



Pokémon FireRed and LeafGreen

Pokémon FireRed Version^[a] and *Pokémon LeafGreen Version*^[b] are 2004 remakes of the 1996 role-playing video games *Pokémon Red* and *Blue*. They were developed by Game Freak and published by The Pokémon Company and Nintendo for the Game Boy Advance. *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* were first released in Japan in January 2004 and in North America and Europe in September and October 2004. The games are part of the third generation of the *Pokémon* video game series and hold the distinction of being the first enhanced remakes of previous games within the franchise.

As in previous games, the player controls their character from an Top-down perspective or overhead perspective and participates in turn-based battles. Throughout the games, the player captures and raises Pokémon for use in battle. Based in the Kanto region, new features include a contextual help menu and a new area (Sevii Islands) the player may access after defeating the Elite 4 and the champion. The games have compatibility with the Game Boy Advance Wireless Adapter, which originally came bundled with the games.

The games received mostly positive reviews, obtaining an aggregate score of 81 percent on Metacritic. Most critics praised the fact that the games introduced new features while still maintaining the traditional gameplay of the series. Reception of the graphics and audio was more mixed, with some reviewers complaining that they were too simplistic and lacked improvement compared to the previous games, *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*. *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* were commercial successes, selling a total of around

Pokémon FireRed Pokémon LeafGreen



North American box art for the Player's Choice release of *Pokémon FireRed* and *Pokémon LeafGreen*, depicting the starter Pokémon Charizard and Venusaur respectively

<u>Developer(s)</u>	<u>Game Freak</u>
<u>Publisher(s)</u>	<u>JP: The Pokémon Company</u> <u>WW: Nintendo</u>
<u>Director(s)</u>	<u>Junichi Masuda</u>
<u>Producer(s)</u>	<u>Hiroyuki Jinnai</u> <u>Takehiro Izushi</u> <u>Hiroaki Tsuru</u>
<u>Designer(s)</u>	<u>Junichi Masuda</u> <u>Shigeru Ohmori</u>
<u>Programmer(s)</u>	<u>Tetsuya Watanabe</u>
<u>Artist(s)</u>	<u>Ken Sugimori</u>
<u>Writer(s)</u>	<u>Hitomi Sato</u> <u>Satoshi Tajiri</u>
<u>Composer(s)</u>	<u>Go Ichinose</u> <u>Junichi Masuda</u> <u>Morikazu Aoki</u>
<u>Series</u>	<u>Pokémon</u>
<u>Platform(s)</u>	<u>Game Boy Advance</u>
<u>Release</u>	<u>JP: January 29, 2004</u> <u>NA: September 9, 2004^[1]</u>

12 million copies worldwide. Nearly two years after their original release, Nintendo re-marketed them as Player's Choice titles.

Gameplay



In a battle scene, the Pokémon at the top right of the screen (Squirtle) is the opponent's; the bottom left (Charmander) is the player's. The player's four options are shown at the bottom right menu.

Pokémon have hit points (HP); when a Pokémon's HP is reduced to zero, it faints and can no longer battle until it is revived. Once an opponent's Pokémon faints, all of the player's Pokémon involved in the battle receive a certain number of experience points (EXP). After accumulating enough EXP, a Pokémon will level up.^[4]

Capturing Pokémon is another essential element of the gameplay. During a battle with a wild Pokémon, the player may throw a Poké Ball at it. If the Pokémon is successfully caught, it will come under the ownership of the player. Factors in the success rate of capture include the HP of the target Pokémon and the type of Poké Ball used: the lower the target's HP and the stronger the Poké Ball, the higher the success rate of capture.^[5]

While *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* are remakes of *Red* and *Green* (*Pokémon Green* was only released in Japan, whereas the international variant was *Blue*), they contain usability enhancements such as a contextual tutorial feature which allows players to look up data at any point in the game, by pressing the *select* button. Additionally, when continuing a saved game, players are shown the last four actions they performed, aiding in remembering what they were previously doing.^[6]

The games support the Game Boy Advance Game Link Cable, through which connected players may trade or battle.^[7] Players may also connect with *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*, as well as with *Pokémon Colosseum*, allowing them to obtain over 350 Pokémon.^[8] *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* also have the ability to connect to the GameCube and interact with *Pokémon Box: Ruby and Sapphire*. In *Pokémon Box*, the player may organize and view their collected Pokémon, and in *Colosseum*, Pokémon may be used in battle.^[9] *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* are also the first games in the series to be compatible with the Game Boy Advance Wireless Adapter, which comes prepackaged with the games.^[8] The adapter can be plugged into the link port of the Game Boy Advance system and allows players within a radius of 30–50 feet (9.1–

AU: September 23, 2004

EU: October 1, 2004

Genre(s)

Role-playing

Mode(s)

Single-player,
multiplayer

15.2 m) to wirelessly interact with each other.^[6] In addition, as many as 30 players at a time may join a special location called the "Union Room", where they can trade, battle, or chat.^[8] Nintendo set up "JoySpots" at Japanese retail locations for this purpose.^[6]

Plot

Setting

Pokémon FireRed and *LeafGreen* takes place mostly in the fictional region of Kanto. This is one distinct region of many in the *Pokémon* world, which includes varied geographical habitats for the Pokémon species, human-populated towns and cities, and routes between locations. Some areas are only accessible once players acquire a special item or one of their Pokémon learns a special ability.^[10] Near the end of the plot, the protagonist is able to venture to the Sevii Islands, a new area not present in the original *Red* and *Blue* games. The Sevii Islands are an archipelago of seven islands and contain Pokémon normally exclusive to the Johto region, as well as several post-game missions. After the aforementioned missions on the Sevii Islands are completed, the ability to trade with *Ruby* and *Sapphire* for Hoenn-exclusive Pokémon becomes available.

Story

The silent protagonist of *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* is a child who lives in a small town named Pallet Town. After players start a journey and venture alone into tall grass, a voice warns them to stop. Professor Samuel Oak, a famous Pokémon Researcher, explains to the player that such grass is often the habitat of wild Pokémon, and encountering them alone can be very dangerous. He takes the player to his laboratory where they meet Oak's grandson, another aspiring Pokémon Trainer. The player and their rival are both instructed to select a starter Pokémon for their travels. The rival then challenges them to a Pokémon battle with their newly obtained Pokémon and continues to battle the player at certain points throughout the games.

After reaching the next city, the player is asked to deliver a parcel to Professor Oak. Upon returning to the laboratory, they are presented with a Pokédex, a high-tech encyclopedia that records the entries of any Pokémon that are captured.^[11] Oak then asks the player to fulfill his dream of compiling a comprehensive list of every Pokémon in the game.

While visiting the region's cities, the player encounters special establishments called Pokémon Gyms. Inside these buildings are Gym Leaders, each of whom the player must defeat in a Pokémon battle to obtain a Gym Badge.^[12] Once a total of eight badges are acquired, the player is given permission to enter the Kanto Pokémon League in the Indigo Plateau, which consists of the strongest Pokémon Trainers in the region. There the player battles the Elite Four. Also throughout the game, the player has to fight against the forces of Team Rocket, a criminal organization that abuses Pokémon. They devise numerous plans to steal rare Pokémon, all of which the player must foil, meeting and defeating the organization boss Giovanni.

After the first time players defeat the Elite Four, one of the members, Lorelei, disappears. After gaining access to the Sevii Islands, an entirely new region, the player discovers Lorelei in her house and convinces her to come back with them. Once more, the protagonist must thwart Team Rocket's plans on

several occasions, recover two artifacts, the Ruby and the Sapphire, and put them in the main computer at One Island. After that, the player can trade with Ruby, Sapphire, Emerald, Colosseum, and XD.

Development

FireRed and *LeafGreen* were first announced in September 2003 as upcoming remakes of the original *Pocket Monsters Red* and *Blue* games that were released in Japan in 1996.^[13] Game director Junichi Masuda stated the new titles would be developed around the idea of simplicity,^[14] as the game engine was a slightly modified version of the one used in *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*. As a result, *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* were made fully backward compatible with *Ruby* and *Sapphire*, allowing players to trade Pokémon between games.^[15]



Development director Junichi Masuda

FireRed and *LeafGreen*'s connectivity with the Game Boy Advance Wireless Adapter was heralded by then-president of Nintendo Satoru Iwata as being able "to enhance head-to-head battles, exchange of information, and communication with others."^[16] An enhanced interface was created for the game to increase usability for new players, as well as a contextual in-game help system that could aid lost or confused players during their journey. President of The Pokémon Company Tsunekazu Ishihara noted, "We don't feel that this a remake at all. We feel that this is a new game, with wireless technology", referring to the bundled wireless adapter.^[17]

The exclusive Japanese production run for *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* was limited to half a million copies, despite the success of *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*. IGN speculated that Nintendo was expecting less demand for the new games, or that it was limited by the production of the bundled wireless adapter.^[18] The North American versions of *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* were indirectly announced at DICE in 2004.^[19] Although the original games were released as *Red* and *Blue* in North America, the remakes retained the Japanese names of "Red" and "Green".^[20] Masuda noted this as a choice on his part, stating the leaf represented a peaceful icon, in contrast to the alternative of water which he saw as suggesting conflict with the icon of fire used by the other game.^[14]

Music

The music used in the games was derived from the classic game consoles, and arranged by Go Ichinose. Masuda and Ichinose decided not to change the reused music from the basic background sounds used in *Red* and *Blue*, and instead updated them by adding additional sounds. Some of the songs have additional key changes compared to the original soundtrack and some songs such as the Trainer Battle music are re-written in MIDI for the GBA and contain pitch bends between notes.^[21] A two-disc set of the music

entitled *GBA Pokémon FireRed & LeafGreen Super Complete* was released, with the first disc featuring all the music used normally in-game, while the second disc featured bonus tracks based on and inspired by the music in the games. Among these are two vocal tracks.^[22]

Reception

Reception	
Aggregate scores	
Aggregator	Score
<u>GameRankings</u>	82.14% (<i>FireRed</i>) (based on 37 reviews) ^[23]
<u>Metacritic</u>	81/100 (<i>FireRed</i>) (based on 38 reviews) ^[24]
Review scores	
Publication	Score
<u>Game Informer</u>	8/10 ^[25]
<u>GameSpot</u>	8.4/10 (<i>FireRed</i>) ^[26]
<u>GameSpy</u>	★★★★★ (<i>FireRed</i>) ^[27]
<u>IGN</u>	9.0/10 (<i>FireRed</i>) ^[8]
<u>Nintendo Power</u>	★★★★★ ^[28]

Reviews of *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* were mostly positive, and the games currently hold an aggregate score of 81 percent on Metacritic.^[24] Jon Minife of the New Zealand Herald praised the game for resolving the connectivity issues that *Ruby* and *Sapphire* had at the time, which would convince older players to get back into Pokémon.^[29] Craig Harris of IGN gave the games an "Outstanding" 9.0/10 rating and praised the creators of the games for creating a game that "works extremely well for the handheld market. It doesn't have quite the same variety as *Ruby* and *Sapphire*, but it's still incredibly satisfying." Harris was less positive about the games' graphics, which he thought were "limited" and "basic".^[8] GameSpot's Greg Kasavin, who gave the games 8.4 out of 10, commented that "though *Pokémon* could probably use a few new twists after all these years, *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* are great role-playing games on their own merits, filled with lots more content and more challenges than last year's *Ruby* and *Sapphire*, and offering up plenty of addictive gameplay that can be a lot of fun for players of all ages." Unlike Harris, Kasavin praised the games' graphics for their "colorful good looks and the endearing character designs that the series is known for."^[26] GameSpot later named *LeafGreen* the best Game Boy Advance game of September 2004.^[30] Game Informer rated the games a "Very Good" 8/10 for being "a lot of fun", yet they saw the graphics as "utterly unremarkable" when compared to other handheld games.^[25]

GameSpy reviewer Phil Theobald, who awarded the games four out of five stars, stated, "Before I knew it, I was hooked all over again. The engrossingly simple gameplay combined with the more-strategic-than-they-first-appear battles was just too much to resist. And yeah, the 'gotta catch 'em all' gimmick is still effective, not to mention necessary to build a well balanced party. There's just something about tracking down, capturing, and training all those Pokémon that really draw you into the game's world." He

justified the games' graphics by comparing them to the "ugly" original *Red* and *Blue* versions. Additional praise was given to the new features such as the contextual tutorial, and flashbacks when loading a saved game, as well as the games' multiplayer capabilities via the Wireless Adapter.^[27]

Sales

During its first week of release in Japan, *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* sold a combined total of 885,039 copies, which was less than the number sold by *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire* in that time period, but *IGN* reasoned that the smaller sales were due to the new titles being remakes.^[31] In the first half of August before *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* were released in the United States, the games received over 150,000 pre-orders, over twice the number *Ruby* and *Sapphire* received. Nintendo's Senior Vice President of Marketing and Corporate Communication George Harrison remarked, "This pre-sell indicates more than twice the player interest!"^[32] Over one million copies of *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* were sold in the US less than one month after their release in that region.^{[33][34][35]} As of March 31, 2008, the games had sold 11.82 million copies worldwide.^[36] The games later entered Nintendo's Player's Choice line in North America and were re-marketed with a significantly lower retail price. However, unlike the original release, the Player's Choice edition games did not include a bundled Wireless Adapter.^[37]

Awards

Year	Award	Category	Result
2004	<u>Spike Video Game Awards</u>	Best Handheld	Nominated
2005	<u>British Academy Game Awards</u>	Handheld	Nominated
2005	<u>GameSpot's Best and Worst of 2005</u>	Best Game Boy Advance Game ^[38]	Nominated
2005	<u>8th Annual Interactive Achievement Awards</u>	<u>Wireless Game of the Year</u> ^[39]	Nominated

Notes

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- a. Japanese: ポケットモンスター ファイアレッド, Hepburn: *Poketto Monsutā Faiareddo*, lit. "Pocket Monsters: FireRed"
 - b. Japanese: ポケットモンスター リーフグリーン, Hepburn: *Poketto Monsutā Rīfugurīn*, lit. "Pocket Monsters: LeafGreen"

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External links

- [Official website \(<http://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-video-games/pokemon-firered-version-and-pokemon-leafgreen-version/>\)](http://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-video-games/pokemon-firered-version-and-pokemon-leafgreen-version/)
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