Assassin's Creed II is a 2009 [action-adventure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action-adventure_game) [video game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game) developed by [Ubisoft Montréal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubisoft_Montr%C3%A9al) and published by [Ubisoft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubisoft). It is the second major installment in the [Assassin's Creed series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassin%27s_Creed), and the sequel to 2007's [Assassin's Creed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassin%27s_Creed_(video_game)). The game was first released on the [PlayStation 3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_3) and [Xbox 360](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_360) in November 2009, and was later made available on [Microsoft Windows](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_Windows) in March 2010 and [OS X](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OS_X) in October 2010. Remastered versions of the game and its two sequels, [Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassin%27s_Creed:_Brotherhood) and [Assassin's Creed: Revelations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassin%27s_Creed:_Revelations), were released as part of The Ezio Collection [compilation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_compilation) for the [PlayStation 4](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_4) and [Xbox One](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_One) on November 15, 2016, and for the [Nintendo Switch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Switch) on February 17, 2022.

The game's plot is set in a [fictional history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_fiction) of real-world events and follows the millennia-old struggle between the [Assassins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Assassins), who fight to preserve peace and free will, and the [Templars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knights_Templar), who desire peace through control. The framing story is set in the 21st century and follows [Desmond Miles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desmond_Miles) as he relives the [genetic memories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetic_memory_(psychology)) of his ancestor, [Ezio Auditore da Firenze](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezio_Auditore_da_Firenze), to uncover the mysteries left behind by an ancient race known as the First Civilization in the hope of ending the Assassin-Templar conflict. The main narrative takes place at the height of the [Renaissance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance) in [Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy) from 1476 to 1499, and follows Ezio's journey as an Assassin while seeking revenge against those responsible for the death of his father and brothers. Gameplay focuses on using Ezio's combat, stealth, and [parkour](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parkour) abilities to defeat enemies and explore the environment. The game features a large [open world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_world) comprising several Italian cities, including [Florence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence), [Venice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venice), [Monteriggioni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monteriggioni), [San Gimignano](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Gimignano), and [Forlì](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forl%C3%AC), all of which have been accurately recreated to fit the game's historical setting.

Using a newly updated [Anvil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anvil_(game_engine)) game engine, Assassin's Creed II began development shortly after the release of Assassin's Creed. As part of the marketing campaign for the game, Ubisoft released a three-part live-action [short film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_film), titled [Assassin's Creed: Lineage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassin%27s_Creed:_Lineage), which serves as a prequel to the main story and stars most of the game's cast. During development, two chapters—titled The Battle of Forlì and Bonfire of the Vanities—were cut from the game due to time constraints, but were eventually released as [downloadable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downloadable_content) [expansion packs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expansion_packs) on [Xbox Live](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_Live) and later to other platforms. Additional in-game bonuses such as missions, outfits, and weapons could be redeemed through Ubisoft's [Uplay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uplay) service—a trend that would continue for most Ubisoft titles going forward.

Upon release, Assassin's Creed II received universal critical acclaim from [video game publications](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_journalism), with praise for its narrative, characters, world design, and improvements over the first game; however, the PC version was met with some criticism in relation to the [digital rights management](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_rights_management) system, and thus had the [always-online DRM](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Always-online_DRM) permanently removed. Considered one of the [best video games ever made](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_video_games_considered_the_best), it sold more than nine million copies within six months, and is frequently cited as the game that brought the Assassin's Creed series to mainstream popularity. The game spawned two direct sequels: [Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassin%27s_Creed:_Brotherhood) (2010) and [Assassin's Creed: Revelations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassin%27s_Creed:_Revelations) (2011), and a spin-off, [Assassin's Creed II: Discovery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassin%27s_Creed_II:_Discovery) (2009), all of which expand on Ezio's story while introducing new plotlines, characters, and locations. The next numbered entry in the series, [Assassin's Creed III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassin%27s_Creed_III), was released in 2012.