There are a lot of games out there that get a ton of press and praise leading up to release only to disappointment once the final product sees the light of day. Then there are those rare titles that fly under the radar of console gamers due to minimal coverage, but shock everyone with addictive gameplay that no one saw coming. It's even rarer for that surprise enjoyment to come from a strategy title on consoles. That's exactly the situation with Kalypso's Tropico 4 and the cast of humorous characters that populate the fictional world that surrounds El Presidente.

Tropico 4 has managed to deliver a mix of addictive gameplay and very likable characters to the Xbox 360 and do so while losing none of the functionality that gamers expect in a deep strategy game. And trust me, Tropico 4 is deep. Developer Haemimont Games has managed to map out the controls on the cramped Xbox 360 nicely enough that with a little practice, players are able to micromanage El Presidente's world with ease. Issuing edicts, building roads and structures is all done with simple button taps that pull up easy to navigate menus. It will take time to learn your way around, but Tropico 4 provides you with all the tools needed through a hefty tutorial level to kick things off.

Everything in this sequel is up to you. You control how your citizens live, the layout of the roads they'll travel, and even the crops they'll grow to feed your bank account. The amount of responsibility thrust upon you will seem overwhelming at first, but in no time you'll be placing your military and police around the island and imposing your will without a second thought. This leaves your mind free to think about and make real decisions like whether or not to accept money from communists or try to please the United States. Tropico 4 is packed full of decisions that all impact the next choice you'll have to make, but as I mentioned you won't get overwhelmed.

{gallery}screenshots/Kalypso/Tropico4{/gallery}