

ULTIMA I

The First Age of Darkness
Player Manual - Version 2.5.0

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1. Your quest

Explore Sosaria as the Stranger. Reach the deepest floor of all three dungeons, board the starship at the eastern peaks, destroy eight enemy vessels, and defeat Mondain to shatter the Gem of Immortality.

2. Begin or continue

Choose **Begin Adventure**, select a race, class, and sex, then press **Enter Sosaria**. Race and class adjust STR, DEX, INT, and WIS. Human/Fighter is a straightforward starting choice. The title screen keeps the new illustrated cover.

Continue Quest appears when a valid checkpoint exists. Beginning a new quest replaces that checkpoint when you enter Sosaria. Export an existing quest first if you want to keep it.

3. Saving your journey

Action	What it does
Automatic checkpoint	Saves during exploration, before encounters or launch, and after town transactions.
Save checkpoint / Ctrl or Cmd+S	Saves immediately in the world, town, or dungeon when no popup or encounter is active.
Save & Title	Saves and returns to the cover screen. If storage fails, the game keeps your current session open.
Export backup	Downloads the current safe checkpoint as a JSON file.
Import Backup	On the title screen, validates and restores a JSON checkpoint after confirmation.

What is preserved: character stats, supplies, equipment, explored terrain, creatures, conquered dungeons, town position, every visited dungeon floor and position, civic contracts, and the world waypoint.

Checkpoint limits: combat, camping popups, and space flight keep the last exploration checkpoint. Browser saves are tied to the browser and game address. Export before moving the game, switching browsers, or clearing browser data. A visible warning reports blocked storage.

Explore and survive

Use the sidebars or keyboard. The center remains your map.

4. Reading the interface

The left sidebar holds your character, health meter, equipment, exploration percentage, dungeon checklist, supply warnings, and journey log. The right sidebar has movement, actions, saving, help, and fullscreen. At narrow widths, scroll below the map for the panels.

5. World and towns

Control	Action
W / E	Northwest / northeast
A / D	West / east
Z / X	Southwest / southeast
Click an explored hex	Walk through known land. Stop walking pauses the route; the waypoint remains.
Enter	Enter a location or board the starship; leave a town.
B / T / C	Buy at a town shop / town services / camp in grass or forest.
Drag; + / -; Center	Pan the map; adjust zoom; return the view to your character.

Fog hides unseen terrain; explored ground remains dimly visible. Walking consumes food. Towns have six stalls: weapons, armour, food, magic, pub, and transport. Stand on or beside a stall and use Buy. Buy food before long expeditions. Camping restores health, consumes food, and risks an ambush.

6. Dungeons

Use **W** to move forward, **X** backward, and **A/D** to turn. Moving in either direction can collect treasure, trigger monsters, or use stairs. Enter uses stairs beneath you. Press V for the atlas, J for the journal, or Esc to confirm returning to the surface. The minimap records nearby explored cells.

Each dungeon is 3-10 floors deep. Reaching its bottom conquers it. Visited floors persist: opened chests, cleared monster tiles, and explored passages remain as you left them. Stairs arrive at the matching stairs on the neighboring floor.

Roads of Sosaria

Survey the land, plan your route, and keep a ration in reserve.

7. The world atlas - M

Open **World atlas** from the right sidebar, the journal, or the **M** key while exploring the world, a town, or a dungeon. It displays explored terrain, known landmarks, and creatures currently in sight. Hidden terrain stays hidden.

Control	Action
Click a hex / destination	Select a location and preview a shortest known-land route.
Arrows or W/E/A/D/Z/X	When the map has focus, move the selection between hexes. Enter sets a waypoint.
+ / -; scroll; Fit map	Zoom from 100% to 300%, scroll to pan, or return to the full overview.
Set waypoint	Remember the destination without moving the hero.
Walk this route	Start walking on the surface after checking the food estimate.
Walk / Resume	Continue toward your waypoint from the right sidebar.
Clear waypoint	Remove the destination and stop automatic walking.

Routes use explored, passable land only. Sea, mountains, and unknown terrain are excluded. The world wraps at all edges, so the shortest route may cross a map boundary. Gold outlines mark the selected route in the atlas; gold dots and an outlined target mark the waypoint route on the main map.

Provisions and interruptions

The preview lists steps, walking food cost, and remaining food. Starting a planned route requires one food per step plus one ration in reserve. Encounters can consume additional supplies. Automatic walking stops with one food left; manual movement can still cause starvation.

Encounters, manual movement, dialogs, Escape, Stop walking, and loss of browser focus pause automatic travel. The waypoint remains. Resolve the interruption, then select **Walk / Resume** to continue. Planning inside a town or dungeon does not leave it; return to the surface before traveling.

Exploration and saved waypoints

Selection and planning do not reveal terrain. World click-to-walk also uses known land. Approach the visible frontier with movement keys or short clicks to explore more. If no known route connects a destination, scout the missing connection.

Checkpoints retain the waypoint. Loading never starts walking automatically. Earlier saves load without a waypoint. The backup remains schema 3: v2.4 can read it, but does not keep the waypoint.

Towns and triumphs

Prepare for the road. Give your discoveries a purpose.

8. Town services and civic contracts

Press **U** or **T** inside a town or castle for services. An inn restores full health for **25 gold** with no ambush or food cost. Expedition restock fills food to **250**, charging 1 gold per 5 added food, rounded up. Services link directly to the shops and local contract.

Equipment shops preview the exact STR or DEX change. Equipped items and items with no stat gain are disabled. Existing training is retained. Food shops sell up to 50 food per purchase; near capacity, they sell a smaller bundle at 1 gold per 5 food, rounded up. Capacity is 999 food.

The contract ledger - Q

Open the ledger from the right sidebar, the journal, or the **Q** key. Its six contracts reward recorded progress. Accept and collect each reward inside the issuing settlement. Achievements made before acceptance already count, and each reward is available once per quest. The local contract appears first.

Settlement	Objective	Reward
Britain	Win 3 battles	80 gold + 40 food
Paws	Map 3 dungeon floors	100 gold + 50 food
Trinsic	Open 3 treasure chests	120 gold + 60 food
Yew	Reveal 128 world hexes	100 gold + 50 food
Lord British	Conquer 1 dungeon	200 gold + 80 food
Barataria	Conquer all 3 dungeons	300 gold + 100 food

The ledger lists settlement coordinates, progress, status, and rewards. Outside the issuing settlement you can review a contract but cannot accept or claim it. The sidebar counts completed contracts and ready rewards. Food rewards fill only the space remaining below 999; excess food is not banked.

Automatic transaction checkpoints

Purchases, inn stays, restocks, acceptance, and reward claims save immediately. If storage is blocked, your current session keeps the change and reports the storage problem. Close the dialog and export a backup before leaving.

Older v2.1-v2.3 saves load with all contracts available. Their recorded victories, treasure, maps, and conquests count toward these objectives. v2.1 records only its current dungeon floor and starts journey counters at migration. New JSON backups require v2.4 or later.

Steel and survival

Read the enemy. Choose your moment. Recover from setbacks.

9. Tactical combat

An encounter offers Fight or Flee. The battle panel announces the enemy action before each turn: **Strike**, **Heavy blow**, then **Recover**, repeating in that order. Damage ranges account for your defence. A heavy blow deals roughly 1.65 times normal damage. Recover restores up to 10% enemy maximum health instead of attacking.

Key / action	Effect and cost
Space - Attack	Deal a normal strike and gain 1 focus.
P - Power strike	Spend 2 focus to deal 1.8 times normal strike damage.
G - Guard	Take 70% less damage this turn and gain 1 focus.
M - Magic	Spend 20 food for intelligence-based magic damage.
H - Mend	Spend 15 food to heal up to 25% of maximum health before the enemy acts.
R - Run	40% chance to escape. On failure, the enemy takes its announced turn.

Each encounter starts at 1 focus, capped at 3. Focus lasts only for that fight. Buttons display their costs and disable unavailable actions. The enemy acts after your choice unless you win or escape. Victory grants gold and experience once; press Enter or Continue to resume exploring.

A useful rhythm: Attack to build focus, Guard against the heavy blow, then Power Strike or Mend while the enemy recovers. Watch your food: magic and healing draw from the same supplies used for travel.

Rescue and returning to the quest

Defeat or starvation brings you to a town with half maximum health and at least 40 food. You lose 10% of your gold, rounded down. Equipment, experience, explored floors, opened treasure, and conquered dungeons stay intact. A lethal failed escape and defeat by Mondain use the same rescue rules.

Select **Continue** on the rescue panel to record a checkpoint. Before that, reloading uses your previous exploration checkpoint. Rescue is recorded in the journal. Enter the town to resupply before setting out again. Successful escape from an ordinary dungeon fight leaves you on that floor.

Maps and memories

Persistent exploration and your expedition record

10. The dungeon atlas

Press **V** or select **Dungeon atlas** while exploring a dungeon. The enlarged map displays the current floor, your position and facing, stairs, and known treasure or monster tiles. Dark cells stay hidden until explored. Opening the atlas pauses exploration.

Symbol	Meaning
Arrow	Your current position and facing, or last recorded position when viewing another floor.
E	The entrance on floor 1.
Up / down triangle	Stairs linking adjacent floors.
Diamond / exclamation mark	Unopened treasure / a monster tile.
Square / dark cell	Known wall / unexplored terrain.

Use the floor buttons to inspect any visited floor of that dungeon. Historical maps show your last recorded position. Viewing a map never teleports or walks your character.

Route to down stairs and **Route to up stairs** highlight a shortest route using only explored, walkable cells. A route may pass known monsters. An undiscovered staircase cannot be selected. If no explored connection exists, the atlas tells you to explore more corridors. **Clear route** removes the highlighting.

11. Your journal

Press **J** or select **Explorer's journal** from the right sidebar. It records mapped floors, opened chests, combat victories, steps taken, known towns and castles, and recent dungeon milestones. Food and health advice helps you prepare for the next descent.

Each dungeon card shows known depth, conquest status, and buttons for its visited floors. Selecting a floor opens its atlas without changing your position. The journal can be used in the world, towns, and dungeons while no other encounter is open.

12. Persistent floors and older checkpoints

A floor is generated only on its first visit in a quest. Returning through stairs or leaving and re-entering the dungeon keeps its map, opened treasure, and explored cells. Entering from the surface starts on floor 1. **Leave dungeon** or Esc asks before returning you to the surface; your floor records remain intact.

v2.1 saves retain their saved floor; other floors and journey totals start recording as you play.

v2.2-v2.3 saves retain all exploration. Older saves start with contracts available. v2.4 saves retain contracts. Schema 3 is unchanged; v2.4 can load new saves but drops waypoints.

Beyond Sosaria

The starship, the final battle, and practical notes.

13. The stars and Mondain

After all three dungeons are conquered, the starship appears at world coordinates **28, 12**. The quest panel then directs you there. Enter boards it; Launch begins the space battle after an exploration checkpoint.

Flight control	Action
Hold W or Up	Thrust forward
Hold A / D or Left / Right	Rotate your ship
Hold X or Down	Brake
Hold Space	Fire
Escape	Retreat to Sosaria

The right panel also provides hold-to-use flight buttons. Destroy eight ships to confront Mondain. Defeat him in the final combat to end the First Age of Darkness. Losing a ship returns you to Sosaria. Reloading during flight or the final battle restores the checkpoint from before launch.

14. Help, fullscreen, and accessibility

Help opens a dialog and pauses world encounters and space flight while it is open. It does not start a quest or generate a new world. The dialog supports keyboard focus, Tab navigation, and Escape where dismissal is permitted. Fullscreen depends on the browser and embedding page permissions.

On-screen controls cover exploration and flight; browser keyboard support remains available. Dragging pans only the world and town maps. Use Center if your character has moved outside the current view. The game canvas automatically adjusts to the available viewport.

15. Backups and recovery

Keep a downloaded JSON backup for any quest you care about. If Continue is missing, confirm you are using the same browser and game address. If a save cannot be read, import a known-good backup or begin a new quest. Invalid checkpoints are rejected before replacing an active game.

A backup contains game progress only. The self-contained index.html includes its artwork and game code and can run offline. The ZIP also includes catalog assets, tutorial, release notes, and this manual.

Credits

Browser recreation by Calvin Robert Glomb, published by Tronsoft Games. Inspired by Ultima I, originally designed by Richard Garriott (Lord British). This is an unofficial recreation. See LICENSE.txt and docs/credits.txt for the full notices.