return with her, then speak with her in bed. You can walk around and talk to the villagers, but they don't say anything particularly interesting. Head back to the gate (after rudely shoving the "Youth" aside) and talk to Madeline.

I gotta say, the esper way of making babies beats out the stork any day.

Err...aaaaanyway, when you regain control, talk to the elder, then the fairy at the door. Leave and run back to the gate for one final scene.

Why's Gestahl gotta bitch-slap Madeline like that?

4e. World of Balance - World Tour

4e-1. Return of the Espers

Finally, some flying time! Before heading to Narshe, return to Jidoor. The auction house is finally open, so it's time to do some bidding! Hopefully you brought money, because there will randomly be two magicite up for bid (how the hell they got magicite when the Empire's snatching it all up is anyone's guess). The Zona Seeker magicite will cost you 10,000 gil, while the Golem will cost a lean 20,000 gil. Buy both, then return to Narshe.

After speaking with Banon, return to the house with all the treasure chests. Remember the one that was locked? Lone Wolf the Pickpocket (great name there) will make off with it. Head to the mines the same way you did in the very beginning of the game. However, this time, instead of going up to where the esper used to be, take the first right and follow it. You'll finally catch up to Lone Wolf where the esper is now resting, along with Mog. When Lone Wolf says to back off, just wait till Mog takes matters into his own hands. Save Mog afterward (the gold hairpin is not worth a party member) to have him join your forces!

Before going anywhere, you may want to head to Maranda (which is west of Vector) and level up/gain some magic from the enemies in the forest near the town. At the very least, Terra should learn the three -ara spells from Maduin. The fights near Maranda give 2-3 magic AP per battle, so it won't take very long.

Now, fly down to Vector and then go east to find the Cave to the Sealed Gate. The Imperial Base is empty, so just pass through and enter the cave itself. You'll find an assassin's dagger and kazekiri in the first two rooms, then a fun lava puzzle in the third!

To get the two chests, first stand in front of the blinking bridges to the right and hold right (don't stop till you're on the opposite end). Return back to the beginning in the same way. Now walk across the first blinking bridge and go down when it splits. Follow that to the island in the center. Go down, then left at the first split to get the chest. Now take the second

split on the same bridge to land on another island on the south wall. Here, hold right and you'll end up near the exit.

Here, ignore the ladder and go right for a hi-ether. Go back for the ladder and walk on till there's a tiny path leading behind the rock. Follow it till you climb a set of stairs with a switch to your left. Pull it, then go back left the way you came to find that chest on a lava island suddenly accessible. Take it, as it's the super-fantastic genji glove, which will be oh so powerful for this stage of the game.

Return right and continue on. You should see a switch on the bridge to the right and two switches on a rock above you. Go to the rock and pull the left switch to open a door to a chest and a beautiful, glorious save point! Use it, then flip the last switch to create a staircase to the right. Go down and grab the chest off to the left, then crawl through the narrow space to the right to find a new area. There will be two switches on the floor as you go right, but ignore those and head down the short bridge and go left. There will be another switch to the left. Stomp it and enter the room. You'll find a bevy of treasure, along with...the Ultima Weapon? Usually you find that thing near the end of the game. Oh well.

As it turns out, it's not as powerful as its legacy might suggest, since its attack power is based on your HP and your HP at the moment should be around 800-1000. Anyway, leave and go right, then walk across the rightmost bridge. Flip the switch, head right and flip the next switch. If the bridge to the mainland is out, go back left and examine the chest and turn the switch inside. With that all done, exit and you'll finally be at the end!

Cutscene, battle, cutscene. Not really a battle, you just have to stay alive till the gate opens, which is all of one round. After the cutscenes, cast Teleport to be returned to the world map (Terra should have it). Return to the airship and...oh, bad espers! Bad! No treats for you!

After returning to the world map, walk three spaces up and go left till you hit a chocobo stable in the middle of the forest. Rent one and ride it to Vector, but don't dismount. Instead, ride north to Tzen. There will be a man in the northeast corner of town behind some trees who will sell you a new magicite. Buy it and walk down to Vector.

4e-2. Eat for Peace

Now, this is very important, be sure to save on the world map. There's a timed event coming up, so if you mess up, it's good to have a recent saved game. Enter Vector when you're ready.

Apparently, despite the pressing concern of the buildings being ON FIRE, the shops are still functioning if you need them. They don't sell anything new, or give any kind of discount (it seems they've never heard of a fire sale...)

Bad jokes aside, just go up through what used to be an Imperial-heavy area and you'll end up at the Imperial Palace. Be prepared for the fight of your... oh, seems they just want to talk. Follow the crony to Gestahl. After much talking, you'll have four minutes to talk to as many soldiers as possible. The more you speak to, the better your reward at the end of the day. Obviously sprint shoes are a must. Here's how you do it:

4 - Start by running down to the previous room and speak to the four soldiers flanking the stairs.

11 - Take the left path first and enter the first door you see for a couple chests. Go up the stairs and enter the door there. You'll find six more soldiers here, along with one who will fight you. Kill him quickly and enter the toilet after you talk to everyone and fight the soldier there too. Leave.

12 - Continue up to the top of the stairs and take the door there. Talk to the sole soldier and go outside.

18 - Talk to all the soldiers on the way to the top center and enter the room there. Speak to the lone guy and go back out. This time take the right door back inside.

21 - Go down one flight of stairs and take the door. There will be two soldiers in the first room and one more in the room to the southwest. Remember to take the chests. Ignore the door on the ground level, it's just the jail and Kefka does nothing but waste your time.

24 - With all that done, go back to the main hallway and exit the palace. There will be three soldiers outside, one of which will fight you in Magitek armor. A single Thundara from Terra will disintegrate him.

Once you speak to all 24, you just have to wait for the timer to run down. When dinner starts, a whole new game begins. You'll be prompted for various responses, and the ones you choose will dictate the outcome of events after the meal. For the best rewards, choose these:

* Toast to your homelands

* Leave Kefka in jail

* Poisoning Doma was inexcusable

* Celes is one of us!

* (Choose any question you like, and when he asks you if you want to move on to the espers, ask him another question. Ask him all three, and make sure not to repeat a question, or it will cost you! Also, remember which question you asked him first!)

* The espers have gone too far...

* Ask him the same question you did before. If you get it wrong, there's no obvious notice telling you so.

* Take a break when prompted. During the break, talk to the soldiers and beat them in a fight. One Thundara will defeat them. Return to your seat when you're done.

* Have Gestahl say that the war is truly over

* Agree to take the transport to Crescent Island

Whew, that's a long meal! When all the talking's done, leave the palace. A soldier will stop you on the way and tell you the results of the meal. If you did everything correctly, here's your prize:

* Imperial forces in South Figaro and Doma will withdraw

* The armory in the Imperial base near the Sealed Gate will be unlocked

* Gestahl will give you a Tintinnabulum (try saying that three times fast!) and a ward bangle.

If you didn't get as many soldiers, or if you didn't pick the right answers at dinner, the rewards will be lessened. Either way, if you got the armory unlocked, head there and pick up the treasures. Along with the obvious treasures, there will be an elixir hidden along the south wall, and you'll find a flame blade in the stove. Return to Albrook and talk to General Leo at the docks when you're ready to go to Crescent Island.

4e-3. The Roof, the Roof, the Roof is on Fire!

The boat ride goes smoothly, except for Locke. You'll find Thamasa to the northeast. At this point you can sleep at the inn and (randomly) see a total of four dream sequences with Shadow. However, it's rather expensive and doesn't happen every time. Oh, if you visit the shops, buy an ice rod.

Either way, enter the house at the north end of town to find Strago and Relm. Afterward, visit the inn. Take a nap (notice the price drop?) and talk to Strago outside of the big house (you'll know which one because it's on fire!)

After entering, walk along and try to avoid the moving fires (the battles are easy if you can't). When you come across two doors, take the right door twice for a flame rod, then go back one and take the left door. One more split here. Right will be an ice rod, and left will be the boss of this place.

Boss - Flame Eater
HP - 8400
EXP - Varies
Gil - Varies
Weaknesses - Ice
Immunities - Earth, Holy, Lightning, Poison

At the start of the battle it'll cast Bomblet, which summons a few bomb critters to help. Take them out with Aqua Rake or Blizzara. The Flame Eater can cast Fira on individual members, or use Fireball, which does about 150-200 damage to your whole party. However, the easy way to beat it is to have Terra use Trance, then single-cast Blizzara. It should take away half the boss's HP easily. With two earrings equipped, it did 5000 damage in one cast for me.

Many cutscenes. When you regain control, head out. Shadow really isn't very social, is he? Head out and walk around the mountain to the west to find the esper hideout. The first screen will have three exits. Take the healing rod from the chest and use the right exit. Afterward, follow the path till you find three statues around a spot of light. Examine them, then it's squid time!

Boss - Ultros
HP - 22000
Weaknesses - Fire, Lightning
Immunities - Absorbs Water

This guy again? When Terra's got Trance and Thundara (hopefully)? A couple casts will incite a cutscene mid-battle with Relm. When the battle resumes, use her Sketch command to automatically end it all. So why exactly does Ultros keep coming back, again?

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Anyway, continue on. There will be a save point in the next room, and three outlined holes. The top hole leads to two chests with a chocobo and tabby suit for Relm and Strago. The right hole will lead to an X-potion. The left hole will lead to the end. Much talking ensues, and it's a happy ending at last!

...yeah, right. Soon you'll take control of General Leo for a short time. Time to beat down the clown! Enjoy the Shock command, it's absurdly strong. However, despite Leo's power, it isn't enough. After all the cutscenes, board the airship. More scenes, then you'll finally be able to fly around the world. We're not done yet, though.

4e-4. The Floating Continent

One thing you ought to do that's not required (anymore) if you're looking to complete Mog's Dance list is take him through the Serpent Trench. It's a long walk back to your airship, but if you use Mog regularly, this is your only chance to do this for a very long time.

Also, if you managed to liberate Doma, take a trip there and loot the castle. There's nothing groundbreaking in the chests, but they do have some nice items, along with the standard elixir in the clock. As a final note, make sure to buy up a lot of consumables before going up. You'll need them.

Once you're all charged up and ready, press Start while on the airship to go to the deck, then check the wheel and select to go to the Floating Continent. You'll be asked to make a party of three. Even if you've been using her thus far, don't take Celes along. As you fly to the continent, the Imperial fleet will attack. Wander around if you like, you get into random battles even if you're standing still. Soon, though, you'll start to see something...pink... floating toward you.

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Boss - Ultros and Typhon
HP - 17000 and 10000
Weaknesses - Fire, Lightning (Ultros), Ice, Water (Typhon)
Immunities - Absorbs Water (Ultros) Absorbs Fire (Typhon)

You ever get the feeling Ultros doesn't think much of you to come back so often only to be beat down? Well, not today! He brings along a friend who, despite being scary-looking, is pretty easy to kill...sort of. Once Typhon arrives, focus your attacks on him to end the battle quickly. However, it won't exactly end the way you think...

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Boss - Air Force, Laser Gun, Missile Bay
HP - 8000, 3300, 3000

Weaknesses - Lightning, Water
Immunities - None

You'll have to kill the Laser Gun and Missile Bay before you can touch the boss, but fortunately they're not hard to kill. If you brought along someone who knows Thundara, hit the boss with it a couple times after it can be damaged to end things. Definitely don't let the battle drag on too long, this boss has a few party-wide damaging effects that'll wear you down.

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Finally, the Floating Continent! I remember it being a different color on the ground. Well hey, it's that guy in black again! Pick him up and move along. The road will open as you walk along, oddly enough. At the path split, go up and snag the chest, then walk right past the little hill to find another chest. This one has a monster in it, and a very strong one. The easiest way to win is to cast Bio on it repeatedly. If it's killing you with its Throat Jab attack, cast Vanish on your party members to become immune to physical attacks. Fun!

Go back up and walk up the little hill to be...um...sucked into the ground. More fun! From here it's a relatively straight line to the next ground sucky thing. After hopping through the second, you'll find two paths to the left and right. Take the left and step on the lower switch to change the landscape below, and the switch to the north to create a shortcut. Take the shortcut and walk across the landmass you just lowered.

From here, keep going till you see a switch on the ground. Step on it, but don't go through the warp hole just yet. To the right will be a chest, and a warp hole that'll take you to a save point. Absolutely rest up and save, then go back up and drop through the hole.

At this point you can return to the airship and form a different party or buy new items and whatnot. You'll start back at the beginning (you can pick up Shadow again), but if you're low on stuff, it will help. Either way, move along till you find something especially nasty.

+++++

Boss - Ultima Weapon
HP - 24000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - None

Again, you'd think he'd show up at the end of the game. Ultima is probably the first really challenging boss of the game. He has a ton of magic at his disposal, and he uses it often. Casting Float on your party before the battle will prevent his Quake, and casting Shell during it will save you a little grief when he busts out his Flare spells.

When preparations are done, just unload on him. The strongest spells, the most powerful attacks, anything you were saving, this is where you spend it. Make sure to keep everyone's HP above 600 or so, because his physical attacks can take off a decent amount as well.

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Assuming Ultima dies, head on up for some super-special cutscenes! Note that regardless of whether or not you took Celes, the scenes play out the same, but if you left her behind, you'll have a fourth party member for the upcoming event.

After the cutscenes, RUN! It's a straight path till you see a chest. Don't take it, but instead go down and around to the right to be able to open it. The little glowing space after it will be Nelapa, who has a perma-Reflect cast on him. The fastest way is to just beat him up, but you can also cast Reflect on one of your party members and bounce the spells onto him.

When you get to the end, you'll have the option of jumping onto the airship. DO NOT JUMP. Instead, wait out the timer. At four seconds to go, the timer will vanish and Shadow will appear! Yay!

You know, there are a lot of villains who boast and brag, but Kefka actually followed through. He really did it.

4f. World of Ruin - Scattered to the Winds

4f-1. Rebuilding the Team

The strange "Suddenly I have a Grandad!" thing aside, Cid is sick and needs fish. Lots of fish. Check the beach to the south. The way this works, the faster the fish moves, the healthier it is for him. The slower fish will just make Cid die faster (and he will die if you take too long). If there are only slow fish (or no fish) you can go back and talk to Cid to get a new batch in the water, but be warned that each time you talk to him, he weakens and eventually dies. It can be annoying if you keep getting slow or no fish in the water.

A good way to do this is to check the beach first off. If there's a fast fish, grab it and feed Cid, then leave to the world map and save your game. If not, save anyway and talk to him to reset the fish. Cid won't die right away, and you'll have a save point in case he does. Just keep feeding him till he gets back on his feet and the game will continue on. Do note that if Cid does die, you'll still get the raft, but he won't be around afterward.

Anyway, when you land, first head to Albrook to restock supplies. Make sure to re-equip Celes as well. For whatever reason, she was left with all the party's gil and equipment. Suspicious...

Albrook has nothing but talk about the end of the world now. Return to the world map and walk north to Tzen. As soon as you enter...BAM!

Before you do anything else, go into the relic shop and buy a jeweled ring if you don't already have one. Make sure Celes has it equipped. Sprint shoes will help as well. When you're ready, go up to the big house. You'll know which one, because Sabin's holding the damn thing up.

You'll have six minutes to get the kid and all the treasure you can nab, which is more than enough time. There are two monster-in-a-box chests you can avoid: one is in the northwest corner of the first floor, and the second is to the left of the kid in the basement. As you begin, go up and left, skipping the monster-in-a-box, then down to the basement. Nab the kid and the two chests here, then on the first floor, go down and right and circle your way back to the entrance.

With Sabin in hand, there are a couple places to go. I personally prefer heading east from Tzen (it's a very long walk) all the way to Mobliz. So,

that's where we're going first. Pick up a couple venom claws for Sabin before you go, if you don't have them already.

As you enter, a couple of dogs will accost you, but not actually fight you. Follow the kid into the house and go downstairs. Here you'll find...Terra! Yay! Speak to her, then leave...or so you think! You'll get into a solo fight with Humbaba, and let me just say this right now: you are NOT supposed to win the first fight! Just hurry up and lose.

However, you are meant to win the second.

+++++

Boss - Humbaba
HP - 26000
Weaknesses - Poison
Immunities - Absorbs Lightning

Humbaba likes to toss out Thundara spells, so cast Shell on your party first off. If Celes knows Bio, have her cast that while Sabin attacks with his venom claws. If he has a pair of them equipped with a genji glove, he should be doing 2500 damage per turn. Eventually, Humbaba will flee.

+++++

And yet, Terra won't rejoin...you do get a new magicite out of the deal, though. Leave and start walking again. However, when you get to the forest a little south of Mobliz, there will be a chocobo rental place in the southwest corner. All the way on the other side of the Serpent Trench will be Nikeah, none the worse for wear.

4f-2. Celes' Eleven

Okay, that title's a little thin. Anyway, in Nikeah, enter the pub and talk to all the thieves. After they leave, Gerad (ha-ha) will be amongst the shops. Talk to and follow him to the ship. You'll get a free ride to South Figaro. Here, buy up some new armor for yourself and Edgar...I mean, Gerad. Visit Gerad at the inn, then head to the cave west of South Figaro.

Despite Seigfried saying he'll clear out the monsters, you'll still get into random battles. Head to where you fought the Tunnel Armor so long ago, but this time you'll have to hop across the turtle. Press A when the turtle moves in front of you to bounce to the other side. From here, go left one screen, then left again to reach Figaro Castle.

From here, it's a linear path till you reach a room with three doors and four chests. Loot the loot and take the leftmost door for a royal crown. Then go back and take the center door to find Gerad and...more potential tentacle hentai. Nice, Square.

+++++

Boss - Tentacle
Top Left - 4000 HP - Absorbs Earth and Water
Top Right - 5000 HP - Absorbs Lightning and Water
Bottom Left - 6000 HP - Absorbs Ice and Water, weak against Fire
Bottom Right - 7000 HP - Absorbs Fire, weak against Ice and Water

The tentacles all have various HP and elemental weaknesses/immunities. The best spell to use is Bio, as none will absorb poison, and the damage over time will help. They have a very annoying tendency to grab one of your party members and hold them, basically taking them out of the battle for several rounds and draining their HP. If they grab the whole party it's not game over, but you won't be able to do anything for a while. Make sure to keep everyone at high health whenever possible, because you can't heal party members when they're grabbed.

+++++

The thieves did in fact empty the treasure room, save for the soul sabre in the suit of armor. Take it before returning topside. As soon as the castle surfaces, send it over to Kohlingen. Visit the inn to find...Setzer! You've got a full party again! The game will give you a quick view of Darill's Tomb, which you must now visit. Go southwest of Kohlingen and begin spelunking!

Head down till the tomb breaks off into a few different paths. Go left and down. Take the chests along the way and flip the switch at the end, then return to the first floor and go right. Enter the door and examine the tombstone, then go through the door it reveals and flip the switch. Return to the main area of the tomb and take the lower right door for a genji helm.

With that done, take the center door down and take a ride on the turtle. Ignore the switch in the next room for now and go down. Examine all four tombstones, then return to the main area. Enter the top left room and check the tombstone. Choose the fourth set of letters, then the first, then the second. Go back to the main area and take the lower left door down to the third basement. Stand one space below the chest there and walk down one square, then walk right to find the secret passage leading to the growth egg.

That's it for treasure for now, so go back to the main area and take the center door again. Flip the switch in the room past the first turtle to raise the water level enough to reach the other side (again, via turtle).

You'll find a pair of chests and a save point. The right one just has an ordinary weapon, but the right has a monster-in-a-box that's actually a miniboss. It acts exactly like the whelk from the very beginning of the game, complete with its retractable head. However, it's not very strong, and it has one big difference from its predecessor: it can be insta-killed by the chainsaw.

Head up to find Darill's memorial, along with...

+++++

Boss - Dullahan
HP - 23450
Weaknesses - Fire
Immunities - Absorbs Ice

This boss loves to use the various level-based magic, like Lv.? Holy, along with tier 3 elemental spells like Blizzaga. Celes should always be using Runic. Always. If you need to heal, wait for the boss to cast something so your spells don't trigger the Runic. As long as you keep absorbing his magic, it's a very simple fight. Use consumables in place of healing magic if you have to.

+++++

Enough of the rough stuff. Go through the passage and get your new airship! Do be warned that you may encounter Deathgaze while flying, but if you have

Celes use Runic, he's not that tough.

Secondly, note that now that you have the airship, you can pick up any of the wayward party members in any order. The ones listed here are simply the order I used. It's neither the best order nor is it required that you follow my route. And in case anyone's readying their e-mails, there is no best order, I just went after the party members I liked best first (with the exception of Locke, it's best if you have two full groups for him).

4f-3. How Terra Got Her Groove Back

I profusely apologize for that title...

The game puts you near Maranda, but ignore that for now. Fly over to Mobliz. Enter the house where the wounded soldier used to be, in the northwest corner of town. Follow the dog that appears to a secret passage behind the bookcase. Watch the cutscene, then before you leave, rearrange your party. You're going to want your two strongest in the two middle spots.

+++++

Boss - Humbaba
HP - 26000
Weaknesses - Poison
Immunities - Absorbs Lightning

There are two parts to this fight. The first is with your regular party, which should kick Humbaba's ass handily. The second is after he uses Humbaba Breath and blows away two of your party members. Terra will then step in as a permamorphed Esper, and Humbaba gains a few new tricks. He'll start casting Thundaga and 1000 Needles, which, as the name suggests, will do 1000 damage to whoever it hits. However, as long as you keep everyone's HP above 1000 and let Terra nuke Humbaba (even better if she knows Bio) then it'll be a piece of cake.

+++++

Hurray, Terra's back! Now take your airship and land it on the Veldt (it's now north of Mobliz) with three party members, then fight around till Gau shows up. Bam, two people for the price of one. Before returning to Maranda, go to the solitary island where you first woke up. Check the beach for a Quetzalli magicite. One more stop.

At the top-center of the world map will be a decent-sized island with Narshe on it. Northeast of Narshe will be five trees lined up like a +. Enter the center and walk up to the house to find Duncan. If Sabin is in your party, he'll learn his most powerful Blitz, the Phantom Rush! Now head to Maranda.

4f-4. A Love Story, Starring Sir Thou

Enter Lola's house on the east side of town. Talk to her and read her letter from her boyfriend(?) then take it to the carrier pigeon. It'll fly off to your next destination, Zozo. Chase after it.

You'll find a man in a blue hat wandering around outside the inn. Buy the Rust Rid from him for 1000 gil and enter the pub. Climb to the top and exit via the right door, then climb up the stairs and use the Rust Rid on the left door to

Mt. Zozo.

Here, pick up the two chests and head down, then just keep going forward till you find two exits. Take the left for a gold hairpin (a very nice accessory), then right to proceed. From here it's a straight line to the save point, and a switch in the floor. Don't touch the switch unless you want to fight the Storm Dragon. Depending on your levels and magic ability it might be too tough at the moment, but I managed to take him down with everyone around level 32. If you want to try it, head down to the Optional Bosses section for a write-up. Otherwise, head down to find an odd room, and further on will be...Cyan!

No big nasties interrupt this reunion, thankfully. Cast Teleport to be back on the world map. Next up, fly over to the Veldt.

4f-5. Behemoth Down Below

Note: If you didn't wait for Shadow on the Floating Continent, he won't rejoin the party, but you can still visit the cave and get some treasure.

If you're using Gau, this would be a good opportunity to get some new Rages. Anyway, in the southwest corner of the plains will be a small mountain range with a cave. Head on in.

Follow the dog initially. There will only be one route for a while. When you walk through the wall, rather than go down through the first doorway, inch left and tap down till you find another hidden tunnel leading to an Ichigeki (this will be important later on). Now head down the first path till you reach a switch on the wall. Ignore it for now and pick up the chest down two sets of stairs. Now flip the switch to move the rocks above and open the path.

As you move along, you'll come to a save point. Use it. Now head through the lower left exit to find...Shadow? And something extra...

+++++

Boss - Behemoth King
HP - 19000
Weaknesses - Fire, Poison
Immunities - Absorbs Ice

Despite Behemoths being holy terrors in previous FF games, this one's not so bad. It will use high-level Blizzard spells, so if you have Celes, using Runic will save you a lot of pain. Now, the reason he doesn't have a lot of HP is because, once you kill him, he'll come back as an undead behemoth (and force your back party members to move to the front and vice-versa) which is easily dealt with. Remember the Phantom Train? One phoenix down will kill him.

+++++

You'll automatically drag Shadow to Thamasa. Leave and re-enter, and Shadow will be gone. Head southeast to the Coliseum (if you get lost, it's at the northwest tip of the world map) and bet the Ichigeki you found in the Veldt cave. You'll fight against Shadow. Beat him, and he'll rejoin.

4f-6. Portrait of the Artist as a Young Lady

Bonus points if you get the reference.

Fly over to Jidoor. Visit Owzer's mansion. Rather dark, isn't it? Try to go up to the first floor and you'll cause his diary to open. Spooky! Read it, then examine the lamp by the stairs to be able to reach the second floor. Check the painting of the lady in the lower left corner of the gallery to fight a quick battle. Defeat the two Misty's and you'll reveal a door.

Head through it and go downstairs. Keep walking till you get pulled into one of the paintings. Defeat the monsters and head up to the two doors side by side. Enter the left for a chest, then the right to keep going. Here you'll find three doors which won't open for you, but they will periodically open and close in rhythm. Enter the leftmost door, and you'll eventually fall into a room with floating chests. Stand beneath them to fight a quick battle, but none of the chests have very good loot.

Check the suit of armor on the north wall. You'll fight a still life, none too powerful. One Phantom Rush will kill it. Enter the door it reveals and use the save point. Ignore the left door and enter through the one on the right. Head up to find Owzer, Relm and...

+++++

Boss - Chadarnook
HP - 56000/30000
Weaknesses - Fire/Fire, Holy
Immunities - Absorbs Holy, Water/Lightning

Here we have two bosses in one. The painting will periodically switch between one of two faces. Try not to attack the goddess, it has more HP and isn't really a threat. The boss will use a Poltergeist attack, which will continuously drain your party's HP, but not by much. It will also use Entice, which controls a party member for one turn. Not very dangerous, unless it uses it on a heavy hitter who starts killing everyone else.

Either way, you only have to kill one aspect of the painting. It's far easier, therefore, to take down the demon side, which only has 30,000 HP.

+++++

After the battle you'll get Relm back, along with the Lakshmir magicite. Now, put Relm in your party and fly to the Serpent Trench. Go south from Nikeah along the Trench till you spot a tower surrounded by mountains. Enter, and Strago will rejoin the party! Yahtzee!

4f-7. Underground National Treasure

Okay, okay, that one's a bit obvious.

Now that you've rounded out your team a bit, it's time to hit one of the more difficult dungeons. You'll need to use two groups here, so make sure your members are split as evenly as possible to deal with random battles and bosses. If you need to train up everyone's magic, the best place is the desert south of Maranda. If you don't know Banish, run from the Slag Worm, it's very strong. Kill Cactaurs till you learn the spell, then use it against Slag Worms for fast magic AP and great XP. However, be very careful, as after you kill 10-20 Cactaurs, you'll encounter Gigantaur (a really big Cactaur) on a specific square in the southwest corner of the desert. It's easily avoided, though.

When you're all magicked up, you'll find the Phoenix Cave to the north of Tzen. It's a five-pointed mountain with a little hole in the middle. Try to land in the hole and you'll be asked to make two separate parties. Set them up however you like, though try to keep a balance between the physical and magical types.

Group 1 - Enter the cave and stand on the switch.

Group 2 - Enter the cave and walk through the new opening. Don't try to take the chest. Instead, go right and stand on the switch above the first.

Group 1 - Head up through the right opening and stand on the switch.

Group 2 - Go up past the retracted spikes, then right and down. Stand on the switch.

Group 1 - Walk past the spikes and head downstairs.

Group 2 - Go back up and left, then go down to the lava caves. Go down the vertical bridge and back upstairs. Stand on the switch to extend a bridge to a chest containing a wing edge, then go back downstairs and park yourself on the S-shaped bridge to the north.

Group 1 - Take the upper left bridge from the stairs and stand on the switch to raise three rocks from the lava.

Group 2 - Hop across the rocks. Walk along till you see a chest guarded by some raised spikes. Stand on the nearby switch.

Group 1 - Return to the stairs and take the lower bridge. Ignore the chest along the way and go up to the next room. Swing around to the left and return to the previous room and stand on the switch there.

Group 2 - Walk up to the next room. South of the switch will be a save point. Use as needed. Step on the switch to lower the spikes.

Group 1 - Go up to the previous screen and walk across the spikes. Go downstairs and hop across the rocks. When you have a choice of two sets of rocks, take the right path (the left leads to an empty chest) and throw the switch on the next screen to drain the lake.

Group 2 - Go left and stand on the switch.

Group 1 - Walk through the opening in the rocks and stand on the switch to the left.

Group 2 - Leave the switch and go through the same opening in the drained lake. Go downstairs and pick up the chest in the middle of the lava room for a ribbon. Take the northwest exit back upstairs and go left and down till you can hop across the rocks.

At this point you can use either group to fight the Red Dragon that's wandering around to the south on the lower level. Check the optional bosses section for strategies. The short version is, use water and ice spells, don't die. Have both groups stand on the switches, then just use one group to go down and find Locke.

After a few cutscenes, you'll receive the various treasures from the Phoenix cave, along with the above-named magicite itself. Now that you have Locke, you can get a few things in Narshe. Onward!

4f-8. What's a Wampa Doing Here?

And I'm back to Star Wars again...well, it's Square's fault anyway.

Narshe has long since been deserted, but with Locke in tow, you can get the treasure they left behind. To start, head up and have him open the door to the weapon shop. Go to the back room and talk to the old man. He'll either give you the magicite or the sword Ragnarok (your choice). The magicite lets you learn Ultima, the most powerful spell in the game. Choose the magicite, as you can steal a Ragnarok sword later in the game.

Now go up from the weapon and relic shops and enter the two-story house behind them. Talk to the old man in his deathbed to get the cursed shield. Have someone (doesn't matter who) equip that and a ribbon. The way it works is, you have to have that shield equipped and fight 256 battles (not in a row) to break the curse and turn it into the Hero's Shield. As long as the character who has it equipped is alive at the end of the battle, it counts as one toward your goal. The ribbon will negate most of the status ailments, except for the Countdown and you'll still be vulnerable to the various elements.

Anyway, there's nothing else here unless you forgot to clear out the storehouse in the World of Balance. Return to the entrance of Narshe, but don't exit yet. Go left and open the secret passage from the beginning of the game. From here, make your way to the Moogle hideout. You'll find Mog there. Pick him up and examine the patch of wall he was standing in front of to get his treasure. At some point you'll have to put him in your party if you want Umaro later.

Now head north to the mines and go to the battlefield where you defended the esper earlier in the game. The Ice Dragon will be flying around, easily avoidable if you don't want to fight yet. Check the Optional Bosses section if you do.

Past the battlefield will be the esper itself, and it's cranky.

+++++

Boss - Valigarmanda
HP - 30000
Weaknesses - Fire
Immunities - Absorbs Ice

Like the Ice Dragon, this birdie's weak against fire, so if you have Firaga, bust it out as often as possible. A Trance'd Terra will easily hit 9999, and Celes at that point in my game was matching her point for point. In other words, an easy kill.

+++++

Your reward is a magicite of the same name, which will teach all three -aga spells. The cliff will also break, allowing you to reach a new section of the mines. Hop on down.

See the dark brown spots on the ground? Step on those and you'll fall down a floor. Ignore the upper left door unless you want to fight three Tonberries in a chest. Take the center path and open the chest on the next screen for an X-ether. Walk up and right, then down through the door in the southern wall. In the next screen, climb up to the raised platform on your left and follow the

bridges around to the next screen. Ignore the first switch and pull the second.

In here, examine the skull totem to find some magicite, but you'll have to fight a yeti for it.

+++++

Boss - Yeti
HP - 17200
Weaknesses - Fire, Poison
Immunities - Absorbs Ice

What's with all the flammable bosses lately? This monster's really a cakewalk, especially if you've already beaten the Ice Dragon and Valigarmanda. Just one Firaga, one Phantom Rush and one...well, anything else, and he's pretty much dead. At one point he'll use a Green Cherry on himself and boost his stats, but at that point he has too little life left to make use of it.

+++++

Now, you can fight and win against the Yeti without Mog, but if you have Mog in your party, Umario will join you. If not, he'll just stand there waiting for Mog. Either way, you're done here, so use Teleport to get a quick exit. One last recruitment trip.

4f-9. Belly of the Beast

Now, take your airship and fly over to the island in the northeast corner of the world map. Walk around till you encounter a Zone Eater. Rather than fight this meddlesome monster, let it use its Inhale on you till it's swallowed your entire party. Instead of a game over, you'll make the remarkable discovery that Zone Eater's innards are really a complex dungeon.

Head down to the next screen. To the left will be a series of bridges you can leap to and from, and a few little green men walking back and forth over them. If you come into contact with them, they'll knock you down to the previous floor, so don't linger. However, do try to take the three treasure chests, as they contain some very nice items. Also, do get knocked off the bridges at least once, as you can pick up a couple chests down below.

Here will be a falling ceiling (inside a freaking monster...) with a few holes allowing safe passage. First run left to the first chest and stand below it. The square below the next chest to the left is also safe. Once the ceiling raises again, go from the second chest straight to the end (you should have time to pick up the last chest on the way).

In the next screen, hop across the open chests. Once you bounce over the two chests lined up vertically, hop down to the little island with a switch in the floor. Hit it to be able to reach the last chest. Now hop around the main path till you reach the door, and Gogo.

And that's it. Use Teleport to get yourselves out. The team is now complete. You can either head straight for Kefka's Tower (to be honest, you can go straight there as soon as you get the airship) or you can attempt a few optional dungeons and bosses for some good loot. The choice is yours.

4g. World of Ruin - Preparations for Battle

4g-1. Cyan's Nightmares

Make sure you have Cyan in your party for this, and ensure at least one person knows Banish. Fly to Doma Castle and head inside. In the castle's main hall, take the lower left door, then the right of two doors to find the inn. Rest, and odd events will transpire...

Save if you feel like it and head left and up. Take the leftmost door to recover a party member. Take the only door, then the upper right door, then the right door again to find your third party member. Walk through the door, then take the upper right route to find the final area. Try to go through the door in the center of this wacky platform to find the three (dream) stooges.

+++++

Boss - Curlax, Laragorn, Moebius
HP - 15000, 10000, 12500
Weaknesses - Ice, Water (Curlax), Fire (Laragorn) None (Moebius)
Immunities - Absorbs Fire (Curlax), Ice, Wind (Laragorn), Lightning (Moebius)

Just for reference, they're positioned from left to right, Laragorn, Curlax, Moebius. Take out Curlax first, as he can cast White Wind and heal his buddies. After that it's a simple procedure to take out the other two, whose magic is wholly unimpressive.

+++++

Look, an open door! Walk on through to find yourself in more familiar territory. Go left through the first car and wait for the in-game flashback to finish before entering the second. Here, you'll find a couple chests attached to a few puzzles. Pulling the rightmost switch will move a box blocking the nearby chest, but you have to have sprint shoes equipped to get it, because the box will move back after a certain time. The next treasure can be acquired by taking the lump of metal from the leftmost chest. Take it and throw it into the moving box to get a flame shield.

Exit left and go to the next car. Here, throw the first switch and go left to the third, picking up the treasure along the way. Throw the third switch, then go back and flip the first back up. Flip the second, then the first, then the third. Walk along the bottom of the screen to find another set of six chests. Make sure the rightmost top chest and the left and center bottom chests are closed while the rest are open, then throw the last switch to open a hole in the wall.

Leave the car and go left. Save in the next car if you want and enter the engine room. Leave to be in a new part of the game. Follow Cyan and take the south exit. Walk along till you re-enter the mines and immediately exit through the same way you came in. Follow Cyan across the bridge and...well, Magitek armor is pretty heavy.

Back in the castle, rest and save if necessary and head for the throne room. While I'd love to write up a boss section on Wrex soul, anyone who's played this game before knows the trick, and anyone who hasn't...well...

Cast Banish until the two soul savers are sucked up. That's it. You win, the dream ends and everyone lives happily ever after. But first, return to the

throne room and pick up the magicite. That's all, you're done here.

4g-2. Even More Underground Adventures!

Fly over to Figaro Castle and have the engineer move it underground. When it gets stuck, tell the engineer to stop and head right to the prison. Leave via the open prison cell to find...more caves!

In here, go right and down (take the chest along the way) and exit to the lower right. Cast Float on your party, then open the chest to find...

+++++

Boss - Master Tonberry
HP - 22000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - Absorbs Water

This sucker's tough. He'll counter big attacks with Traveler, which does 1800 or so damage to a single person. His physical attacks are nothing to scoff at either, and they become more powerful as he moves closer to your party. You have to kill him before he gets too close, or he starts annihilating your party with one-hit kills. At one point he'll alter his defenses, which means some magic will start doing zero damage. When he's about to die, he'll cast Quake, but if you had Float on your party before you started, it'll just kill him.

+++++

From the chest, go left and through the wall. Grab the other chest in the center of the room before leaving to the left. In this screen, ignore the stairs going down for a moment and snag the two treasures along the outskirts of the room. Now take the stairs down. Rest/save and go up the left stairs to find an ancient castle...

Rather than go in the main door, enter the little side room to the right, then either of the two openings to the left. Make sure you're fully healed before opening the chest on the left...

+++++

Boss - Samurai Soul
HP - 37620
Weaknesses - Poison
Immunities - None

If you have Locke, make sure to Steal from this guy. Otherwise, the battle doesn't really start till he gets low on life. He'll toss out water scrolls which do maybe 900 damage to the whole party, and maybe hit you for a decent amount. Keep throwing out Bios, and when he gets low, he'll start smacking you around a bit. His Ashura will do ridiculous amounts of damage, around 7500. An instant kill unless you're severely overleveled. He'll also start hitting the whole party with an attack that deals 1750-2000 damage to all. However, with enough Bio spells on him, he'll take 1000-1500 damage per tick, which ended up killing him for me.

+++++

Now enter the big double doors and go up until you find Odin's statue. Examine

it to get his magicite. Now, stand on the right throne and move down five steps, then press A to open a passage elsewhere. First, enter through the opening that's second to the right along the north wall for a couple chests. Return to the throne room and go through the opening along the right wall center. In here, examine the sparkling bookcase, which will trigger a mini scene if you have Terra along. Check the bucket at the other end of the room to get another item, then go down the stairs.

In this little hall, the Blue Dragon will be flying about. Avoid or fight him as necessary. Examine the statue of the queen, and your Odin magicite will become Raiden. Fortunately, you can learn Meteor from a different magicite, and Raiden is a stronger esper as far as battle use goes.

That's it for the ancient castle. Unfortunately, you can't use Teleport here, so you'll have to walk back to Figaro Castle. Speak to the engineer to get the place moving again.

4g-3. Revenge of the Hidon

Back to Star Wars again...

For this little jaunt, take Strago and Relm to Thamasa. A cutscene will occur, and the little mountain on the island north of Thamasa will suddenly have a cave. You'll have to bring Strago along for this one.

Once inside, it's rather dark. Walk up and step on the little circular thing to be teleported elsewhere. The chest here wants coral. 22 pieces, to be exact (it doesn't really have to be exact, just at least 22). Unfortunately, the teleporters are entirely random, so there's no way to tell where you'll end up or give directions to that regard. Equip a ward bangle to cut down on random battles, or if you have Mog, use the molulu's charm to eliminate them entirely. Once you have 22 or more pieces of coral, warp till you find the chest again and feed it.

Once the chest vamooses (it's a word!) go up to find Hidon. Before the battle, cast Haste on your party.

+++++

Boss - Hidon
HP - 25000
Weaknesses - Earth, Fire, Holy
Immunities - Absorbs Poison

The Erebus that are with him are weak to earth as well, so if you have Quake, cast it to rid yourself of them all at once. Once they're gone, Hidon will (eventually) cast Grand Delta, Strago's strongest Lore, so be sure to keep him (Hidon, that is) alive till then. Otherwise, it's not a difficult fight, especially if you've been through the ancient castle.

+++++

After the cutscenes, you'll automatically be dumped outside Thamasa. That's all for Strago and co.

4g-4. The One Tower

I swear, the section titles just get cornier and cornier...

Err, that is, fly to the fanatic's tower surrounded by mountains where you found Strago. Before traversing this toppling tower, make sure you have a few things:

1. Ensure you have four reflect rings, and that everyone has one equipped. These can be purchased from South Figaro (among other relic shops) if you don't have enough.
2. Have Mog for the molulu's charm, or have a ward bangle equipped.
3. Absolutely make sure you have Reraise from the Phoenix magicite (if you haven't found Locke yet, do it now).

With those preparations made, enter the fanatic's tower. The only command available to you in this place is magic. Likewise, the monsters can only use magic, and they all have permanent Reflect status. While random encounters here give good magic AP, it's best to just avoid them entirely with Mog if at all possible. You can't run from anything here, so obviously it ends up being a drain on your MP.

Make sure you enter every room you see, as they all have treasure. In the first room, examine the spot to the right of the chest to open a new room one floor down. After that, continue on up the tower. Be warned, though, that the third room you come across will contain the Holy Dragon as well as treasure. The rest of the tower is smooth sailing, such as it is. At the very top, enter the small room to receive the Soul of Thamasa, a very powerful relic. When you exit, however, you'll have to fight to leave...

+++++

Boss - Magic Master
HP - 50000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - None

It is absolutely imperative at least one person in your party knows Reraise, otherwise you will lose. This boss is, surprisingly, not in a permanent Reflect status, so you can toss spells onto him. However, he will use a Barrier Change ability every time you attack him (or if he bounces a spell off you) and alter what element he'll absorb. This can be a pain in the ass, since he can change it so he absorbs fire, attack your party with Firaga and reflect it back onto himself. The way to stop this is to cast Berserk on him.

Now, the trick is, when this boss dies, he'll first cast Ultima on you. This will, naturally, do several thousand damage to your whole party and, in all likelihood, kill you dead. If you have Reraise, no problem! Just cast it on whoever and they'll come back to collect the magic AP and move on. If not...

There is a longer, slower method of killing you can do. It involves using Osmose and just eating (or reflecting) whatever spells he throws out till he runs out of magic. This is of course very long and very boring. Quicker to use Reraise.

+++++

Unfortunately, you can't Teleport down off the tower. Chug those ethers and elixirs, it's a long way down...

4g-5. A Brief Intermission

This particular part is just for the story. Create a party with Sabin and Gau and visit the lone house northwest of the Veldt and west of the dinosaur forest.

When you enter, you'll be treated to a series of cutscenes involving...well, everyone, but centered on Gau. Enjoy.

4g-6. Training For the End

Now, all that's left is Kefka's Tower. Let me just say that it will involve three full groups, so that's 12 people you have to make ready to fight the big one. With that in mind, there are a couple good places to train up espers and levels.

The first is the desert south of Maranda. You'll encounter only two enemies: the Slag Worm and the Cactuar. The latter can be killed in one shot by special attacks such as Phantom Rush, anything Thrown by Shadow, Cyan's Bushido, etc. Magic won't hurt it, though (however, Strago's Lore: 1000 Needles will kill it).

The Cactuar will give a whopping 10 magic AP per kill, making it a great little bugger to give everyone whatever magic is needed. The other monster, the Slag Worm, should be slain with Banish. It will counterattack almost everything else, but it's highly susceptible to instant death magic, making it a quick 1881 XP and 5 magic AP.

The place to train levels is the dinosaur forest, north of the Veldt. The whole thing is shaped like a dinosaur's head (or perhaps a dragon...) so it's pretty easy to spot. Here you'll fight Tyrannosaur and Brachiosaur. The former isn't too hard to kill if you've completed the optional content already, though they're very strong for optional monsters, and they can cast Meteor. The latter, the Brachiosaur, can cast Ultima, making it very deadly. However, it also has a very, very rare chance of dropping a Celestriad. This absurdly powerful relic will reduce the cost of all magic to 1 MP. So with this and the Soul of Thamasa, you could dual-cast Ultima for a measly 2 MP per turn.

Now, before you enter Kefka's Tower, make sure not only your favorite team is ready, but everyone is. As there are already FAQs for certain parts of this training, I'll refer over to those. Partly because the content's already been written by others, partly because I'm a lazy bugger.

1. Get as many Rages for Gau as you can.
2. Acquire as many Lores for Strago as possible.
3. Make sure Sabin knows Phantom Rush.
4. Ensure you have enough equipment to gear up everyone before going in.
5. Make sure everyone's around level 35-40 or so.
6. Make sure at least one person in each group knows Ultima, Curaga, Arise, Hastaga, and as many support spells as you can manage.
7. If you got the cursed shield from Narshe, break the curse to turn it into

the paladin's shield. The best way to do this is to fight battles on the solitary island, as they're over very soon. Or keep switching it between party members as you master espers and raise levels.

8. If you skipped any of the dragons, go back and kill them so that only two remain. The last two are in Kefka's Tower.

9. Try and kill the optional bosses (Gilgamesh, Leviathan, Gigantuar and Deathgaze) for their magicite. Some have new magic you can use.

10. Check the Coliseum FAQ and try betting some elixirs/rename cards to get miracle shoes or other strong relics and armor:

<http://www.gamefaqs.com/console/snes/file/554041/29048>

You can easily get seven genji armors (one for each person who can equip them) and a few genji shields for good measure. If you've got the time to spare, try to get a Celestriad relic by either fighting Brachiosaurus or through the coliseum (see the above FAQ for details).

4h. Kefka's Tower - Take Down the Clown

When you're ready, fly over to and land on Kefka's Tower to begin a cutscene and the divying of your forces. It doesn't really matter who goes in which party for the most part, all three will be subject to multiple boss battles. However, there is one boss who will use Strago's Lore: Force Field on the path taken by party #1, so stick him there if you want it.

My party setup:

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Shadow	Terra	Cyan
Relm	Locke	Edgar
Strago	Celes	Setzer
Mog	Sabin	Gau

Let's get started.

- Group 1 -

Take the conveyor belt down and take the hypno crown from the chest before going inside. Snag the chest here and walk along till you run into an obstruction.

- Group 2 -

Head down and inside. Take the minerva bustier and go down. There will be two exits. Take the north one to find a pinwheel, then take the southern. You'll end up in...a bathroom? Enter the leftmost cell to uncover...Ultima Buster.

+++++

Boss - Ultima Buster
HP - 55000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - Absorbs Earth, Holy, Poison, Water, Wind

With all his elemental immunities, your best bet is Ultima spam. He has several

party-wide damage spells like Flare Star, Quake, and more. Cast Float either before or during the battle to eliminate damage from Quake (which heals him, by the way) and keep pounding him till he disintegrates.

+++++

With Ultima dead, exit south and keep walking. When you come across two tubes, take the left tube to find the proper exit. Once outside, take the conveyor belt down and head around to the left to find a chest with force armor. After, take the door leading left into a pile of garbage and stand on the switch to open the way for your first group. Go back outside and enter the door to the right. Walk up till you find a dragon.

+++++

Boss - Gold Dragon
HP - 32400
Weaknesses - Water
Immunities - Absorbs Lightning

In the original FF3 for SNES, you couldn't exploit this dragon's elemental weakness unless you had Strago in the party. Now, thanks to Leviathan, you can chain-cast Flood with no worries. Alternatively, if you haven't beaten Leviathan yet, switch to Ultima. Naturally this dragon will bust out a series of lightning spells, so thunder shields are a big help. Don't worry if you don't have enough, though, its spells won't one-shot you unless you're severely underleveled.

+++++

With the dragon dead, take the northern door and troop your way up till you reach a switch. Plant yourself there and switch groups.

- Group 3 -

Walk down till you find a chest and a door off to the left. Pick up the treasure and go through the door to find a couple more little items, then return outside. To the south you'll find another door. Take it and head up after opening the chest inside. Here, go left to find a save point. Use it if you want, then walk left till a boss falls on you...literally.

+++++

Boss - Inferno, Ketu, Rahu
HP - 30800
Weaknesses - Lightning
Immunities - Absorbs Fire, Ice and Lightning respectively

Much like the boss at the end of the mine cart sequence back in Vector, this guy has two arms with which to hurt you. He'll use primarily fire-based attacks to start, and the left arm (Rahu) will use a party-wide lightning attack if the right arm (Ketu) is down, and vice-versa (Ketu will use ice). If all three are up, they can use Delta Attack, so it's best to take out one or both arms with a quick Ultima before single-targeting the boss.

+++++

Use the save point if you need to, then exit south. When you're outside again, walk down and left to the door. Examine the sparkly chest left of the door, then take the conveyor belts up to get the rainbow brush. Enter the door and

walk along till you encounter...a dragon!

+++++

Boss - Skull Dragon
HP - 32800
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - Absorbs Poison

No, Phoenix Down will not work on this guy, nor will any of the coinciding spells. Instead, pound this guy with Firaga. If you don't have Firaga, use Holy. The former does more damage, though (7500-8000 versus 5000 for Holy). The dragon will use the prerequisite death spells like Doom and whatnot, but you can pretty much chain-cast Firaga and torch him in a couple rounds easily.

+++++

That should be eight dragons, so with them all dead, you'll receive the Crusader magicite. Yahtzee! Now, take the northern door and follow the path till you can step on the right switch. Change it up again.

- Group 1 -

Walk down and keep moving forward till you reach the outside again. The chest to the left along your way contains a pinwheel, and the door to the north will lead you back to your buddies. Walk through the now-open door to the north and go left from the switch. The way back will be closed off, so exit south. Switch to group 2 and step away, then change back and shove the weight onto the switch. Do the same with group 3 and have them all stand on the three switches inside.

- Group 3 -

Before going up, exit south and hit the switch outside to open the way for your other groups. Now go up twice to find a boss.

+++++

Boss - Guardian
HP - 60000
Weaknesses - Lightning, Water
Immunities - None

Though it's weak against water, Thundaga will do more damage than Flood. This boss has a similar array of attacks as the various mech enemies you fight in random battles. It can also use a series of status effects such as confuse and slow. Feel free to blow all your MP in this fight, since when the Guardian dies, it leaves a save point.

+++++

Use the save point, because the next batch of bosses are no joke. Exit north and keep walking till you run into...a statue. Okay, more than a statue.

+++++

Boss - Demon
HP - 58000
Weaknesses - Poison
Immunities - Absorbs Fire, Wind

Don't hold back here. This guy is not one to be reckoned with. His Metal Cutter will hit the whole party for around 1000 damage, then he'll follow it up with Firaga for 1800-2000. Any kind of armor that reduces or absorbs fire damage is good here. Though be warned he can also use Aero and Southern Cross, both of which do a lot of damage by themselves. Keep everyone topped off at all times, because anyone under 1800-2000 HP can be one-shotted by Firaga without protection.

+++++

With the first of the Warring Triad dead, go up and use the save point inside, then drop down the hole and stand on the switch.

- Group 1 -

Go down and take the new door to the left. Eventually you'll run into another of the statues.

+++++

Boss - Fiend
HP - 63000
Weaknesses - Holy
Immunities - Absorbs Ice, Poison

This boss likes to use Absolute Zero and related ice-based attacks. He can freeze your party members, which can't be removed via Esuna or remedies. You'll have to cast Fire on your party members to thaw them out. If you put Strago in this group, make sure not to kill Fiend until he uses the Force Field spell.

+++++

With the second out of the way, use the save point. Go up to the next room and stand on the switch.

- Group 2 -

Like the first group, exit south and take the right door up to the last of the Triad.

+++++

Boss - Goddess
HP - 44000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - Absorbs Holy, Lightning

This is a bit of a break, since the Goddess has much less HP than the other two. You also get to start the fight by surrounding the boss, so you get a free round to open a bit. However, this mostly-nude lady is still a threat. Her Thundara does around 1800 or so, and her Thundaga can fry someone if they're not at max health.

+++++

With the last one dead, move up to the final switch, BUT BEFORE YOU ACTIVATE IT! Ensure your four preferred and/or strongest characters are equipped with the best armor, the best relics (Celestriad and Soul of Thamasa) and ready for some hardcore killing. Now, activate the final switch to be taken to Kefka

himself.

After all the cutscenes, it's final battle time! You'll be asked to put together a lineup consisting of all three parties in order from 1-12. When one person dies and they aren't raised before the fight ends, they'll be replaced by the next person in the lineup at the start of the next battle.

Put your best team up first. Don't be afraid to use things like Megalixirs here if you need them. If Locke isn't in your

+++++

- Part 1 -

Boss - Visage, Short Arm, Long Arm
HP - 30000, 27000, 33000
Weaknesses - Fire, Water, Wind respectively
Immunities - None

Keep one person healing at all times. His physical attacks are incredibly strong, and hit as hard as the Triad's spells. Your best bet is Ultima spam, preferably from someone with a Celestriad so you don't waste MP for later. Buff up your party with Hastaga and such here, as they carry over into later fights.

- Part 2 -

Boss - Power, Magic, Machine, Tiger
HP - 28000, 41000, 24000, 30000
Weaknesses - Poison, Earth, Lightning, Ice respectively
Immunities - None

This section will begin by casting Hastaga, then go to work on wearing you down. Rather than high-damage attacks, it likes to debuff you in various ways, like using Dispel to remove your buffs and casting Slowaga, Absolute Zero (which can freeze you) and other annoying spells to ruin your day. Due to its varying weaknesses, continue to spam Ultima and keep your party members up. Be ready to unfreeze your party members, and heal them when the boss uses his 10-Hit Combo attack. If the attacks are centered on one person, they can and probably will be killed. Also be aware these four can cast Reraise on one of their bunch, so one will have to die twice.

- Part 3 -

Boss - Lady, Rest
HP - 9999, 40000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - None

While Lady is, in fact, weak against everything, she also absorbs...everything. So really, she has no weakness. Rest will cast Meltdown, damaging everyone and healing Lady. If Locke is in your party, DON'T attack Lady! Use elemental spells or physical attacks to take out Rest, then let Locke steal from Lady, as she holds the Ragnarok weapon. Steal the Ultima Weapon from Rest as well. If Locke isn't in your party, just kill them as per normal. Be warned, though, that Rest can use Trine when low on life, which will inflict bad status effects. He will also counter his death with Repose, an instant-death ability, so if you want to keep your main four for the last leg, cast Reraise on everyone.

- Part 4 -

Boss - Kefka
HP - 62000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - None

Okay, where'd the clown suit go? For starters, his Heartless Angel ability reduces all party members' HP to 1, so that needs to be healed straightaway. He can also counter with his own Ultima, dealing at least 2200 damage to every party member, so if you aren't high enough to survive that...well, let's just say you're dead anyway.

There is a quick and dirty way to do this, which involves a Morph'ed Terra equipped with a Soul of Thamasa and Celestriad. Start by casting Quick, then just spam Ultimas till he croaks. She should be doing 9999 damage per Ultima, which will take him out rather nicely.

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And that's it! Enjoy the cutscenes and the ending credits, you've beaten the game! Well, most of it. Next up, the Dragon's Den!

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5. Optional Bosses
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5a. The Eight Dragons

The dragons can be done in any order, and can be fought as soon as you find them. They each have their own element and level of difficulty, and some are downright nasty.

5a-1. Storm Dragon

The first dragon you're likely to meet is at Mt. Zozo. The Storm Dragon is one of the harder dragons because there's not much you can do to mitigate the wind magic it possesses. The Storm Dragon is found about halfway through the mountain, near the first save point you encounter. There's a switch on the floor that will open a chest on a ledge containing the dragon (don't ask how it got in there in the first place...) It will then fly around the room. Simply stand in its way (on the save point is a good spot) to start the fight.

+++++

Boss - Storm Dragon
HP - 42000
Weaknesses - Lightning
Immunities - Absorbs Wind

This guy's got the full arsenal of wind magic. It will use Cyclone, Aero, Wind Slash, and has a pretty strong physical attack. As the battle starts it will mainly use Wind Slash, then as it loses HP it will start casting Aero (if you have Strago in your party, he'll learn it) then Cyclone, which will reduce all

party members to near-death.

The best way to start out is to summon Zone Seeker, who will put Shell on your entire party. Then start tossing out the strongest Thunder-based spells you have, and powerful skills like Phantom Rush and whatever else you're packing. Make sure to keep everyone above 1000 HP, because Aero can do 1000-1200 damage to your entire party in one shot.

+++++

5a-2. Earth Dragon

The Earth Dragon is actually very easy, and if you're having trouble with the Storm Dragon, it's a good beastie to cut your teeth on. Take a quick side trip to Jidoor and buy four angel wing relics for your party. Have everyone equip one and you'll be set.

You'll find the Earth Dragon at the opera house. Talk to the Impresario on the balcony, then enter the top-right room on the second floor. Flip the second switch to the right to be dropped onto the stage by the dragon itself.

+++++

Boss - Earth Dragon
HP - 28500
Weaknesses - Water, Wind
Immunities - None

If you have the angel wings equipped, you'll be permanently floating and thus immune to the Quake and other earth-based attacks the dragon tosses out. This is only part of the battle, as the Earth Dragon has an attack called Honed Tusk which will do a sizable amount of damage to a single target. It's best to put your entire party in the back row regardless of who they are, because someone in the front row will take 2-3 thousand damage from a single attack. When in the back row, it will only do about 1000 damage. Keep everyone well above a thousand HP and keep pounding away.

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5a-3. Red Dragon

You'll find this sucker in the Phoenix Cave, near the end. When your teams converge, you'll find him south of there on the lower level, protecting a chest with a dragon horn inside.

+++++

Boss - Red Dragon
HP - 30000
Weaknesses - Ice, Water
Immunities - Absorbs Fire

Obviously whatever gear you can get that'll protect against fire will be useful here. It's highly recommended you don't attempt this without at least a little fire protection, or really high HP levels. The dragon will use such attacks as Southern Cross, which does about 2000 damage to the whole party, along with

Fireaga and Flare (of course), each of which does about the same.

Other than making sure you stay alive, just bring your best ice and water spells and let him have it.

+++++

5a-4. Ice Dragon

The Ice Dragon's no pushover, but it's made much easier if you find Locke first. Not that Locke specifically is this guy's weakness, but the Phoenix magicite and Firaga make it an easy battle.

+++++

Boss - Ice Dragon
HP - 24400
Weaknesses - Fire
Immunities - Absorbs Ice

If you have Firaga, this guy is toast. Terra and Celes tend to do 1/4 of his life or more in one shot. However, the dragon still uses high-damage ice spells like Absolute Zero and Blizzaga against your party, which tend to hit for 1000 damage minimum to everyone. Flare, despite sounding fiery, doesn't do nearly as much damage as Firaga, though it's still your best bet if you don't have Phoenix yet.

+++++

The Ice Dragon will drop a force shield, which isn't as great as it sounds.

5a-5. Blue Dragon

Despite the D&D blue dragons being lightning-based, this one is water-based. You'll find him in the basement of the ancient castle, in the same hall with the stoned queen (not as bad as it sounds).

+++++

Boss - Blue Dragon
HP - 26900
Weaknesses - Lightning
Immunities - Absorbs Water

As expected, his attacks include Tsunami and a number of other party-wide damage effects. If you haven't learned Thundaga yet, Thundara will suffice, though it'll be about half as effective. Still, as long as you have a dedicated healer keeping everyone up, you can keep on tossing out lightning spells and Phantom Rushes (where applicable) till he goes under.

+++++

Your reward is the Zantetsuken, and safe passage to the stony queen.

5a-6. Holy Dragon

The Holy Dragon is located in the Fanatic's Tower, in the third treasure room.
Very easy to find, if not to reach.

+++++
Boss - Holy Dragon
HP - 18500
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - Absorbs Holy

It's actually best if you remove your reflect rings before this battle. The Holy Dragon will bounce his Holy spells off you and hit himself, thus healing him. The Holy Dragon is also the only monster in this tower that isn't in a permanent Reflect state, so you can toss spells onto him at your leisure. If you happen to know Ultima, a couple casts will kill him easily. Otherwise, just toss out your best spells, but save some MP for the final boss of the tower.

+++++
You'll receive the holy lance, a very nice weapon for Edgar or Mog.

5a-7. Skull Dragon

The Skull Dragon is located in Kefka's Tower. Your third team will be the one to encounter him. Having Firaga and/or Holy is highly recommended.

+++++
Boss - Skull Dragon
HP - 32800
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - Absorbs Poison

No, Phoenix Down will not work on this guy, nor will any of the coinciding spells. Instead, pound this guy with Firaga. If you don't have Firaga, use Holy. The former does more damage, though (7500-8000 versus 5000 for Holy). The dragon will use the prerequisite death spells like Doom and whatnot, but you can pretty much chain-cast Firaga and torch him in a couple rounds easily.

+++++
Your reward is the muscle belt. Not exactly stellar, but it's something.

5a-8. Gold Dragon

Also in Kefka's Tower, your second group will fight this dragon. Armor that can absorb or nullify lightning is recommended, though not required.

+++++
Boss - Gold Dragon
HP - 32400
Weaknesses - Water

Immunities - Absorbs Lightning

In the original FF3 for SNES, you couldn't exploit this dragon's elemental weakness unless you had Strago in the party. Now, thanks to Leviathan, you can chain-cast Flood with no worries. Alternatively, if you haven't beaten Leviathan yet, switch to Ultima. Naturally this dragon will bust out a series of lightning spells, so thunder shields are a big help. Don't worry if you don't have enough, though, its spells won't one-shot you unless you're severely underleveled.

+++++

Your reward is the crystal orb, which boosts your max MP by 50%. Very nice if you don't have a Celestriad available.

5b. Deathgaze

Deathgaze can only be found when flying around the World of Ruin in the airship. He is not a random battle, but instead on a particular square in the world. Which square, you ask? It's random. It resets every time you enter or land the airship, and there is absolutely no way of telling exactly where he is.

The only recommendation I can make is to point the airship due north, then turn ever so slightly either left or right, then just fly forward. You should be tilted in such a way that you cover the entire world...eventually. Yes, it's long and slow, but the reward is well worth it.

+++++

Boss - Deathgaze
HP - 55555
Weaknesses - Holy, Fire
Immunities - Absorbs Ice, Poison

It's very important that none of your party members are at a level ending in 5 (25, 30, 35, etc.) Deathgaze will open every battle with Lv.5 Death, which means an instant kill for anyone at those levels. He will also use tier 3 elemental spells (the -agas) which can be painful, and Death, which often doesn't work. Using Celes and her Runic can help a lot.

If you have Sabin's Phantom Rush (and you should as soon as you have the airship) then use him and any other three. Other preparations for the fight should include buying up several holy rods from Thamasa. Use them as items for big damage.

Unfortunately, Deathgaze will often flee from combat, which means you'll have to search the world yet again to find him (argh!) Fortunately, his HP rolls over to each new encounter. Say, for example, you hit him for a combined total of 25000 damage in the first encounter. When you meet him a second time, he'll only have 30555 HP left. Between Phantom Rush and the holy rods, you shouldn't need to fight him more than 2-3 times.

+++++

When you defeat Deathgaze, you'll be rewarded with the Bahamut magicite. This will teach you Flare and let you use Bahamut's Mega Flare. These two will be extremely powerful if you kill off Deathgaze as soon as you get the airship.

5c. Gilgamesh

First off, you'll need to make 500,000 gil. This is easily done in the desert south of Maranda. Next, go to Jidoor and talk to the blond guy outside the auction house. Start the auction and buy the Excalipoor when it shows up (it might not be up for sale at first). Bet it in a Coliseum match and Gilgamesh will appear after you defeat the initial monster.

+++++

Boss - Gilgamesh
HP - 38000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - None

This guy's incredibly strong. Even in the back row, his physical attacks will do 1000 damage. Front row, 3000. He'll also various blue magic like Aero, Stone, Aqua Breath, etc. Not only that, but he can do a jump attack. As if that weren't enough, when he's low on life he'll do a series of special attacks such as Sword Dance and a thrown weapon that does 9999 damage to one person.

Basically, you're going to want everyone in the back row, cast Hasteaga, cast Protect and Shell on everyone, and hit him with the best you've got. Flare can do a lot of damage here, so make sure a couple people know it. When he leaps into the air, make sure everyone's at full health, because he'll do about 2000 damage to whoever he lands on. Finally, when he casts Protect and Shell on himself, use Dispel to make the rest of the battle that much easier.

+++++

You'll receive the Gilgamesh magicite, which teaches Quick and Valor, both powerful spells.

5d. Gigantuar

Gigantuar is found in the desert south of Maranda. You have to kill a number of regular cactuars before you'll find him. Rather than a random battle, he'll appear on a particular square in the southwest corner of the desert. Make sure everyone in your party has at least 2000 HP.

+++++

Boss - Gigantuar
HP - 30000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - Absorbs Water

This cactus is a pain in the posterior. He can't be hit by normal attacks or magic, and he'll counter special attacks such as Blitzes with Knockdown, which does 2000 damage to someone in the back row (much more for anyone in the front row). If that weren't bad enough, he'll do two 1000 Needles attacks in a row every turn, and he can hit the same person twice. If that person doesn't have at least 2000 HP, they're dead.

However, there's a trick to this fight. Take Sabin, Cyan, Shadow, whoever has a special attack that can normally hit a Cactuar. Before they attack, cast

Vanish on them. The resulting Knockdown will miss them completely.

Now, try to pay close attention to the damage you deal him. When he dies, he'll first cast 10-12 1000 needles in a row (I think) and pretty much wipe out your party. There are a few remedies for this. The first is to just cast Reraise on someone when you know he's about to die. The other is to have someone equipped with the dragoon boots and dragon horn, which will put them continuously in the air, and thus away from the resulting death. You can outlast the barrage, but it requires everyone to have a lot of HP (and some luck that he blasts two or three characters repeatedly rather than weakening everyone and then going in for the kill).

+++++

Your reward for this battle is the Cactuar magicite, which teaches Teleport, Vanish and Hastega.

5e. Leviathan

To find this sea serpent, first go to South Figaro and talk to the guy near the entrance. He'll talk about a sea monster he saw. Fly to Nikeah and take the ferry over to South Figaro. Along the way, Leviathan will attack.

This is probably the only battle where you're meant to fight as an imp. You'll see why.

+++++

Boss - Leviathan
HP - 32000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - Absorbs Water

Leviathan is much, much harder than other bosses before him. He'll always start the battle with a Tsunami, which deals 2000-2500 damage to your entire party. He'll also pop out Aqua Rake, El Nino, and occasionally do two Tsunami's back to back for a total party kill. In other words, this is not meant to be done the normal way, unless you're drastically overleveled.

The way to do it is with imp gear. Each piece will absorb water attacks, making Leviathan about as threatening as a sardine. Find and equip one piece, and you're set. The fastest I've found is to head to the dinosaur forest and fight in the plains outside the forest itself. The tumbleweed monsters have a saucer item you can Steal. They come in packs of four, so Steal from each one and bam, you've got your set. Once you're equipped, take the ferry and kick that snake's ass!

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6. Bonus Dungeons

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6a. Dragon's Den

The Dragon's Den is located north of the Coliseum, on a small island with a single tree. Attempting to land on the island will then prompt you to create three teams, ala Kefka's Tower. Like the tower, make sure to split your most powerful items amongst the three teams. Unlike the tower, there's no linear path for each team, so you can stack one team with all your heavy hitters and have them face a majority of the challenges while the other two teams handle switches.

Also like Kefka's Tower, there are several things you should do to prepare for the dungeon:

* Go through Kefka's Tower again and ensure Locke steals an Ultima Weapon and a Ragnarok sword from the Lady and Rest bosses during the third part of the final battle. These can be stolen over and over again as long as you save the game afterward, and because the bosses in Kefka's Tower don't respawn (besides Kefka) you can go through it much faster.

* Ensure all 12 party members you'll be using have Ultima, Curaga, Arise, Reraise, and most if not all of the support spells. If you prepared all this for Kefka's Tower, you're set for the Dragon's Den.

* Make sure everyone is at level 50-55, at least. The later bosses can one-shot party members below 4000 HP. And since I'll get e-mails about this, yes, you can go through the Dragon's Den at lower levels than 50 (or even 40) but if you're not trying to do a low-level game, 50+ is recommended.

* Play the Coliseum and acquire at least 4 marvel shoes, 4 growth eggs (for faster leveling), a snow scarf for Mog (if you're using him) and bet your Ragnarok swords to win Lightbringers. Ensure you have four sets of angel wings and at least two ribbons.

* And of course, make sure you're fully decked out in the best gear possible. Having at least four of each type of elemental shield is highly recommended. Also make sure you have four sets of gaia gear.

Because there are no set paths and your team of heavy hitters can always fight all the boss battles, I'll be referring to them as the A-team. Also, because most of the chests in the dungeon contain very mundane items, I'll just be covering the ones that are easy to get, or worth your while. When first starting off, most of the passages are blocked. Take a group into the right entrance and, inside, go right and up till you run into the Ice Dragon.

+++++

Boss - Ice Dragon x4
HP - 32000
Weaknesses - Fire
Immunities - Absorbs Ice

Make sure you have some sort of armor equipped that either reduces, nullifies or absorbs ice. The dragons will counter everything with some sort of ice-based attack, and if you toss out an area effect spell like Ultima, all four will attack. With that in mind, it's best to just equip armor that can negate the damage and start tossing out Ultimas. If you don't have enough, then it's easier to just nuke them all and resurrect your dead buddies after the fight.

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After defeating the dragon, go up and loop around to a lava-filled room. Head down the right side of the lava to get a hi-ether, then take the left end and

stand on the switch there. Change groups and take the left door into the caves. Take the right door into the lava caves and walk up, hop across the rock in the lava and park yourself on the switch.

Now, you can either take your third group into the left doorway and walk all the way around to fight the Storm Dragon, or you can take your first group along the same path and use them to kill the dragon. Either way, it has to die. Make sure you leave a group on the switches to the west and south of the Storm Dragon's little island.

+++++

Boss - Storm Dragon
HP - 62000
Weaknesses - Lightning
Immunities - Absorbs Wind

This guy can toss out various wind attacks that either damage for a high amount or reduce your HP to almost nothing, then follow up with a physical attack for at least 2000 damage to kill you. In other words, tough, but not as difficult as the Ice Dragons due to the fact that there's only one of him.

+++++

Whichever group took out the Storm Dragon, make sure they're off the island before you start moving everyone off their respective switches, or they can be trapped. Take that group and the one south of the island to the north and out the door off to your immediate right. The other group (the one standing on the switch to the left of the island) should enter the nearby door. Now, that group can reunite with the other two by going up and right. If you keep going right, you can enter a room where you can rest, as well as use the red light to swap party members between groups.

Now, when you're ready, choose your favorite team and go left and down from that room until you run into a dead end with two doors, one going up and one down. Take the north door to find the Earth Dragon.

+++++

Boss - Earth Dragon
HP - 58000
Weaknesses - Wind, Water
Immunities - Absorbs Earth

The key to this fight is preparation. Before you initiate the battle, make sure everyone is wearing angel wings, providing a permanent Float status. Second, put everyone in the back row. Using a regular Float spell doesn't work, as the dragon will counter it with 50G (bringing you down to earth), Magnitude 8 and Quake (the last part will do about 4000 damage).

With preparations in place, use Quick/Ultima spam and frequent Curagas to defeat this sucker. Don't even bother with physical attacks, the Earth Dragon has a high defense rating. Try to end it quickly, as he will enrage and attack more often, and deal more damage.

+++++

With that out of the way, take that group back to the save point. Rest up and have one of your secondary groups stand on the switch just outside the save point room. Take your heavy hitters over the little bridge that appears down,

past the first set of stairs and into the little doorway off to the right. You'll be in a setting similar to Daryl's Tomb.

Go up and press A to call the turtle and ride it to the other side. Go up and flip the switch, then climb the stairs and fight the dragon there.

+++++

Boss - Blue Dragon
HP - 57000
Weaknesses - Lightning
Immunities - Absorbs Water

For this fight, just make sure no one is wearing a relic that gives positive status effects, like miracle shoes. He'll weaken himself and change his status with one of your party, and if you're wearing something like miracle shoes, he'll gain permanent buffs. Either way, just keep tossing out Thundagas and Ultimas, this is a much easier dragon than the others.

+++++

Now, of the three seals released by the death of the Blue Dragon, two of them are worthwhile. The third, which unblocks a new passage in the lava caves, just leads to a couple chests which, again, contain very lousy treasure. So don't bother unless you're a completionist.

Anyway, take your team back to the save point and walk down and right from there to reach a new section of the caves. From the entrance go down, left, up and you'll find the Red Dragon.

+++++

Boss - Red Dragon
HP - 59000
Weaknesses - Ice, Water
Immunities - Absorbs Fire

Make absolutely sure everyone is wearing some sort of armor that absorbs or nullifies fire damage, because if you're not, you're in for a world of hurt. Actually, you're in for a world of hurt anyway. At the beginning of the battle the Red Dragon will make himself pretty much invincible. You cannot hurt him with any attack, no matter what it is. Magic, Tools, Blitz, nothing hurts him whatsoever. Instead, you have to survive.

He'll toss out some major spells like Flare Star and Meltdown, as well as Red Fang which is an instant kill (no damage, you just die if it hits) and a combination of Ultima and Flare close to the end of the battle. Everyone should be in the back row and Reraise should be on as many people as possible, because Ultima will, in all likelihood, kill a few people. Once he casts Ultima and Flare, though, he'll die.

+++++

With that one out of the way, bring your two other groups to this area. Take all three groups around to the right below the entrance. Have one group stand on the switch there, then take another group to stand on the switch just to the north and unblock the rightmost passage. Take your A-team up and right through said passage to an area reminiscent of Gogo's lair.

Go up the first set of stairs and then right from there. Hop across the chests

till you reach the dirt ground with a door to your right. Ignore it and go left. Hop down and quickly run down to find a Celestriad! Good stuff. Now get to the left of the first green guy and up hop to the next bridge. Stay to the right of the second green guy and keep going up. For the third green guy, you have to hop on his bridge and quickly run left and hop down to the bridge on the left side without getting hit. Trust me, it's a pain. Once you do it, though, you have a clear path (and a couple chests with mundane items) straight to...

+++++

Boss - Skull Dragon
HP - 61000/14000
Weaknesses - Fire, Holy
Immunities - Absorbs Poison

Make sure you have ribbons equipped to as many people as possible, as this dragon will toss out a lot of negative status effects. This is actually a very boring fight. While the dragon does have a proper HP count, it will just reincarnate until you drain all its MP. So, you basically have to chain-cast Rasp and Osmose till it dies, while curing anyone who doesn't have a ribbon equipped.

+++++

Defeating the Skull Dragon will, thankfully, create a shortcut back down so you can avoid hopping around the green guys again. Return to the Red Dragon room where you left the other two groups and set the A-team on the lower switch. Move the group that used to be there up to the northern switch and move the A-team back to the hopping room. Go up till you see two doors, one north and one south. The north is the second save room, and south is a new area. Rest up if you need to and exit south.

Loop around right and up till you spot a 4t weight. Shove it onto the switch and keep going up and right. Ignore the first passage and continue right till you see two pools of lava. Examine the bit of rock wall in between them to flip a hidden switch. Now go back left and take that passage up to a new area. Here, to the left you'll find a magus robe in a chest, and right will be...

+++++

Boss - Holy Dragon
HP - 55000
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - Absorbs Holy

If ever there were a time to abuse Quick/Ultima spam, this is it. The Holy Dragon will counter everything you throw at it with Curaga, healing it for 6500 or so. The solution? Ultima and any multiple attacks like someone equipped with a genji glove + offering combo. The dragon will count all eight hits as just one and only counter with one Curaga. The only other thing of mention is it likes to cast Heartless Angel, so that needs to be healed immediately, obviously. Otherwise, it's a rather easy fight.

If you want to cheese your way through it, however, you can always cast Reflect on the dragon. With Quick and a pair of Ultima Weapons on Locke, though, I didn't need it.

+++++

Now, from here you have to backtrack quite a bit. Return to the first save room and go south to the castle area where you fought the Blue Dragon. Ride the turtle across to the north and from there, go right till the path splits. Walk north here and examine all the tombstones. Just past them will be the Gold Dragon.

+++++

Boss - Gold Dragon
HP - 60000
Weaknesses - Water
Immunities - Absorbs Lightning

Hopefully you equipped your casters with some good weapons and/or brought some heavy hitters. The Gold Dragon will absorb every single spell cast, either harmful or beneficial, similar to the Runic ability. So basically, you can't heal in this fight except for items. The Gold Dragon will also counterattack everything you throw at it with a powerful hit (think 4-5k damage if you're in the front row). The solution? Have someone with high HP equipped with a pair of Ultima Weapons and a Master's Scroll cast Quick, then go to town. Depending on your HP, the battle may be over before Quick even wears off.

+++++

Now then, for future reference, to reset the turtle so you can use it to go right to left (or vice-versa) stand on the opposite side of where it's resting (i.e. it's waiting on the north end, stand on the south end) and hit A once to have it stop in the middle.

Anyway, take your A-team to where you fought the Blue Dragon and go right and up. There will be a gravestone to your right. Examine it and order the letters so it spells "THE KING OF DRAGONS." Now, assuming you left your other two groups in the Red Dragon's area standing on switches, take the team standing on the south switch to this area, because this next section requires two to fully exploit. It's not required, but the treasure here is actually worthwhile.

Take your A-team through first. Traverse the stairs till you find a door. Enter and go down and right. You'll come across a little sparkly thing on the floor. Step on it to be teleported elsewhere. Here, open the four chests for some great loot, but be warned the two on the right are monsters-in-a-box (with good loot, so fight them). South of here and to the left will be one more chest, and to the right of the four chests is another teleporter. Hop in and take the next port to the left. In this room, however, skip the next teleporter and go around to the northwest exit.

Once outside again, go right and down to get a ribbon, then go up and stand on the faint switch on the floor. Now take your second team to the open door (go right instead of left at the second set of stairs). When inside, go down to get a dueling mask, then up to find three chests. The center one is another monster-in-a-box. Just spam Firaga till they die. Afterwards, you're done here, so take both teams out.

Whew, there's only one boss left to fight. Take your A-team back to the second save point in the Zone Eater-like area (leave your secondary group at the gravestone), and enter the doorway to the left of the save room. From the entrance go left and stand on the switch underneath the wooden bridge. Switch to your team in the Red Dragon's room and walk them up to the same room as the A-team. Hop across the stone and go up and around till you find a save point. Save if necessary and go left to the next room, then up and stand on the switch. Leave this group there.

Now then, take the A-team back to the Blue Dragon's room. Set them on the switch to the left of the gravestone that reads "THE KING OF DRAGONS." Now take the other group in this room and move them through that door, and onto the switch in the room beyond.

Last step! Take your A-team back to the Zone Eater area and climb the stairs that appeared upon the defeat of the Skull Dragon. Follow the path left (don't hop onto any bridges) and you should find a doorway. Enter, and you'll find the final teleporter. Be forewarned that when you step inside, you WILL NOT be able to switch to your other two parties, so make sure they don't have any equipment, relics or espers equipped that will help. When you're ready, hop in the teleporter and walk up to find the master of this place...

+++++

Boss - Kaiser Dragon
HP - ????
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - None

This fight is half preparation, half skill, and half luck. First off, everyone should be wearing a ribbon and some form of armor that negates/halves all or most elemental damage (i.e. minerva bustier, force armor, paladin shield, etc.) Kaiser will hit you with multiple spells per turn, all of them extremely strong. The types of spells depend his barrier change, which is used several times throughout the fight. Whenever he uses the barrier change, watch what kind of spells he uses. Whatever type those spells are, that's his weakness. Any other type of magic short of Ultima will do zero damage.

Now, the luck comes in with his barrier change. If you have proper elemental protection and ribbons equipped, most of this fight is a breeze. However, if he changes to an ice barrier, he'll counter most attacks by freezing party members (which the ribbon does not protect against). If he changes to holy, he can use Hyperdrive, a guaranteed 9999 damage attack against one party member as a counter, as well as the appropriate holy-element spells.

Another of his little tricks involves a fire-like barrier where he'll cast Meltdown. Fire damage, right? Well, it'll heal him, as well as any other fire-type spells you cast. Instead, when he does this, use Thundaga.

As a final note, make sure you either have someone with more than 8000 HP or someone with Reraise on them throughout the fight, because Kaiser will cast Ultima upon his death, dealing around 7500-8000 damage to the whole party. I had Locke equipped with two Ultima Weapons and a Red Cap (+25% to HP total) at level 67 and he was the only one to survive this.

+++++

Upon your victory, you'll receive the Diablos magicite and a free ticket out of this joint! Yay! You'll also unlock the Soul Shrine west of Mobliz. Also, if you return to the Kaiser's lair, you'll find a new boss in his place. All the bosses will be dead the second time, so to get there quickly, take all three teams to the Blue Dragon's area and ride the turtle right-to-left over to the Zone Eater room. Take two teams to the second save room and from there, you can set up the teleporter to Kaiser's Lair.

+++++

Boss - Omega Weapon

HP - ????
Weaknesses - None
Immunities - None

This guy is tougher than the Kaiser Dragon, mainly because he uses non-elemental spells like Meteor and Grand Delta, so elemental protection won't work as well. He'll also counter every single attack you make against him with Freezing Dust, which...well, freezes you. Ribbons aren't as useful here, because he doesn't inflict nearly as many status effects as Kaiser (though he can use Delta Attack, so be prepared to use Esuna). Depending on the stage of the fight, Omega can use attacks like Blaster, Absolute Zero, and Omega Drive, the latter of which is a single-target non-elemental attack he'll use to counter attacks alongside Freezing Dust.

This fight either requires you to be over level 60 or so (or have over 6000 HP) or have a lot of luck. Omega doesn't always use Meteor or Grand Delta, but when he does, it deals 5000-6000 damage to everyone. Use Reraise liberally if your levels are low. Keep plugging away and he'll eventually fall, and fortunately, will NOT use Ultima in his death throes.

+++++

Your reward? Nothing but bragging rights. Which brings me to the next bonus dungeon...

6b. Soul Shrine

Soul Shrine is only unlocked after defeating Kaiser Dragon. Defeating Omega Weapon isn't a prerequisite, it's just for fun. Soul Shrine is located on the biggest island just west of Mobliz. Land there with your airship and your current party will go inside.

The Soul Shrine is really a gauntlet rather than a dungeon. You'll fight 128 battles in a row, often without a break in between. You'll encounter all manner of monsters from the game, as well as various bosses, including all the bosses from the Dragon's Den. All these bosses and associate monsters are the same as they were when you first encountered them, so the same strategies apply.

Obviously you're going to want some high levels for this place, as it'll help. Ribbons are pretty much essential. Status effects carry over from battle to battle, so preventing them is key. Celestriads aren't really necessary, as you won't need to blast your way through with Ultima for most fights, and in later battles, you can use Osmose against some monsters. They can help in extended fights like against Kaiser and the other dragons, though.

Anyway, you'll periodically be given a break from the action where you can enter the menu, change your gear/espers/relics, do whatever. You can speak to the ghost to restart the battles. But if you leave, you'll have to start the gauntlet over from the beginning.

So what do you get for all this? Mostly just bragging rights. Defeating Kaiser at the very end gives you the Master's Crown, which can't be equipped. However, you also get lots of nice items as drops, and if you bring Locke, you can steal some very nice stuff like Master's Scrolls, Soul of Thamasa and Celestriad from the Glutturns you'll fight. However, the Glutturns are incredibly strong, so taking the time to steal from them may cost you the fight. Make sure you're well-prepared.

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7. Acknowledgements
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Thanks to you, the reader and gamer, for taking the time to read my faq.

Thanks to Daniel(?) for reminding me about the secret jail in Locke's scenario.

Thanks to Square-Enix and the development team responsible for creating this masterpiece.

Thanks to CJayC and Gamefaqs for hosting it.

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