



REVIEWER'S GUIDE

PLUS

Drengin Fire Chili Recipe!

The Basics

Galactic Civilizations IV is the 4th installment of the popular space strategy game series from Stardock Entertainment.

This game is the result of years of thinking about the exciting innovations that have been occurring in strategy games in recent years and the feedback that has come from players and reviewers. As you play the game, you will - we hope - see that a lot of the requests and great ideas that have come from fans of the genre have made their way into Galactic Civilizations IV.

Our goal with Galactic Civilizations IV is to make the ultimate turn-based space strategy game.

Title	Galactic Civilizations IV
Platform	Windows PC (Windows 10, 11)
Release Date	APRIL 26, 1pm EST
Price (at release)	\$49.99
Developer / Publisher	Stardock Entertainment (www.stardock.com/games)
Homepage	www.galciv4.com
Genre	Turn-based (4X) space strategy game
Recommended Hardware	8 CPU core PC with at least an NVIDIA GeForce GTX 1080 / AMD 5700 or better.

Our story so far

Spanning nearly 30 years all the way back to its OS/2 release in 1993, the Galactic Civilizations series is both the best-selling and [highest-rated Metacritic](#) space strategy game series of all time.

Highlights of Galactic Civilizations IV include:

- Multisector maps
- Character-based abstraction
- Customization of the player's civilization during the game via Policies
- Galactic Challenges: New Prestige and Achievement features solve the "you know you're going to win but you still need to grind out another couple hours to get it" issue.
- Vast reduction of grueling micromanagement by separating the high-quality worlds from the low-quality worlds via the Core vs. Colony world dichotomy.
- Eliminating a single "main" campaign and instead making each play-through feel like its own campaign.
- Inclusion of a shareable mod system that is seeded with tons of high-quality art assets from Galactic Civilizations III (players won't feel like they have to wait for "DLC" to flesh GalCiv IV out; we make sure GalCiv IV starts out with a vast amount of content)

This guide is designed to help walk through what all this marketing-speak means.

Differences between this and "Gold"

You should absolutely judge this as if it were a shipping 1.0 game. It's certainly not a journalist's fault that these games are time consuming to review and thus we have to send you a 1.0 "release candidate" in order for you to have time to check out the game.

That said, here are some of the things we will be addressing between this build and release:

1. **The modding** features are coming in "hot". In this game, players can literally design their own ships (and even send them out for 3D printing!) as well as design their own civilizations and share them in our Metaverse. However, this part of the game needs a lot more polishing still and is likely buggy.
2. **Balance.** We are still adjusting the difficulty levels as well as tweaking resource outputs based on player feedback. Factory producing 3 industry units vs. 2 can make a huge difference in game pacing.
3. **Additional quest content.** We have more quests and other interesting events going in every day. These will keep going in until an adult steps in and stops us - however, we've locked the doors.
4. **Minor UI glitches.** There are a handful of dumb UI stuff like confirmation dialogs showing up under a window and a few other things that you may or may not run into.
5. **Multiplayer.** During our beta phase, we shared and received player feedback on several different multiplayer modes. For launch, we will be including the Arena style death match

that pits two players against each other on a map size that encourages early conflict. Other modes we'll add in after release include:

- a. Agenda - Each player receives a random victory goal for the game, and the first to achieve it wins.
- b. Survival - Human players start on a team together, but the AI continues to grow in power as the game progresses. All players will eventually submit, but you want to be the last one standing.
- c. Sandbox - Play a complete and classic game of GalCiv IV with your friends.

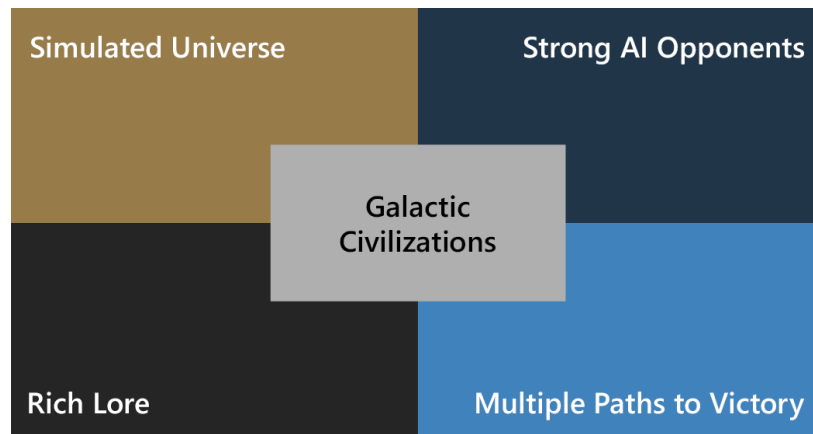
Tips & Tricks

1. For your first game, just use the defaults when setting up. Most players will do that anyway.
2. The game uses in-game advisors to help guide new players. You will probably want to follow their advice until you feel like you've got a good handle on a particular strategy.
3. You can use Ctrl-N to restart a map.
4. You can use the WASD keys to move the camera around.
5. Mouse-wheel will zoom in and out.
6. In the OPTIONS menu, you will see an INPUT button on the bottom. This will let you see the various keyboard shortcuts and reassign them (shockingly, GalCiv III did not have this feature).
7. **Left-click** with the mouse to select a ship and **right-click** to send them somewhere.
8. **Double-clicking on something will bring up its relevant screen or activate it (instead of going through a menu).**
9. **The TAB key** will always take you to the next thing the game thinks needs your attention.

What is Galactic Civilizations?

Galactic Civilizations is set approximately 200 years into our future. Earth has united after discovering the existence of alien civilizations and invented a faster-than-light technology called Hyperdrive. The games have focused on the exploration and expansion and inevitable conflicts that result of newly formed Terran Alliance and alien civilizations competing to take control of our sector of the Milky Way galaxy.

For almost 30 years, the Galactic Civilizations series has focused on these pillars:



Strong AI in a simulated universe

The tagline for the series has always been “Never the same game twice,” because under the covers the game takes place on a simulation that results in lots of interesting things happening each game.

This was a radical concept when the series was first released because it required the game to be highly multithreaded at a time when DOS games were the norm. This multithreading means the game is concurrently doing lots of things at once and also means that the AI can be exceptional because the AI can calculate its strategies, while the slow human player is taking their turns.

In-game “canon” having multiple paths to victory

Galactic Civilizations is not a war game. Most victories are not due to military conquest, but rather a combination of economic, diplomatic, and cultural power.

Players would then compete against AI-powered civilizations or other human players to forge a victory in our sector of the galaxy...

Things are about to change in a big way.

Introducing Galactic Civilizations IV

Every previous Galactic Civilizations game played in a single sector. Galactic Civilizations IV dramatically departs from this: Players now have *multiple* sectors available. Think of a sector as a single map with free-form movement. Galactic Civilizations IV allows players to have many different “maps” that are connected to each other via a “subspace stream”.

Strategy games have traditionally chosen their maps to either be free-form (Civilization, Endless Legend, Galactic Civilizations) or have a node-based map where planets (or stars) are connected via lanes (Master of Orion, Stellaris, Endless Space).

Galactic Civilizations IV combines the best of both: The enjoyable free-form movement with the strategic depth of space lanes.

Core Features

The key features of Galactic Civilizations are:

- Play as one of over a dozen different civilizations: from humans, to robots, to giant alien bug monsters
- Explore the galaxy, find new worlds to colonize
- Research new technology to give you access to new abilities
- Build up your planets to increase manufacturing and research capabilities
- Meet alien civilizations, negotiate treaties, trade technology and other goods with them
- Build alliances, fight wars, invade planets
- Use your technology to design new kinds of starships to counter the designs of your foes
- Find galactic resources and lay claim to them, allowing you to build more powerful and more effective ships and tools
- Win the game through conquest, research, diplomacy, culture, or prestige (new in IV)

Galactic Civilizations IV is a Massive Upgrade

The GalCiv series has changed a lot over the years, but here's a quick table to give you an idea of just how much has changed with GalCiv IV. To make this fair, we are sticking to features that would be "on the back of the box".

MAJOR FEATURE	GALCIV I	GALCIV II	GALCIV III	GALCIV IV
GALACTIC EXPLORATION AND FOG OF WAR	X	X	X	X
COLONY SHIP FOR COLONIZING PLANETS	X	X	X	X
TRANSPORT SHIP FOR INVADING PLANETS	X	X	X	X
STARBASES TO CLAIM TERRITORY AND BOOST PLANETS	X	X	X	X
STELLAR ANOMALIES TO INVESTIGATE FOR RESOURCES	X	X	X	X
PRECURSOR RELICS TO MINE FOR CIV BONUSES	X	X	X	X
ETHICAL DILEMMAS	X	X	X	X
HUGE GALACTIC MAPS		X	X	X
PLAY AS AN ALIEN CIVILIZATION		X	X	X
FREE FORM SHIP DESIGN		X	X	X
COMBAT VIEWER		X	X	X
STRATEGIC ZOOM		X	X	X
GALACTIC RESOURCES		X	X	X
CUSTOM FLAVOR TEXT PER CIVILIZATION		X		X
ASTEROID MINING SHIPS		X		X
ALIEN TRADE SCREEN		X	X	X
SPECIAL PLANETARY RESOURCES THAT GIVE BONUSES			X	X
PLANETARY ARTIFACTS TO USE AS POWERS			X	X
MULTIPLAYER			X	X
IDEOLOGY TREE			X	X
PIRATE HIVES			X	X
BLACK HOLES, STORMS, NEBULAE			X	X
CUSTOM CIVILIZATION BUILDER			X	X
GALACTIC BAAZAR MARKET			X	X
CUSTOMIZE MAJOR CIVILIZATIONS AT SETUP		X		X
LEADERS			X	X
CHARACTERS (PEOPLE WITH THEIR OWN STATS)				X
INCLUDED CIVILIZATIONS	8	12	10	18
CITIZENS (POPULATION PLANET REPRESENTED BY PEOPLE)				X
INTERNAL FACTIONS				X
SECTORS				X
POLICY SYSTEM				X
COMMANDERS				X
GOVERNOR CHARACTERS				X
MISSIONS (QUESTS)				X
MINISTER SYSTEM				X
MULTI-TURN COMBAT / INVASIONS				X
ON MAP BATTLE TACTICS (RANGE BASED ATTACKS)				X
EXECUTIVE ORDERS (DIRECT ON MAP COMMANDS)				X
PRESTIGE VICTORY CONDITION				X
GALACTIC ACHIEVEMENT SYSTEM (VICTORY QUESTS)				X
MASSIVE MODDIER CONTENT LIBRARY INCLUDED				X
BUILT IN MODDER LIBRARY				X

This is by no means comprehensive, and keep in mind: we're competing with GalCiv III (with 6 years of DLC and expansions!) here.

A Quick Walkthrough

To avoid this guide being too long, here's a link to a walkthrough that should get you going:

[The Galactic Civilizations IV Walkthrough](#)

Key NEW Features of Galactic Civilizations IV

Below are some of the features we think that players are going to really, *really* like.

Sectors

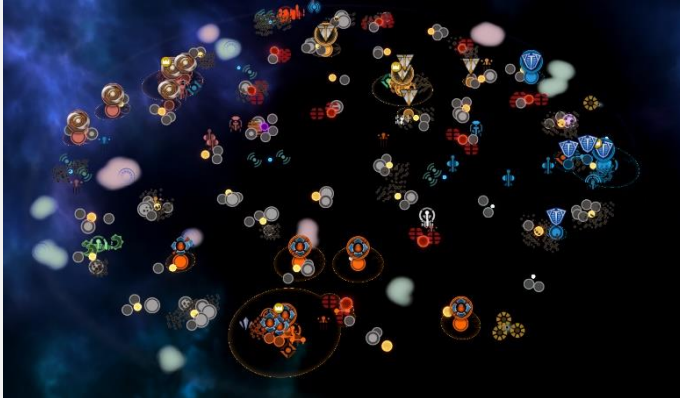
Players can set up the number of sectors and the size of their starting sector. Thus, a player who wants a “quick” game could just set up a single small sector to play in. A GalCiv fan who doesn’t like change could set up a big single sector and play it like that. But, for those who want to really feel like they’re playing in a sector...well, just look at this:



Here we can see Earth and the moon with its local shipyard. The shipyard is producing a new colony ship (“Curious Traveler”) to go out and explore.

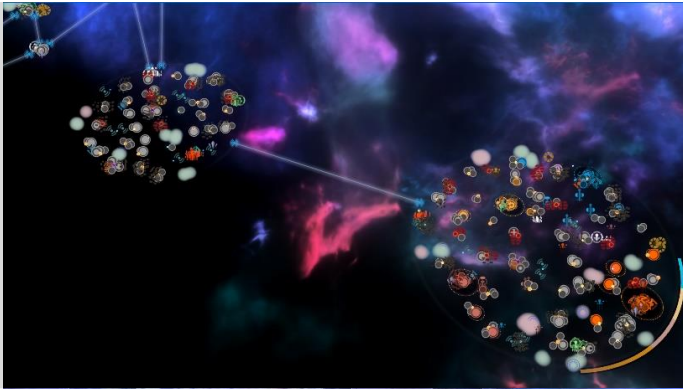


Now we’ve zoomed out and we can see our entire solar system - including the 9th planet, Artemis, discovered in 2031. We have set up colonies on Mars and Artemis already.



Now we zoom out and see the entire sector. This would be akin to a medium to large Galactic Civilizations II (or III) map.

At this stage we’ve already made contact with three alien civilizations, and there are a number of planets that are available for colonizing.



Zooming out further, we can see that there are actually other sectors out there.

These sectors are traversable via a technology called Subspace Streams. This means that there are two phases of the "colony rush" now because subspace streams have to be researched, then discovered, and then traveled.



Zooming out even further, we see that there are many such sectors out there. The UI changes at each level to indicate who the leading power is in each sector (being the leader of a sector generates additional prestige for that player).



And finally, we can see the entire Milky Way galaxy, containing lots of sectors with aliens and other unknown things in them.

Now, players could just set up a single sector and play a quick game on a "small" map. The goal with sectors, however, is to allow players to truly experience an epic story, all told through their decisions and choices throughout the game.

Characters

The previous section begs the question, “How long will these games last???” And the answer is: depending on your setup, possibly a very long time. That’s why there is no “campaign” mode. Every game is a campaign, and campaigns have characters.

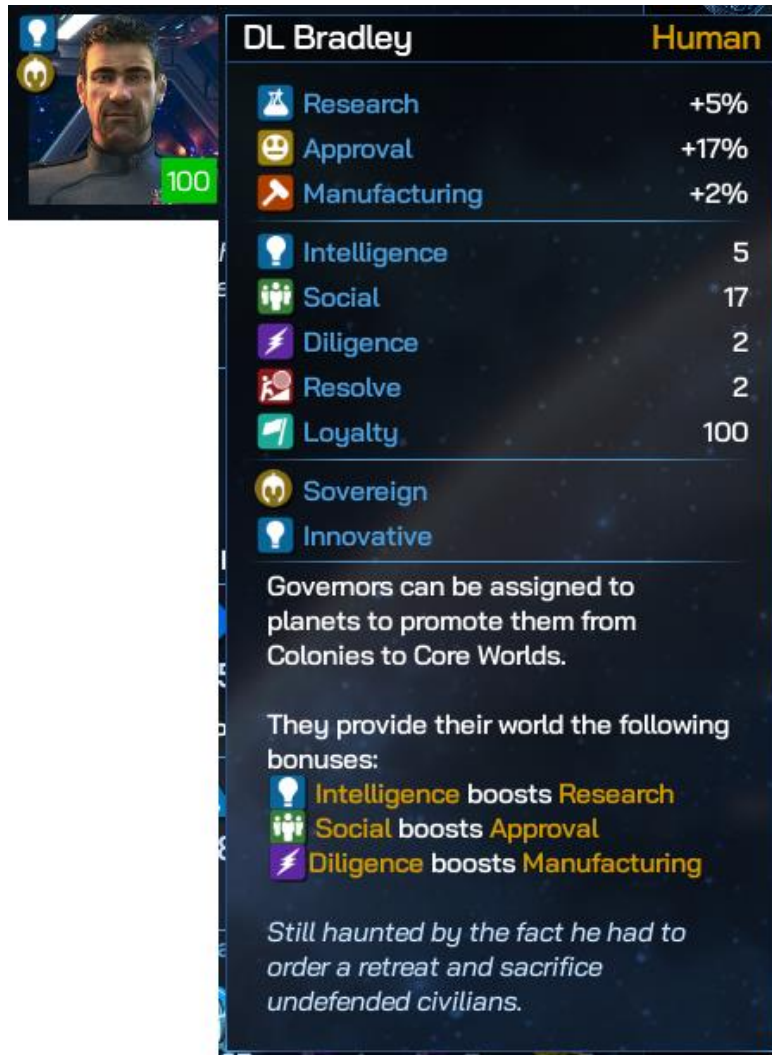


Figure 1: Based on what civilization you choose, you are a character with your own strengths and weaknesses.



Figure 2: Your citizens are characters



Figure 3: Each citizen is unique



Figure 4: Citizens are happy or sad based on a number of factors. A planet's production is literally multiplied by approval, so keeping people happy is important.

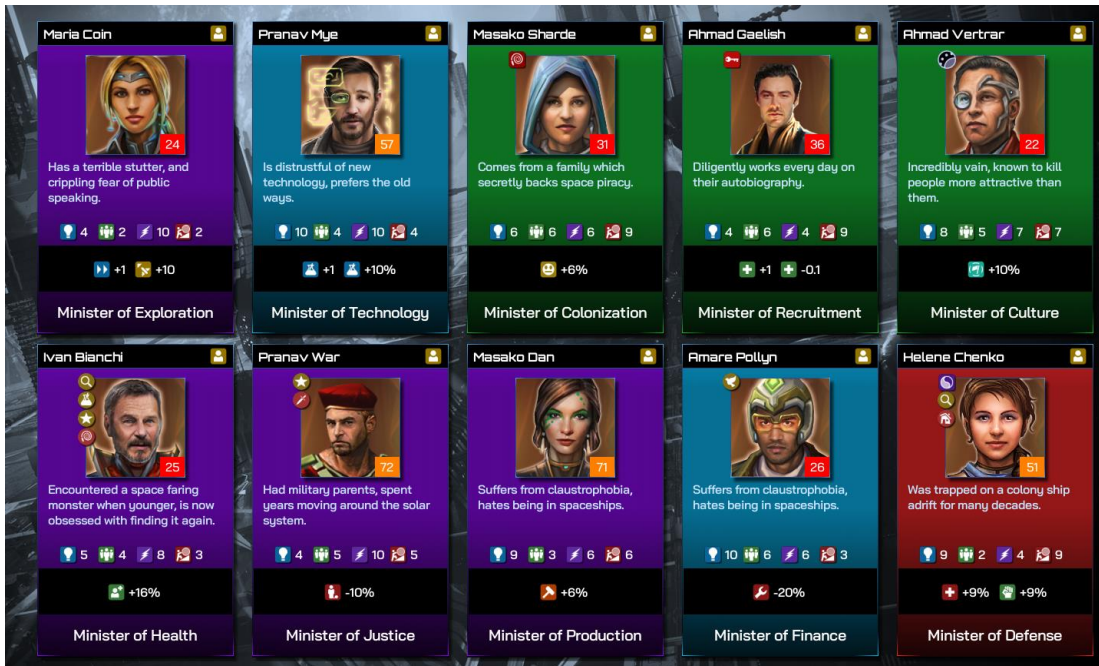


Figure 5: Over the course of the game, you can recruit (or promote) citizens to be leaders who can be put in charge of an aspect of your civilization. Each has a backstory.

Different jobs take advantage of different traits from a leader. Thus, it's probably not a good idea to put a fool in charge of your Technology ministry.



Figure 6: Leaders can be put in charge of planets. There is no "AI" automation of planets; instead, they give bonuses (or penalties) to the planet.

The loyalty of characters fluctuates and can be very helpful or harmful to your civilization. A disloyal and unhappy governor might just take their planet and corresponding colonies with them and start a new empire.



Figure 7: Characters can be diplomats. Send them off to be the ambassador to a particular world and hope that their skills help you.



Figure 8: Characters can be given command of flag ships in your fleet where their unique skills can be put into play.

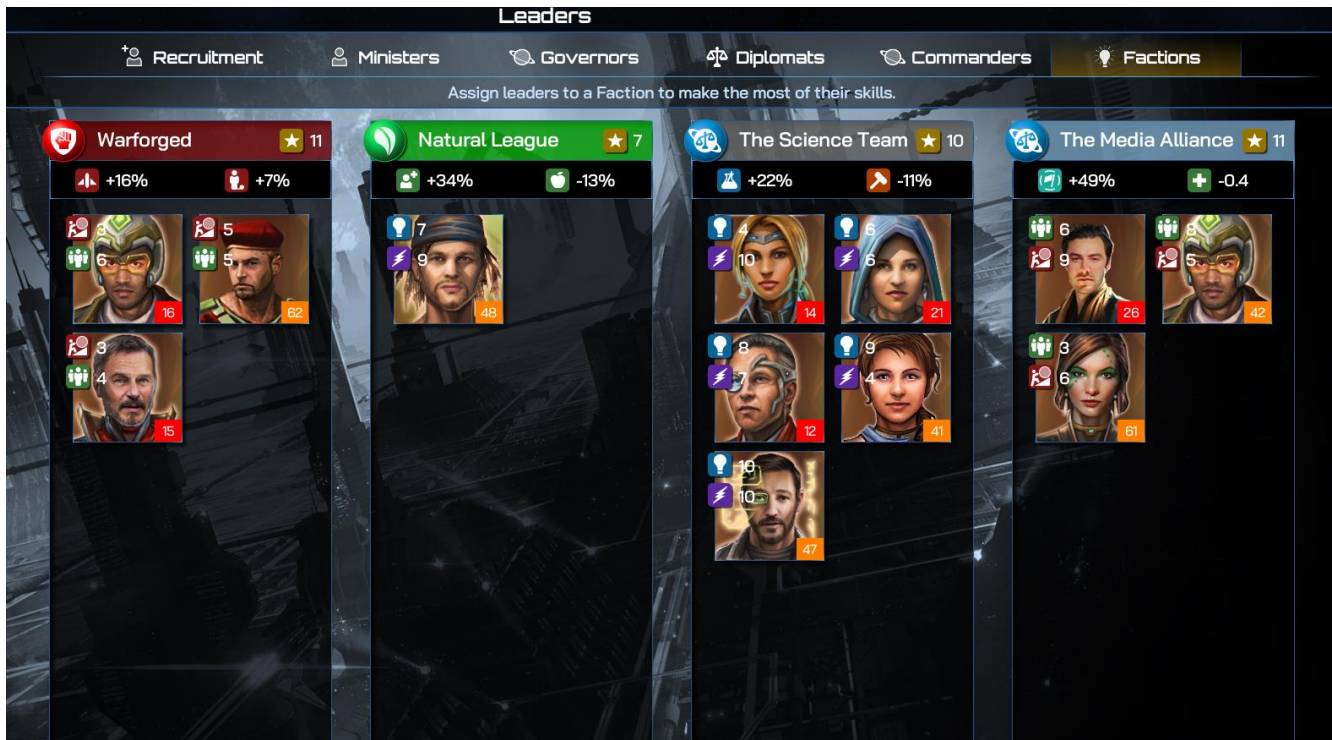


Figure 9: Leaders can be assigned to work with internal factions to help boost the good things they do and try to mitigate the bad things they do.

Each civilization has their own characters with their own perks and their own factions to deal with. Good luck with that.

Having so many different characters with their own backstories, combined with what civilizations you are up against, plus the simulated universe that the game runs on, you end up with each game being its own story.

Core Worlds

Another question someone will likely have is: this depth means a lot of micromanagement, right? Not so much. That's because unlike previous versions of the game, players only manage *core* worlds.

In most strategy games in this genre, players directly manage every planet or city in their empire. This can get extremely time consuming and boring later on. Games then introduce "AI governors" to handle it for them which tend to not be very enjoyable to use. **GalCiv IV has NO AI GOVERNORS.** The player directly controls everything. However, they don't have to manage nearly as much because of the core world concept. Here's how that works:



Figure 10: This is Ceti Alpha V. It sucks. Do you really need to manage it? No. This is where you send criminals or something and hope they don't get ahold of a ship.

Nearly all planets are pretty awful. So instead of managing dozens of crappy planets (which, ahem, is what players had to do in GalCiv I, GalCiv II, and GalCiv III) we instead simply output its resources to its *Core* world that is managed by you.



So, in a typical game, the player might have 7 core worlds late game and another 28 colonies. Each core world thus has, on average, 4 colonies feeding it.

In GalCiv III, the player would have been managing all 35 planets even though 28 of them were very low quality (which meant they used AI governors or something to manage those worlds or just got overwhelmed by micromanagement). Now, they only manage the 7 planets that matter while the others feed them. It's so much better.

Policies

Every civilization is designed to play differently. This is a great feature *in theory*, but the data we got back from Galactic Civilizations III works out like this:

Civilizations played by players:

1. Terran Alliance (humans) [79%]
2. Custom Civ [11%]
3. Yor [3%]
4. Other [7%]

I won't get into how depressing it is that only 11% even made a custom civilization. With a data set of around 1.4 *million* players, the results are pretty staggering – but, they are what they are.

So, what do we do?

If we can't get players to go see other play styles, we'll bring the play styles to them. This is where the policy system comes in.

Consider Turn 1:



Do I...

- A. Move twice as fast, but have terrible HP?
- B. Get a big tech buff at the start?
- C. Get a big population buff at the start?
- D. Get a generic buff (heart of the empire)?
- E. Get a big production buff, but increase pollution (which lowers food)?

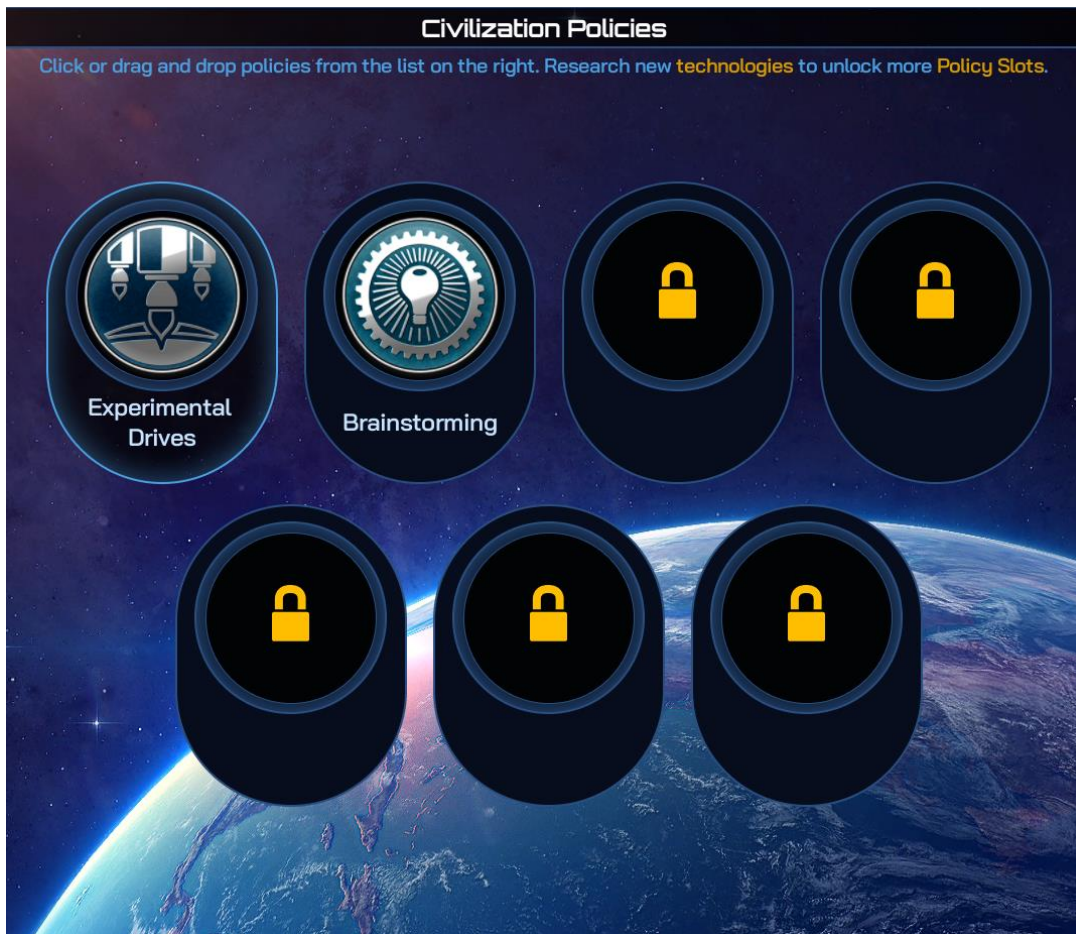


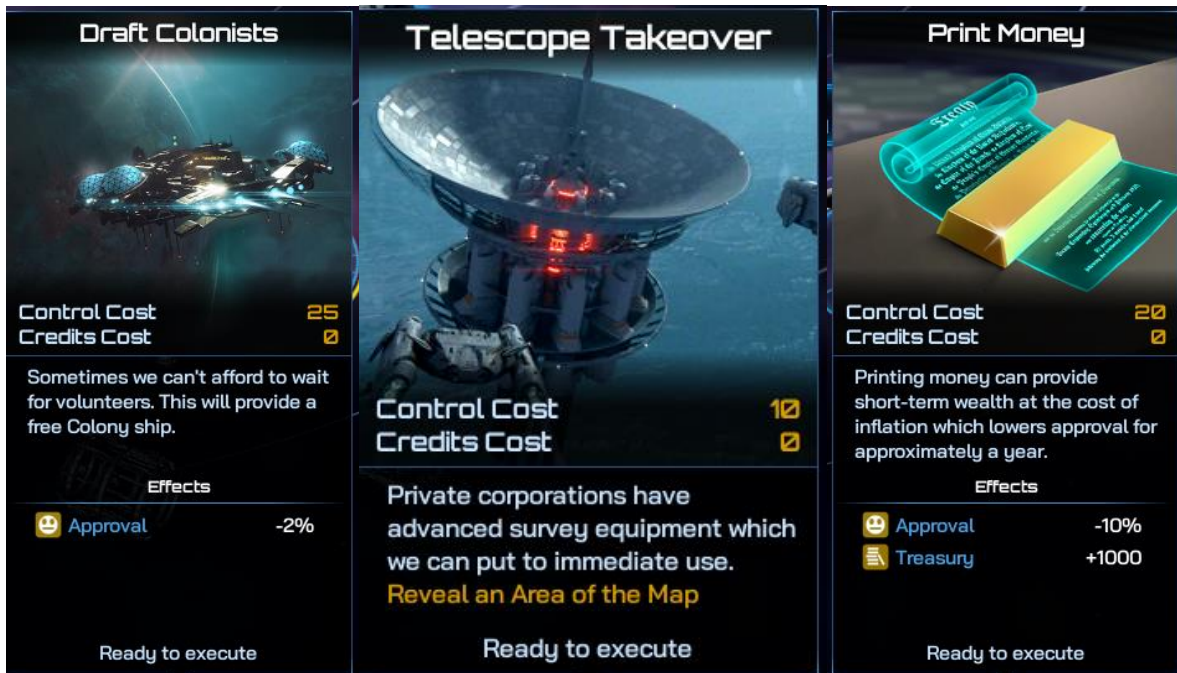
Figure 11: You have finite slots for policies so choose wisely

All these interesting choices would normally be a benefit for playing a particular civilization. Now, different civilizations are still very different and get unique policy options. But, knowing that most players are going to just play as the humans, we can let them really customize the play style once they get started in the game.

Executive Orders

GalCiv IV introduces a new resource: Control. It represents how much *direct* control you have of your civilization. At the start, only your home planet gives you control points (1 per turn). But over time, you will find ways to generate more.

Players can spend that control on executive orders such as:



As you research new technologies or experience other actions and events, you will get access to additional executive orders. Once used, they have a cooldown period that is different for each one.

New Ideology System

Originally, players could choose between good, neutral, and evil. Later, we renamed these to Benevolent, Malevolent, and Pragmatic.

In Galactic Civilizations IV, ideologies are much more nuanced and divided into 7 different categories. Each category has two paths.

Liberty	Authority
Innovation	Tradition
Compassion	Pragmatism
Equality	Opportunity
Secrecy	Transparency
Creativity	Cooperation
Harmony	Individualism

Players will gain *awareness* of a particular path through their actions and choices. Adopting an ideology into one of the tenets of your civilization comes through completing missions and other events.

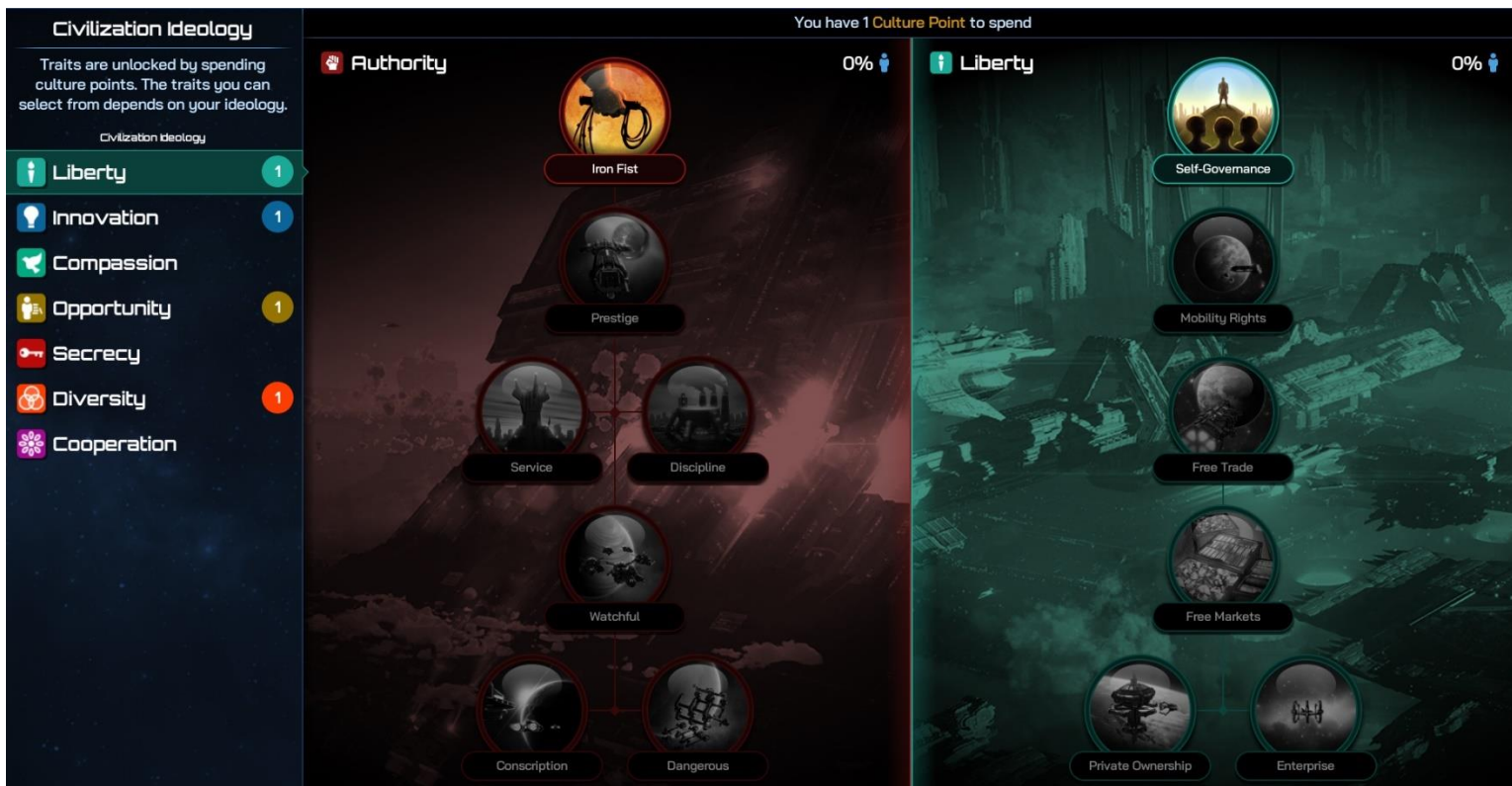


Figure 12: There are 7 categories each with two trees - a yin and a yang.

How different civilizations get along depends heavily on where they are ideologically. Adopting a given trait provides different benefits (and consequences).

Dealing with the “I am going to eventually win” problem

In every strategy game out there, the player reaches a point where they know they’re going to win but they are forced to play another half dozen hours to actually win with the preselected victory condition. How do you solve this?

The answer is through a new victory condition called Prestige. Prestige is less of a resource and more of a fancy schmancy way of us determining who is “gonna win”. After 30 years of making strategy games, we have a pretty good idea of knowing when someone is likely to eventually achieve victory in a given game.

We don’t, however, just give the game to the player who is likely going to win. Instead, we solve the problem with the new Galactic Achievement System.

Here’s how it works:

Let’s say you’ve been playing the game for 300 turns (about 5 hours of play) and you know you’re going to win but it’s going to take another 100 turns to do it (another 2 hours or so). Most players just quit the game when they know they’re going to win, but don’t want to grind through to a victory condition. Such a situation isn’t very satisfying. This is where Prestige comes in.



Figure 13: After a trillion years making these games, we have a pretty good idea of when someone is on the path to victory. But we can't just "give" the player the victory. Hence: Galactic Achievements.

First, the Prestige victory condition is always present, and you can see how you're doing on it.

Let's pretend that you're at 740 prestige out of 1,000. Not enough to win outright, but you know you're going to win eventually. So instead of grinding out the last 260 points you go to the new Galactic Achievements system:

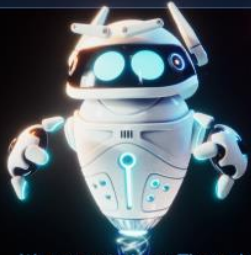
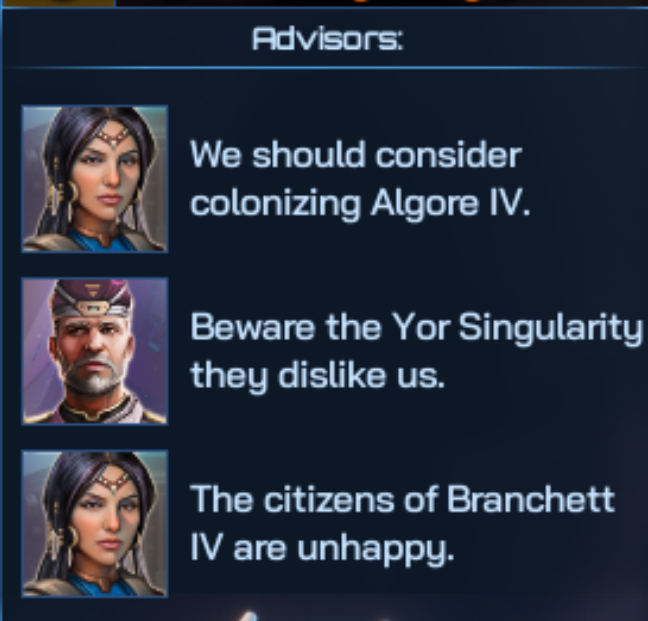



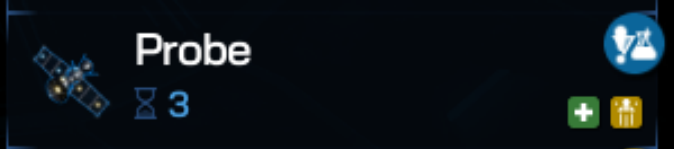


Here, based on which civilization you're playing as, which other civilizations are in your game, and what other characters are in your game, you can start one of these galactic achievements. These are not easy to do normally, but if you're already dominating the game, they're quite doable.

Completing an achievement will give you a lot of prestige points and provide some great story moments. Rather than grinding out another 5 hours of gameplay, one of these achievements might take only 15 minutes to complete. However, if you aren't as powerful as you think you are, well...these can end the game on an entirely different note.

Other features worth mentioning

Here are a few other changes and additions that aren't worth giving a big section to but are worth mentioning:

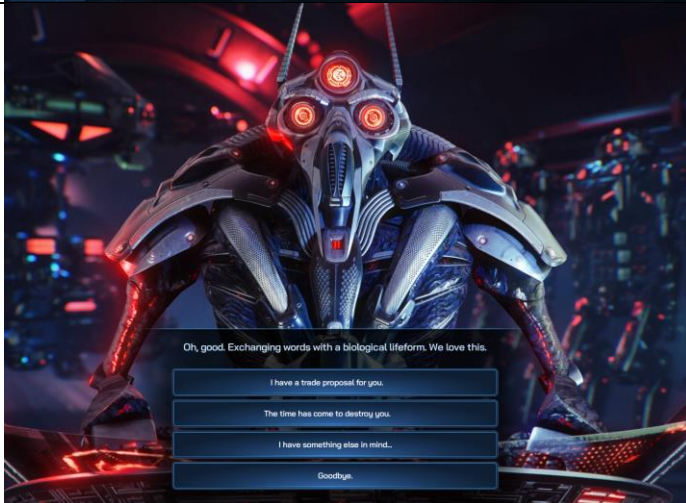
 <p>We are not alone. Through diplomacy we can trade with civilizations, negotiate treaties, declare war and much more. Their opinion of us will depend on their individual personality and the way we have treated them.</p> <p>If a relationship is particularly important to us we can assign one of our leaders as a Diplomat to that civilization.</p> <p>Show me.</p> <p>Not right now.</p>	<h3>Space Clippy: In-Game Tutorial</h3> <p>It's not actually called that, but a voiced (in 1.0 anyway) character will help guide the player through the game.</p>
 <p>Advisors:</p> <p> We should consider colonizing Algore IV.</p> <p> Beware the Yor Singularity they dislike us.</p> <p> The citizens of Branchett IV are unhappy.</p>	<h3>Advisors: Strategic Advice</h3> <p>These are characters (who change based on the civilization you're playing as) who give you suggestions for what you might want to do. We basically tap into the AI.</p>
 <p>Probe</p> <p>3</p>	<h3>Advisors: Tactical Advice</h3> <p>Your advisors will also suggest what things you should prioritize for building when there's a list.</p>



Updated Ship Designer

We've made the ship designer easier to use.

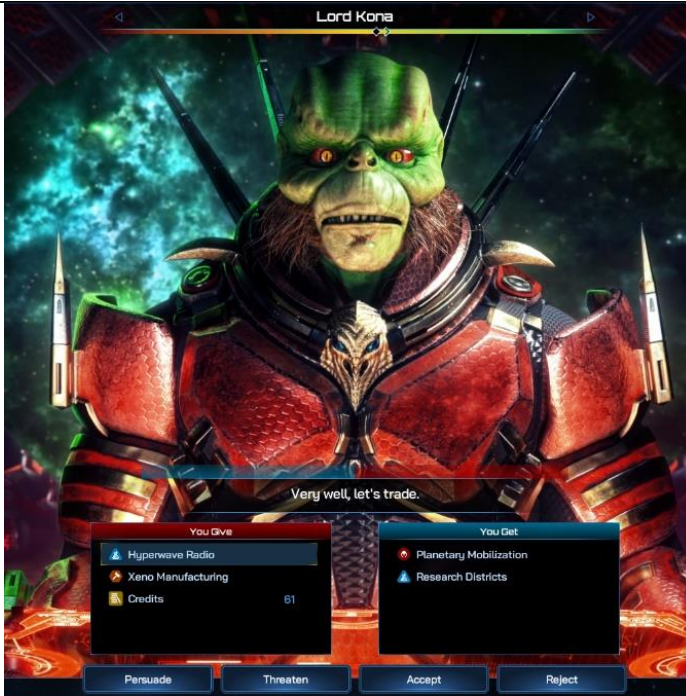
You can even export your designs to be 3D printed.



Flavor Text

Aliens will speak to you differently when you meet them based on who they are and who you are playing as.

The player's experience of playing as, say, a robot species, will be quite different from playing as a space lizard. Note that this is science fiction because of the word "space" in front of the word lizard, so it's OK.



Smart AI Behaviors

The AI is much better about putting together trade deals and behaving in a way that feels more...well, real.

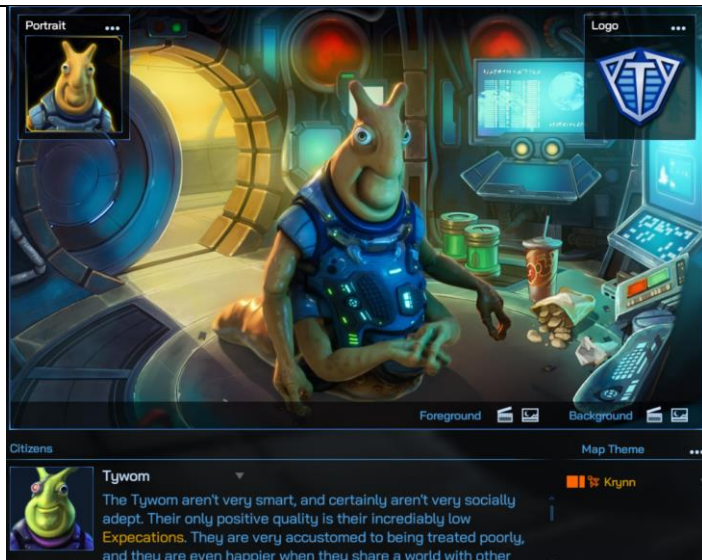
You can also now threaten or persuade during trade as each civilization has stats in this area they can build on.



Easy Planning

GalCiv IV does away with the idea of every improvement needing to be unique. Instead, there are a handful of unique improvements, with the rest being *districts*.

As a result, players can pre-plan an entire planet and then focus on other things.




The Vault

No rebuying DLCs. GalCiv IV includes additional content from the previous GalCiv games for modders to use to create their own ships, aliens, and other mods.

GalCiv IV releases as a superset of the previous GalCiv games.

Gameplay Hints

1. On Turn 1, **rush a colony ship** so you can quickly colonize Mars.
2. On Turn 1, use the Executive Order **"Draft colonists"** to get another colony ship and send it somewhere.
3. Early on, **lower your taxes** to Normal or even Low until you start to actually get low on money.
4. Don't use the "Print money" executive order unless you're pretty desperate.
5. **Research Subspace Streaming** as early as you can so that you can start to get to other sectors. This will give you a big advantage.
6. Don't convert too many colonies into core worlds early on.
7. When you do create a core world, Build a  shipyard. It's one of the projects on the core world screen.
8. **Lower the difficulty level of the AI Players to the lowest setting before starting.**

When in doubt, you can email brad@stardock.com. He'll fix ya up! You can also click on our Discord channel from the title screen to talk to the community.

Appendix A: The evolution of the series

The first public availability of the series was in 1993. Much has changed.

Galactic Civilizations OS/2



- Released: 1993
- Play as the humans (The Terran Alliance)
- Up to 8 alien AI powered opponents
- Victory paths: Conquest, Diplomacy, Culture
- First commercial 32-bit computer game
- First commercial game to support >640x480 resolutions
- First commercial multithreaded game

Galactic Civilizations (for Windows)



- Released in 2003
- Added space anomalies (on map items that could trigger an event or provides resources)
- Added starbases
- Added ideologies ("good", "neutral", "evil")

Galactic Civilizations II



- Released in 2006
- Added free-form ship designing
- Added ability to play as other civilizations (not just humans)
- Added asteroid fields
- Added viewable fleet battles
- Added strategic zoom
- First commercial game to be released at retail (Walmart, Bestbuy, etc.) and digitally (TotalGaming.net, which became Impulse).

Galactic Civilizations III



- Released in 2015
- Added Multiplayer
- Added strategic resources (special resources required to construct special things)
- Added galactic market (trade items for money and vice versa)
- Added artifacts (special items with specific powers)
- New ideology system (malevolent, benevolent, pragmatic)

Galactic Civilizations IV



- Release: April 2022
- Adds Sectors
- Adds characters
- Adds Policy System
- Adds Internal Factions
- Adds Prestige Victory Path
- Adds Executive Orders
- Adds Core worlds
- Adds Missions
- Adds Galactic Challenges
- New Combat System

Drengin Fire Chili Recipe

1/3 C Terran-corn oil
3 large Arcean onions, chopped
6 large Drengin garlic cloves, minced
5 T mild ground chilies, preferably from the K'thir province
1 tsp HOT ground chilies or Cayenne pepper (more for hotter)
2 T ground cumin
1 lb lean Torian spleen, ground
5 lb boneless Torian chuck, trimmed of fat, cubed 1/2"-3/4"
2 tsp oregano
2 1/2 t salt
1/2 tsp fresh ground black pepper
28 oz Italian (Earth) plum tomatoes, canned, with juice
24 oz good amber beer (Nothing from Earth)
13 oz Torian broth
2 bay leaves
34 oz kidney beans

In a large flame-proof casserole or stockpot, heat the oil. Add the onions. Cover and cook over moderate heat for 5 minutes. Uncover, increase heat to moderately high and cook, stirring frequently, until the onions begin to brown, 5 to 10 minutes.

Add the garlic and cook another 1 or 2 minutes, until fragrant. Add the chilies and cumin. Cook, stirring, 1 minute then add the Torian spleen (pork may be substituted if you are on Earth, and/or if all Torians have been eliminated), mashing and stirring, until the meat browns and begins to separate.

Add the Torian chuck (beef may be substituted if you are on Earth, and/or if all Torians have been eliminated), oregano, salt and pepper. Increase heat to high and cook, stirring frequently, until the meat loses most of its redness, about 10 - 15 minutes.

Add the tomatoes and their liquid, the beer, Torian chuck broth and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, partially cover and reduce heat to moderate. Cook until the Torian chuck is very tender and the sauce is reduced to a chili-like consistency, about 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

In a medium saucepan, heat the beans in the liquid from the cans. Drain when hot and either add to the chili or serve on the side along with other accompaniments such as steamed rice, sour cream, grated cheddar cheese, thinly sliced scallions, onions, or chips. Mmm, mmm, good!