= Super Mario RPG =

Super Mario RPG (Japanese : ?????????? , Hepburn : S?p? Mario ?ru P? J?) , subtitled Legend of the Seven Stars in its North American release , is a role @-@ playing game developed by Square (now Square Enix) and published by Nintendo for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System . It was originally released on March 9 , 1996 , in Japan and on May 13 , 1996 , in North America . Nintendo ported the game , with minor differences , to the Wii 's Virtual Console service in 2008 and to the Wii U 's Virtual Console service by late June 2016 to regions around the world . It is the first role @-@ playing video game in the Mario series . The game contains fundamental gameplay similarities and inspirations to other Square role @-@ playing video games , such as the Final Fantasy series , with a story and action @-@ based gameplay derived from the Super Mario Bros. series .

The story focuses on Mario and his party as they seek to eliminate the game 's main antagonist , Smithy . Smithy has stolen the seven star pieces of Star Road where all the world 's inhabitants ' wishes become Wish Stars , and Mario must return the pieces so these wishes may again be granted . The game features five permanent playable characters . Super Mario RPG was directed by Yoshihiko Maekawa and Chihiro Fujioka and produced by Shigeru Miyamoto . Yoko Shimomura composed the game 's score , which was released on a soundtrack album in Japan shortly after the game 's debut .

Square did much of the development of Super Mario RPG under direct guidance from producer Shigeru Miyamoto . The game was well @-@ received upon release , praised particularly for its 3D @-@ rendered graphics and humor . The game spawned the Mario RPG series , and two successive RPG @-@ themed spiritual sequels followed : the Paper Mario and Mario & Luigi series , both of which use certain conventions established in the original .

= = Gameplay = =

Super Mario RPG contains token similarities to other Square @-@ developed video games , such as the Final Fantasy series , along with a story and gameplay based on the Super Mario Bros. series of platform games . Like most traditional JRPGs , there are two main sections to the game : adventuring and turn @-@ based battle sequences . Much of Super Mario RPG 's gameplay is outside monster battles and plays like an isometric 3D platformer , in which traditional Mario elements such as punching floating question blocks from below are prominent . There are no random encounters and as such enemies are visible in the field ; a battle ensues only if Mario comes in contact with one . This allows the player to evade unnecessary battles .

The player controls only Mario at the journey 's beginning . Ultimately , the player will gain a party of five characters , though only three members can be used during a battle at any given time . Mario is always in the player 's party , but the other two characters can be selected before battles . Each of the five characters has a unique set of attacks and techniques . For example , Princess Toadstool 's abilities are primarily healing techniques , whereas Geno and Bowser have offensive attacks that deal high amounts of damage . The combat is based on a traditional turn based battle system with the addition of action commands that amplify a move 's effects . The action command consists of timed button presses during an attack , special move , defense , or item usage . This is one of the more innovative features of gameplay , becoming a mainstay of later Mario RPGs .

= = Plot = =

= = = Characters and setting = = =

The game world is set in a geographically diverse land , which includes mountains and bodies of water . Each region has distinct characteristics held by its inhabitants ; Mushroom Kingdom is inhabited by Toads , Moleville is inhabited by moles , Monstro Town is populated by reformed

monsters , Yo 'ster Isle is where Yoshi and his eponymous species reside , and Nimbus Land is an area inhabited by cloud people . Bowser 's Castle is another prominent location in the game , as it holds the portal to the main antagonist 's home world .

As in most Mario series games , the main protagonist is Mario , whose initial goal is to rescue Princess Peach (Toadstool) from Bowser . However , the story takes on an unusual and very important twist . Soon after the start of his journey , the Smithy Gang invades the world . While attempting to stop the group , Mario is joined by Mallow , a cloud boy who thinks he is a tadpole ; Geno , a doll possessed by a celestial spirit from the Star Road ; Bowser , whose armies have deserted him out of fear of the Smithy Gang ; and Princess Toadstool , who was lost in the turmoil that occurred when the Smithy Gang arrived . The Smithy Gang is led by Smithy , a robotic blacksmith from an alternate dimension with aspirations of world domination .

= = = Story = = =

The game begins when Mario enters Bowser 's Castle to rescue Princess Toadstool . During the battle , a giant sword falls from the sky , breaks through the Star Road (a pathway that helps grant people 's wishes) , and crashes into Bowser ? s castle , sending Mario , Princess Toadstool , and Bowser flying in different directions , as well as scattering seven star fragments . Mario makes his way to the Mushroom Kingdom , where the mushroom chancellor insists that Mario recover the Princess and discover the purpose of the giant sword , but once he returns to Bowser 's castle , the giant sword (who reveals that it can talk) destroys the bridge , preventing him from entering . Upon returning , Mario encounters Mallow , a " tadpole " who has lost a frog coin to Croco , a local thief . Mario agrees to help him , but when they return to the castle , he finds that the kingdom is overrun by creatures from the Smithy Gang led by an evil robotic blacksmith king named Smithy . He and Mallow enter the castle and are met by the first boss in the game , a giant knife and spring @-@ like creature named Mack . When Mack is defeated , they find a mysterious Star Piece , which Mario takes .

Mallow accompanies Mario as they travel through the Kero Sewers and after they defeat a monster named Belome , they reach Tadpole Pond where they meet Mallow 's grandfather , who reveals that Mallow isn 't really a tadpole and claims that his real parents are waiting for him to return home . The duo travel to Rose Town where they meet a star spirit who has taken control of a doll named Geno . After battling the bow @-@ like creature , Bowyer , who is immobilizing residents of Rose Town with his arrows , they retrieve another Star Piece and Geno joins Mario and tells him that the Star Piece is a part of the shattered Star Road , where he resides . Geno has been tasked with repairing Star Road and defeating Smithy , so that the world 's wishes may again be heard , and he must find the seven pieces held by members of the Smithy gang . The three retrieve the third Star Piece from Punchinello , and continue to Booster Tower where they encounter Bowser , who is trying to reassemble his forces . Though former enemies , they join forces to fight a common enemy as Bowser wishes to reclaim his castle . The new team intercepts the princess , just before she is forcibly married to the eccentric amusement @-@ venue owner , Booster , but it turns out that the wedding wasn 't real and that Booster only wanted the wedding cake . After her rescue , the princess initially returns to Mushroom Kingdom but later joins the party as its final member . After recovering six of the Star Pieces , Mario 's group learns that the final piece is held by Smithy in Bowser 's castle . Upon battling their way through the assembled enemies and returning to the giant sword , they discover that it is actually a gateway to Smithy 's factory and they fight it to gain access to the factory , where Smithy mass @-@ produces his army . In the end , Smithy is defeated , the giant sword disappears , and the collected Star Pieces are used to repair the Star Road .

= = Development = =

Yoshio Hongo of Nintendo explained the game 's origins : " Square 's RPGs sold well in Japan but not overseas . There have been calls from all ages , and from young girls , for another character to which they could become attached . Mario was the best , but had not been in an RPG . Nintendo 's

director , Mr. Miyamoto also wanted to do an RPG using Mario . There happened to be a chance for both companies to talk , which went well . "

The game was officially unveiled by both Mario creator and producer Shigeru Miyamoto and co @-@ director Chihiro Fujioka at the 1995 V @-@ Jump Festival event in Japan . Miyamoto led teams at Nintendo and Square , who spent over a year developing the graphics . The story takes place in a newly rendered Mushroom Kingdom based on the Super Mario Bros. series . Square reported that the game was about 70 % complete in October 1995 . The developers created the interior elements such as columns , stairways , and exterior elements with advanced computer modeling techniques . Special lighting effects were used to create shadows and reflections that were meant to improve the 3D elements . With guidance from Miyamoto , Square developed the game , combining role @-@ playing aspects of previous Square games like Final Fantasy VI with the platforming elements of Nintendo 's games . Square 's Final Fantasy series was the model for the battle sequences , while the tradition of Super Mario Bros. games demanded a lot of action . Mario 's ability to jog in eight directions and jump up or down in three ? quarter perspective gave him a (comparatively) large range of motion . At 70 % completion , the mix of adventure and action game play elements placed it in a category closer to The Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past .

When Nintendo of America received a 60 % complete version in November , the staff were surprised at the inclusion of an RPG battle system . The battle screens , using pre @-@ rendered sprites as in the rest of the game , included attack animations of equipped weapons . In December , further development and improvements to the gameplay delayed the translation of the game . For example , the Chancellor , who was named the Mushroom Retainer in Japan , was called the " Minister " in North America . Plans continued through February for the North American version , changing the release date forecast from winter to spring .

Super Mario RPG : Legend of the Seven Stars is one of only seven SNES games released outside Japan to use the Nintendo SA @-@ 1 chip . Compared with standard SNES games , the additional microprocessor allows higher clock speeds ; faster access to the random @-@ access memory (RAM) ; greater memory mapping capabilities , data storage , and compression ; new direct memory access (DMA) modes , such as bitmap to bit plane transfer ; and built @-@ in CIC lockout for piracy protection and regional marketing control . When asked about the possibility of a European release , Nintendo representatives said there were no plans for one , and remarked that preparing an RPG for release in Europe is far more difficult than other regions due to the need to optimize the game for PAL TV systems and translate it into multiple languages .

= = = Music = = =

Yoko Shimomura , best known for her previous work in Street Fighter II , composed the game 's music . As part of the score , she incorporated arrangements of music by Koji Kondo from Super Mario Bros. and three tracks by Nobuo Uematsu from Final Fantasy IV . Shimomura regards the Super Mario RPG soundtrack as one of the turning points in her career as a composer . The music from the game was released as a soundtrack album , titled Super Mario RPG Original Sound Version (?????????? ????? ? ???? ? ?????? , S?p? Mario ?ru P? J? Orijinaru Saundo Vu?jon) . NTT Publishing released it in Japan on March 25 , 1996 . The two @-@ disc set contains 61 of the game 's 73 songs .

= = Reception = =

Super Mario RPG received universal acclaim and has appeared on reader @-@ selected " best game of all time " lists , such as 26th on GameFAQs and 30th at IGN . Japanese audiences received Super Mario RPG well with 1 @.@ 47 million copies sold , making it the third highest @-@ selling game in Japan in 1996 .

Though various aspects of Super Mario RPG have received mixed reviews , the game garnered praise for the quality of the graphics and for the humor in particular . Nintendo Power 's review commented that the " excellent " 3D graphics helped the game appeal to a much wider audience

than most traditional RPGs . In March 1997 , Nintendo Power nominated the game for several awards , including " Best Graphics " , in a player 's choice contest , though Super Mario 64 won " Best Graphics " . Electronic Gaming Monthly praised the graphics , stating that they are " the best seen on the Super NES " . 1UP.com stated that the graphic element is " strong enough to resemble a Mario title but still retains the role @-@ playing theme at the same time " , and Electronic Gaming Monthly commented that the graphics are " typical of Nintendo , using clean and colorful graphics along with nice animation " . RPGamer editor Derek Cavin called the backgrounds " beautiful " and stated that they " perfectly bring the Mushroom Kingdom and surrounding areas into 3D " . Skyler Miller from Allgame stated that the graphics are " absolutely outstanding , with colorful , 3D rendered visuals that once seemed impossible on the Super NES . This is definitely the high watermark for 3D graphics on any 16 @-@ bit system " . The editor also called the music " quite extraordinary " and that the songs " match the mood of the surrounding environment " . In the Virtual Console re @-@ release , IGN 's Lucas Thomas 's review of Super Mario RPG stated that the game 's experience " completes itself with a compelling story , a humorous attitude and a variety of interspersed mini @-@ games that break up the adventuring action " . The publication also stated that the soundtrack is " spectacular and a joy to listen to " and the graphics " took full advantage of the system 's 16 @-@ bit technology and looks great " .

Despite the praise , Cavin noted that most of the battle system mechanics " aren 't very original " and also noting the " lack of a unified storyline " which is " far from great " . Miller commented that after engaging in many battles , " the battle music becomes monotonous " and that after the game is beaten , " There aren 't any surprises to be discovered the second time around " . While 1UP.com stated that " The characters seem too childish for older gamers " .

= = Legacy = =

Super Mario RPG does not have a direct sequel . Nintendo originally announced a game entitled Super Mario RPG 2 , but was changed to " Paper Mario " before release . Considered to be its thematic and spiritual sequels , two successive RPG @-@ themed Mario series , Paper Mario as well as Mario & Luigi , followed conventions established in the original . This includes the use of Flower Points as a shared party resource instead of each character having their own pool of Magic Points , timed action commands during battles , and , in the original Paper Mario , the collection of the seven stars . Mario & Luigi : Superstar Saga features the Geno doll , with a mention of Square Enix as the copyright holder of the character in the end credits . Various locations and characters from the game appear in the children 's book Mario and the Incredible Rescue released by Scholastic in 2006 .

On May 30 , 2008 , Nintendo announced that Super Mario RPG was to be released on the Virtual Console in Japan the following month . On June 13 , 2008 , the OFLC rated the game for release in Australia . On June 24 , 2008 , it was released on the Virtual Console in Japan . On August 22 , 2008 , the game was released for the first time in Europe and Australia , as part of the third Hanabi Festival alongside a release of Super Mario Bros : The Lost Levels on the European Virtual Console after being available for a limited period during the first Hanabi Festival . Certain animations , namely those for the Flame Wall and Static E ! attacks , were dimmed to reduce the potential for triggering sensitive players ' seizures , and colors were adjusted . On September 1 , 2008 , it was released on the Virtual Console in North America , under the distinction of being the 250th Virtual Console game released in that region . Super Mario RPG was released on Wii U 's Virtual Console in Japan and Europe in 2015 , and in North America on June 30 , 2016 . Geno , one of the main characters originating in this game , is a downloadable Mii Fighter costume in Super Smash Bros. for Nintendo 3DS and Wii U.