

= Viva Piñata (video game) =

Viva Piñata is a 2006 life simulation game developed by Rare and published by Microsoft Game Studios for the Xbox 360 . The game revolves around the player tending to a neglected garden in Piñata Island , in which different variations of piñatas must be bred whilst fending off disruptive interlopers . The project was headed by Gregg Mayles and the team behind the Banjo @-@ Kazooie series , based on an idea from Rare co @-@ founder Tim Stamper . Microsoft wanted the game to become a key franchise for the platform , and developed a tie @-@ in television show to accompany the series . Viva Piñata released in November 2006 .

The game received positive reviews from critics , who praised the graphics , color palette , and numerous types of piñatas . They disliked the disruption caused by frequent autosaving . A Windows version was released in November 2007 . The game started the Viva Piñata series , with a direct sequel and a portable version both released in 2008 . Viva Piñata is included in Rare 's 2015 Rare Replay , a compilation of 30 games for the Xbox One .

= = Gameplay = =

Viva Piñata is a first @-@ person life simulation game in which the player restores and tends to a neglected garden on Piñata Island . The player uses gardening tools , such as shovels and watering cans , to plough their garden , sow seeds , create ponds , and sculpt the garden to their liking . When certain requirements are fulfilled , the garden will attract a black @-@ and @-@ white outline of a given piñata species . After fulfilling additional requirements , the piñata will become a resident , changing into a full @-@ color version .

Once two piñatas of the same species are residents and their mating requirements are met , they can perform a " romance " dance . If the player successfully completes a maze minigame , the romance results in a baby piñata egg , which is delivered by a stork . The piñatas are not gendered , and hence any two piñatas of the same species can mate . Once a piñata species has successfully romanced , the player can use a candy shortcut to bypass their original romance requirements . The player can hatch the egg or send it to another player over Xbox Live . The game 's antagonists include the " Ruffians " led by Professor Pester and " sour piñatas " who occasionally enter the player 's garden with the sole intent of wreaking havoc : eating seeds , dropping poisonous piñata candies , and destroying objects . The player may tame sour piñatas by constructing fences around them . Weeds may occasionally sprout in the player 's garden and will quickly spread to destroy vegetable rows if the player does not kill them in time .

The game features sixty types of piñatas . Certain animals are " piñatahores " , and must eat other piñatas to become residents or reproduce . A food chain (referred to as the doughnut of life) exists , with a number of piñata species having one or two others that are considered prey . When such piñatas are visiting the garden , they devour garden residents to satisfy their residency requirements . Once piñatas are residents , they will not eat each other unless instructed to do so by the player , although fights can break out between residents who do not share the predator ? prey relationship . Piñatas die when they are broken open , either from another piñata 's predaciousness , the hit of the player 's or Professor Pester 's shovel , or following an extended illness . Dead piñatas forfeit their equipped accessories .

= = Development = =

Rare co @-@ founder Tim Stamper conceptualized a gardening game for the handheld Pocket PC platform in 2002 . A three @-@ person team began work on a simple prototype while the company was still affiliated with Nintendo , prior to its Microsoft acquisition . Development transferred to the original Xbox and , ultimately , to the Xbox 360 for its enhanced graphical capabilities . The development team wanted its animals to have a unified style , which was how the concept artist arrived at the piñata conceit . The idea was exciting for the team , as piñatas were not commonplace in the United Kingdom . The connection between piñatas and candy @-@ filled insides led to new

gameplay directions .

The Viva Piñata team was a model for productivity and regular output within Rare and Microsoft Studios . Though compared to the 12 @-@ person teams behind earlier Rare games , the company 's Xbox 360 development teams consisted of 50 to 60 people . The Viva Piñata team included about 50 people at its zenith . Microsoft transitioned its development teams to use its XNA package to streamline and reduce duplication in engineering efforts . Microsoft pressured the Viva Piñata development team to keep the game 's themes children @-@ friendly , as the parent company planned for the game and resulting franchise to increase the market appeal of their Xbox 360 . In 2006 , a Microsoft Games executive called the game its most important franchise . But its reception was tepid .

Viva Piñata was planned as a larger intellectual property . 4Kids TV had agreed to make a Viva Piñata cartoon before the game was released . 4Kids selected the series out of several Microsoft properties offered . 4Kids also handled the series merchandising . The cartoon is tied very closely to the game , and its animations are based on the game 's own 3D character models . Its episodes are approved by Rare 's Gregg Mayles for their applicability to the game . The cartoon was also designed to give viewers tips on how to interact with the in @-@ game piñatas . The animated series ' storyline later influenced the plot of Trouble in Paradise .

= = = Release = = =

After the release of Viva Piñata in 2006 , its development team saw it as incomplete . The developers cut partial ideas from the release to meet their deadlines . Rare 's Gregg Mayles said that the game sold well and steadily on par with their expectations and Xbox executive Phil Spencer added that the game was considered a success inside the company . The team incorporated player feedback and worked towards a " more definitive version " of the original .

During the Microsoft press conference at E3 2007 , a Microsoft Windows port of Viva Piñata was announced . The conversion was handled by Climax Group . The game is part of the Games for Windows programme which offers easier installation and support for Windows Vista 's Games Explorer , Xbox 360 Controller for Windows , Parental Controls , and the use of Games For Windows - Live .

In 2007 , Microsoft collaborated with amusement park Six Flags Mexico to promote the Xbox 360 as well as Viva Piñata . To accomplish this , a 48 feet (15 m) tall , 52 feet (16 m) long piñata , specifically a Horstachio , was constructed at the park . At the time , it was the largest recorded piñata ever built .

= = Reception = =

Viva Piñata received " generally favorable " reviews , according to video game review aggregator Metacritic . Nearly a year after its release , Rare 's Justin Cook said that the game had sold about 500 @, @ 000 copies .

The graphics were unanimously praised by critics . Justin Calvert of GameSpot stated the attention to detail was " uniformly impressive " , and asserted that the visuals were cohesive . Erik Brudvig of IGN found that the game 's graphical slowdown during its frequent autosaving to be startling , although he praised the presentation overall . Andrew Taylor of the Official Xbox Magazine praised the vibrant use of colors and attention to detail . Will Tuttle of Team Xbox similarly stated the colors were " vividly vibrant " and the design aesthetics " remarkably appealing " , although he also found the autosaving slowdown frustrating . Gerald Villoria of GameSpy stated the graphics were " breathtaking " , and noted the color palettes of the piñatas themselves gave the appearance that they were " stripped directly from an animated show " .

Critics commended various aspects of the gameplay . Calvert enjoyed the wide customization options and large number of piñata variations , stating that the gameplay itself was " silky smooth " . Brudvig noted that there was a " ton to do " ; he praised the encouragement of discovery and stated that it was " constantly filled with moments where you find something new to do " . Tuttle

commended the large number of piñatas , stating that finding managing all of the resources is " a lot of work " . Villoria praised the " surprisingly deep " strategic gameplay , saying that it was one of the most " entertaining and fulfilling " experiences for the Xbox 360 .

Viva Piñata was nominated for six awards by the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences for its 10th annual awards covering 2006 . The music score by Grant Kirkhope was nominated for Original Score at the 2007 BAFTA awards . The game was nominated for the " Best Original Game " in X @-@ Play 's " Best Video Games of 2006 " awards . Other accolades include a Parents ' Choice Award from the Parents ' Choice Foundation. and GameSpot included the title as one of their ten nominees for their " 2006 Game of the Year " award , although it received only 3 % of the total votes .

= = = Legacy = = =

A sequel , Viva Piñata : Trouble in Paradise was announced in May 2008 and released in September of that year . The sequel adds more than 30 new piñata species , a " Just for Fun " sandbox mode , and new co @-@ operative modes , as well as new desert and arctic environments .

Rare announced plans to release a Nintendo DS version of the game at Comic @-@ Con 2007 . It was later revealed to be titled Viva Piñata : Pocket Paradise and was subsequently released in September 2008 . Key changes include a control scheme which makes use of the stylus , as well as the presence of additional context @-@ sensitive information on the second screen . On October 30 , 2007 , a party game spin @-@ off , Viva Piñata : Party Animals was released for the Xbox 360 . Developed by Krome Studios , the game features the TV show piñata characters competing in races and close to 50 party mini @-@ games .