

## = Metroid II : Return of Samus =

Metroid II : Return of Samus is an action @-@ adventure video game developed and published by Nintendo for the Game Boy handheld game console . The second installment and the first handheld title in the Metroid series , it was released in North America in November 1991 , and in Japan and Europe the following year . The story of Metroid II follows the protagonist and playable character Samus Aran , who is sent on a mission to exterminate the Metroid creatures from their home planet SR388 before the antagonistic Space Pirates obtain and use them . The gameplay of Metroid II involves killing a fixed number of Metroids before the player can advance deeper through the planet 's tunnels .

Metroid II was developed by Nintendo Research & Development 1 ( Nintendo R & D1 ) and produced by Gunpei Yokoi , who both worked on the first Metroid game for the Nintendo Entertainment System . The developers of the game added round metal shoulders on Samus ' Varia Suit to differentiate it from her Power Suit , since both looked similar on the Game Boy 's limited greyscale display . The updated suit has since been a staple of the series , appearing in all subsequent games . A unique color palette for Metroid II was added to the Game Boy Color console , a successor to the original Game Boy with a color screen .

The game was given generally favorable reviews . Critics praised Metroid II for its story and settings , while other reviews criticized its graphics and audio . A follow @-@ up to the game , Super Metroid , was released for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System in 1994 . Metroid II became available as a Nintendo 3DS Virtual Console title in 2011 .

## = = Gameplay = =

Metroid II is an action @-@ adventure game in which the player controls the protagonist Samus Aran on the fictional planet SR388 . In this side @-@ scroller , players advance through the game by using Samus ' weapons to kill a fixed number of Metroid creatures . The player is given a detector that displays the number of Metroids remaining in the area . Once all the creatures are eliminated , an earthquake occurs and the planet 's lava levels decrease , allowing Samus to travel deeper through its tunnels . The Metroid creatures are encountered in different evolution stages of their development cycle : original , Alpha , Gamma , Zeta and Omega . The more developed the organism is , the stronger its attack . Metroid II features save modules located around the planet , which allow players to save their progress and continue in another session .

The game features two weapons new to the Metroid series : the tri @-@ splitting Spazer Laser Beam , and the Plasma Beam , which passes through enemies when shot . Samus can only equip one beam at a time ; however , she can switch between them by returning to where they are first found . Metroid II features the Space Jump , a new suit enhancement that allows Samus to jump infinitely and access otherwise unreachable areas . The game also sees the return of Samus ' Morph Ball , a mode in which she curls up into a ball to travel through small tunnels . In addition , the game is the first in the series to feature the Spider Ball and Spring Ball . The Spider Ball allows Samus to climb most walls or ceilings , giving her freedom to explore both the surfaces and ceilings of caverns , and the Spring Ball gives Samus the ability to jump while curled up into a ball in the Morph Ball form .

## = = Plot = =

In the previous Metroid , bounty hunter Samus Aran ruined the Space Pirates ' plans to use the newly discovered lifeform known as Metroid . To ensure that the Space Pirates can never obtain any more Metroids , the Galactic Federation sends several teams to the Metroid 's home planet , SR388 , to destroy them once and for all . However , when each of the teams disappear , the Galactic Federation contracts Samus to finish the mission .

While exploring the planet , Samus encounters Metroids and destroys them , slowly decreasing the planet 's Metroid population . During her mission , she notices the mutations that each creature

exhibits : the Metroids grow from small jellyfish @-@ like creatures into large , hovering , lizard @-@ like beasts . After destroying most of the planet 's Metroids , Samus encounters and battles the Queen Metroid . Killing it , Samus proceeds to return to her gunship through the planet 's tunnels .

Along the way , she finds a Metroid egg that hatches in front of her . A Metroid hatchling floats out of the broken shell and imprints onto Samus , thinking that she is its mother . Unable to commit to her mission of extermination , Samus spares its life . She exits the tunnels while the Metroid helps clear the way . Reaching the planet 's surface , the Metroid and Samus board the gunship together , setting the plot for Super Metroid .

= = Development = =

Metroid II was developed by Nintendo Research & Development 1 ( Nintendo R & D1 ) , and produced by Gunpei Yokoi ; they both also worked on the previous Metroid game for the Nintendo Entertainment System . It was directed by Hiroji Kiyotake and Hiroyuki Kimura , and designed by Makoto Kano , while Takahiro Harada serving as the main programmer . Metroid II marked a " new high point " for handheld game consoles , with graphics that were almost as good as the 8 @-@ bit graphics in games for the NES . The game features enhancements from its predecessor that include easier controls which allow Samus to crouch while firing at the same time , and jump while shooting straight down to attack anything below her . The game also utilizes the cartridge 's battery @-@ backed memory for saving the player 's progress . In the 2004 interview for the Nintendo Dream magazine , Kiyotake revealed that the planet SR388 was named after the Yamaha SR400 motorcycle .

The Game Boy 's black @-@ and @-@ white graphics resulted in changes to Samus 's gear that eventually became permanent . In the original Metroid , color was used to differentiate between Samus 's Power Suit and her Varia Suit ? an upgraded version . However , without color on the Game Boy , the two suits would have appeared similar , requiring the developers to develop a visual indicator for players to determine which suit Samus is wearing . They also updated her Varia Suit , adding round metal shoulders that have been a part of the suit in every game in the series since then .

Nintendo R & D1 was also involved in developing the Game Boy Color , a successor to the original Game Boy with a color screen . Nintendo of America 's Dan Owsen noted that Nintendo R & D1 included a special " Metroid palette " in the Game Boy Color 's hardware , which " makes Metroid II look really , really nice on Game Boy Color " , remarking that this made the game 's graphics comparable to the original Metroid on the Nintendo Entertainment System .

= = = Release = = =

Nintendo released Metroid II in North America in November 1991 . This was followed by the release in Japan on January 21 , 1992 , and in Europe on May 21 , 1992 . Nintendo included the game in its Player 's Choice marketing label in North America in 1993 . It was re @-@ released in Japan as a downloadable game for the Nintendo Power flash memory cartridge . On August 17 , 2011 , Nintendo announced that Metroid II , along with other Game Boy games such as Super Mario Land 2 : 6 Golden Coins , Mega Man : Dr. Wily 's Revenge , and several others would be released for the Nintendo 3DS Virtual Console at the end of the year . It was released in Japan on September 28 , 2011 , and in North America and Europe on November 24 .

= = Reception = =

Although considered by a few critics to be the weakest game in the franchise and not as well received as the Nintendo Entertainment System counterpart , Metroid II still received generally favorable reviews . Because Metroid II has a single large level instead of multiple small ones , Tim Jones of IGN found the game a " refreshing departure from the norm " , which made him feel claustrophobic the further into the game he ventured . He praised Metroid II 's replay value ,

considering its non @-@ linearity as the primary reason for this . In their retrospective video on the Metroid series , GameTrailers believed that the game still maintained the high standards set by its predecessor and noted that it also introduced new methods of exploration to the series that have become staples .

AllGame 's Brett Alan Weiss believed that Metroid II would please fans of the original Metroid , and they noticed that the backgrounds were more detailed in this Game Boy iteration . Marcel Van Duyn of Nintendo Life noted that the difficulty was improved over the original game because of the inclusion of " hot spots " that restores health and missiles . On the other hand , Jeremy Parish of 1UP.com was particularly critical of the game , finding the game painful to play and describing it as " something of a dark spot on a brilliant series ' reputation . " Parish found the game 's premise " ambitious " , adding that it provided the series a vital crux : " Samus ' actions in Metroid II fuel the plots of both its sequels : Super Metroid [ ... ] and Metroid Fusion " . GameTrailers similarly commented that it told one of the most pivotal chapters in the series ' overall plot .

Van Duyn praised Metroid II 's visual detail , writing that " the platforms in the foreground and the enemies on and around them are all quite detailed , so you can easily identify what you 're trying to kill . " In contrast , Jones considered the graphics average , and noted that the walls appeared mostly the same , which confuses players when wandering through identical tunnels . Parish complained that aside from Samus , the visuals for the environment are " bland and repetitive , full of monotonous rocks and sand with few details to differentiate the various areas , and the enemies are mostly simple and boxy . " Parish also found the music " downright painful " , which he contrasted with the " moody , atmospheric compositions " the series was known for . Van Duyn cited the music as the " only bad point " in the game , stating that the ambient sounds " tend to get annoying after hearing them again and again . " Jones said that " [ a ] lot of the time there is no music , just a steady beat , but when you get into certain areas a slow , moody tune begins to play in the background . " GameTrailers noted that the game is too linear , and was unimpressed with its audio and visuals .

In the September 1997 , Nintendo Power 12 staff members voted in a list for the top 100 games of all time . The magazine placed Metroid II at 34th place on their list of 100 games of all time . In their Top 200 Games list , Nintendo Power also ranked the game as the 85th best game on a Nintendo console , and Videogames.com included it in their list of the best Game Boy games . Nintendo Power listed it as the 12th @-@ best Game Boy / Game Boy Color video game , praising it for introducing several staple abilities to the series . Game Informer 's Ben Reeves called it the ninth best Game Boy game and noted that it was polarizing among fans .

= = Sequel and legacy = =

Super Metroid , a follow @-@ up to Metroid II , was released for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System in 1994 . Metroid series co @-@ creator Yoshio Sakamoto remarked at the 2010 Game Developers Conference that he was " very moved " by the ending in Metroid II , which influenced him on creating Super Metroid .

Due to the black and white color palette used in Metroid II , and no Metroid games released for the Game Boy Color , there have been attempts to create colored versions of Metroid II . A programmer using the pseudonym DoctorM64 created Project Another Metroid 2 Remake , also known as AM2R . The project aims to update the game 's appearance by emulating , and in some cases trumping , the visual designs of Super Metroid and Metroid : Zero Mission . Frank Caron of Ars Technica claims that it features " incredible graphics " and he consider it a " painstaking recreation of the original level design " . He observed , " [ t ] he animations are incredibly smooth , colors vibrant , and backgrounds well @-@ detailed . " AM2R is scheduled for release on August 6 , 2016 .