= The Final Fantasy Legend =

The Final Fantasy Legend , known in Japan as Makai Toushi Sa · Ga (???? Sa ? Ga , lit . " Warrior in the Tower of the Spirit World ~ Sa · Ga ") , is a video game released for the Game Boy in December 1989 by Square Co . It is the first game in the SaGa series and the first role @-@ playing video game for the system . Square translated the game into English for worldwide release and renamed it , linking it with the Final Fantasy series to improve marketing . Sunsoft re @-@ released it in North America during 1998 ; Square followed with an enhanced remake released for the WonderSwan Color and mobile phones in 2002 and 2007 respectively .

The Final Fantasy Legend operates on a turn @-@ based system similar to that of Final Fantasy II . The game 's characters battle monsters and fiends using a variety of weapons , armor , and skills that develop through the player 's actions . The game follows the story of four heroes who attempt to scale a tower at the center of the world that supposedly leads to paradise . The four heroes may belong to one of three character classes , each housing a unique customization path .

The Final Fantasy Legend was conceived by Nobuyuki Hoshino and developed under director Akitoshi Kawazu ; renowned composer Nobuo Uematsu wrote its score . The game is Square 's first million seller with 1 @.@ 37 million units shipped . Though released to mixed reception , it has since been described as one of the Game Boy 's greatest games and cited as an influence for series such as the Pokémon franchise .

= = Gameplay = =

In The Final Fantasy Legend , the player navigates a character throughout the game world with a party of up to four characters , exploring areas and interacting with non @-@ player characters . Most of the game occurs in towns , castles , caves , and similar areas . To aid exploration on the field screen , the game makes use of various signs within towns . The player is initially limited to the World of Continent to explore , and given access to later worlds as his or her party climbs the Tower . Players can save their game anytime and anywhere when not in combat to a save slot for later play .

Players can journey between field screen locations via the world map , a downsized representation of Final Fantasy Legend 's various worlds . Players can freely navigate around the world map screen unless restricted by terrain , such as water or mountains . The goal in each world is to find the entrance to the next level of the Tower . Random enemy encounters occasionally interrupt travel across the world map screen and hostile areas , as in other Final Fantasy related games .

= = = Classes = = =

At the beginning of the game , the player must choose a character class , gender , and name for the group 's " party leader " . There are three available classes : humans , mutants (espers in the Japanese version) , and monsters , each with its own strengths and weaknesses . Character classes cannot be changed once the game has begun . The player may recruit up to three additional party members through a similar process via " Member Guilds " in various towns . Characters may also be recruited to replace fallen party members , though the party leader is irreplaceable . Higher @-@ level party members may be recruited at later towns in the game .

A character 's performance in battle is determined by numerical values (" statistics ") for four categories . Each statistic has a range of 1 to 99 . The categories are strength , the effectiveness of physical attacks ; defense , the ability to reduce damage received ; agility , the effectiveness of ranged weapons or skills and at avoiding attacks ; and mana , the effectiveness of magical attacks . A character 's health is measured in hit points (HP) , consisting of a current HP statistic and a maximum HP statistic , ranging from 0 to 999 . Character statistics are relative to their class ? humans have higher HP levels , strength , and defense , and mutants are physically weaker but enjoy a higher mana statistic . Human and mutant statistics can be amplified by worn equipment of different types . Monster @-@ class characters are dependent on their sub @-@ class , and their

statistics vary greatly .
 Humans raise their statistics through items that grant permanent bonuses , such as " STRENGTH " or " HP200 " . Mutant attributes simply increase by random increments after battles , and new abilities may be gained (or lost) in the process . Monsters change in power by consuming " meat " dropped in battles ; depending the monster 's current sub @-@ class and the meat 's origin , the monster may transform into a stronger or weaker sub @-@ class or fully recover health . Later versions of the game released upon the WonderSwan and mobile phones removed the latter effect entirely .

= = = Equipment and abilities = = =

 The basic function of equipment in SaGa games is to increase character attributes . Arming a character with a gold helmet increases his or her base defense statistic , for example . The amount of equipment that can be placed on any one character at any time depends on the character 's class . Humans can hold eight , mutants four , and monsters none . There are five types of armor : shields , helmets , breastplates , gauntlets , and shoes . Only one of each at a time may be added to one character and cannot be added to monsters . Weapons , consisting of swords , hammers , whips , spell books , and guns , utilize either the strength , agility or mana attribute of a character , and can be used only a certain number of times before breaking and being removed from the player 's inventory . Shields can be used as items in combat , most with a limited number of uses , and allow the user to evade enemy attacks .
 Mutants and monsters have different spells and abilities depending on their battle experience and sub @-@ class . These come in one of four categories : attack , non @-@ combative , healing , and resistances / weaknesses . When used in combat , attack spells and abilities will damage a target by an elemental type , while non @-@ combative spells and abilities inflict various status ailments (such as " blindness ") or grant benefits upon a target . Healing spells and abilities restore a target 's HP and can be used outside of combat . Certain spells and abilities have added traits , like affecting a group of enemies or draining HP from a target . Each spell and ability has a finite number of uses , and once depleted the party must visit an inn to recharge them . Resistances and weaknesses are abilities that are active throughout combat . Represented by an " O " or " X " next to the related element or status ailment , they respectively give the user either resistance or weakness to one or more types of attack ; status ailments grant immunity against a particular ailment .
 Curative items can be found or purchased in the game through various means , each with a limited number of uses and able to be activated from a character 's inventory or the items sub @-@ menu to restore HP or remove a status ailment in or out of combat from a single target . Like other inventory items , in order to be used during combat these must be placed in a party member 's equipment slot prior to battle .

= = = Combat = = =

 Combat is initiated when the player encounters an enemy , which changes the map to the " battle screen " . The enemy appears at the top , above the current party characters ; each battle uses a menu @-@ driven turn @-@ based system . At the beginning of each turn , the player selects whether to fight or attempt to run . If the fight option is selected , the player selects an action for each party member from his or her equipment or skills to attack , defend , use magic , or use equipped items . Once the player has chosen actions for each player character , the player characters and enemy begin battle . Participants move one at a time determined by their agility statistic . If the player tries the " attempt to run " option and it fails , the party skip their turn and the enemy attacks . Combat ends if the party successfully flees , all enemies are defeated , or all player characters are defeated ; in the last case , the game ends and must be reloaded from the last save .

 Winning battles may award the player money (GP) and items . Enemy monsters occasionally drop meat , which can be consumed by monster @-@ class characters . Mutant classes may " evolve " at

this point , randomly gaining either increased statistics or a new random magic spell or ability , possibly overwriting an existing one . Party members that lose HP during combat can have them restored via curative items , spells , inns , or elements of the world such as healing fountains . If a party member other than the starting character is defeated in battle , he or she loses a " heart " and must be resurrected in a town via the building with a large heart @-@ shaped symbol on it . Defeated characters with no remaining hearts cannot be revived . An item can be bought at significant expense to restore a heart to a character . Alternatively , a fallen party member can also be replaced completely with a new character recruited from a town guild , regardless of the number of hearts they have remaining .

= = Story = =

= = = Setting = = =

 The Final Fantasy Legend takes place on several worlds centered around a large tower , built by the Creator in ancient times (God in the Japanese version) to link worlds . There are four unique major worlds that make up different layers of the tower : the World of Continent at the base , the World of Ocean on the 5th floor , the World of Sky on the 10th , and the World of Ruins on the 16th . Time does not flow at a constant pace between levels of the tower , rendering some worlds more technologically advanced than others . Various monsters come forth from the tower into each world ; many are hostile , but some of them are friendly to humans and willing to coexist . An offshoot of the human race (named mutants) also exists in each world ; they are the magic @-@ attuned descendants of a union between humans and the World of Continent 's older races .
 The World of Continent is a large land mass ruled by three kings in constant war for control of their world . They each carry an object needed to open the tower 's entrance . The World of Ocean consists of various small islands surrounded by water , each connected by small caves . Pirates roam the sea of this world , forbidding travel by ship . The World of Sky contains large land masses suspended in clouds , and is ruled by a powerful dictator from his flying castle . The World of Ruins is a technologically advanced cityscape , reduced to a post @-@ apocalyptic wasteland by constant monster attacks .

= = = Plot = = =

 Standing in front of the tower , the hero and party learn that they cannot climb it to paradise without first unsealing its base door . In the base world , three kings named Armor , Sword , and Shield fight for dominance using a piece of legendary equipment corresponding to their names . Visiting King Armor , the party learns that he is in love with a girl who returns his feelings , but cannot marry him , as a bandit holds her village hostage in return for her love . They defeat the bandit , and the king gives them his armor in gratitude . King Sword attacks the heroes , who vanquish him and take the sword . Lastly , King Shield is murdered by his own steward , and after a short fight , the party recovers his shield . Restoring the items to a statue of a great hero , they receive the Black Sphere , but are attacked by Gen @-@ bu , the first of four fiends controlled by Ashura . They defeat him and use the power of the Sphere to enter the tower .
 They climb the tower and come to another door ; inside lies a second world surrounded by large bodies of water . By navigating caves , they find a floating island which allows them to travel around the world by air . They locate an old man , Ryu @-@ O , and solve his riddle to obtain the Airseed , allowing them to breathe underwater and enter the undersea palace . They encounter the second fiend , Sei @-@ ryu ; they defeat him and recover half of the second sphere . Upon returning to Ryu @-@ O , he reveals himself to be the guardian of the other half of the sphere , and the two halves form the Blue Sphere .
 Using the Blue Sphere to continue up the tower , the party comes to a world of clouds , dominated by Byak @-@ ko and an army of thugs . They learn that Byak @-@ ko recently wiped out an

underground resistance movement , except for Millie and Jeanne , the two daughters of its leader . The party temporarily joins Byak @-@ ko 's gang to find the girls , and attempt to defend them until Millie betrays Jeanne and the party is captured . Breaking free , they confront the fiend , who tries to kill Millie ; Jeanne takes the blow and the party engages the fiend . They defeat him , recover the White Sphere , and continue their journey .

The fourth world is a post @-@ apocalyptic wasteland ; Su @-@ Zaku roams the surface defended by an impenetrable forcefield . The party retreats to an abandoned subway for refuge and meets Sayaka , who directs them to the nearest town . There the party is confronted by the leader of a biker gang , So @-@ Cho , but his sister Sayaka intervenes and the two groups agree to work together to defeat Su @-@ Zaku . As they gather the needed parts for a device to deactivate the forcefield , So @-@ Cho sacrifices his life to guide the party through an atomic power plant . Beasts then ambush the town , and Su @-@ Zaku kidnaps Sayaka . The party defeats Su @-@ Zaku , earns the Red Sphere and travels on .

Climbing the tower , the party discovers the remains of a family that attempted to reach Paradise but failed , and a library suggesting Ashura is controlled by someone else . They encounter him at the top , guarding the final door ; he offers each of them control of one of the worlds , but they refuse and defeat him . Before they can pass through the door , a trap drops them to the bottom floor . Encountering the allies they made along their journey , they decide to rescale the tower . As they climb stairs that wrap outside of the tower , they engage each of the fiends revived and defeat them . They find the Creator at the summit , and learn that the fiends and the tower itself are actually part of a game created by him to see heroes defeat evil ; for succeeding they would be granted a wish as a reward . Angry at his manipulation , they reject the reward and challenge the Creator , who insists that because he created everything he was allowed to use them as he saw fit . They then attack and defeat the Creator in a fierce battle . The heroes then discover a door leading to an unknown location ; they consider entering , but decide to return to their own world .

= = Development = =

The Final Fantasy Legend was conceived by Nobuyuki Hoshino and developed under director Akitoshi Kawazu two years after Final Fantasy was released . It was the first installment of the SaGa series in Japan and the first Game Boy game produced by Square . Square president Masafumi Miyamoto requested developers create a Game Boy game after he noticed the success of Tetris and the popularity of handheld system . Kawazu and partner Koichi Ishii decided that instead of creating a game similar to Tetris , they would produce what they felt customers desired most : a role @-@ playing game .

Square 's concept for the game was a title that could be completed in six to eight hours , based on the duration of an airplane flight between Narita , Japan and Honolulu , Hawaii . Developers sought to optimize the game for short bursts of gameplay , as if played by a train passenger between stations . Square raised random battle encounter rate relative to its other role playing games , ensuring players would have at least one enemy encounter during short playtime to maintain an interesting experience . The Final Fantasy Legend was designed to be difficult and feature advanced gameplay , described by Kawazu as the main difference between the SaGa and Final Fantasy series . Square implemented several other ideas to distance the games , notably the " meat " system to allow players to collect enemy abilities , though these proved difficult to portray at first .

Kawazu took a direct hand in shaping the game 's scenario development , working alongside Ishii , Takashi Tokita , and Hiroyuki Ito , who were involved in other Square projects at the time . Ishii and Ito developed the game 's world layout and geography as well ; Ry?ko Tanaka designed the background graphics . Tokita developed character concept art and handled the in @-@ game sprites . The monochrome screen of the Game Boy proved an obstacle , as some graphics such as fire were more difficult to portray without color . As a result , they had to develop a world that " works in black and white " . Tanaka later revealed that the 2 @-@ megabit capacity of contemporary Game Boy cartridges severely limited their designs ; the team removed some elements from the finished game to ensure peak performance .

= = = Audio = = =

The Final Fantasy Legend 's soundtrack was composed by Nobuo Uematsu and consists of sixteen tracks . Uematsu struggled with composition at first , as the Game Boy 's sound hardware was different from the Famicom 's , featuring a new stereo option , unique waveforms , and only three musical notes . Kawazu wanted the game 's music to resemble that of Square 's two preceding Final Fantasy titles , but Uematsu chose to develop new waveforms . Despite Game Boy 's limited audio capabilities , Uematsu expressed desire to compose music for it again in 2000 , though added regarding the notion of a remake " it would be better to have high quality music and graphics , but we need to make sure that the users enjoy the game . "

Square has reused several songs from the game (notably the " Battle " theme) in later titles and released them on compilation soundtracks . The introductory music , titled " Prologue " , appeared remixed as the opening for the next two SaGa games . " Heartful Tears " (also known as " Wipe Your Tears Away ") became a staple for later SaGa titles , used in five of the games and arranged differently each time . Fifteen tracks were later included in the 1991 two @-@ disc All Sounds of SaGa soundtrack , encompassing the Game Boy SaGa series and re @-@ released by Square Enix in December 2004 as SaGa Zenkyoku Shu . The final track of the set , " Journey 's End " , is a synthesizer @-@ arranged version of six of the game 's tracks combined into one by Uematsu . In the liner notes for All Sounds of SaGa , Uematsu states he enjoys listening to the track while remembering scenes from the game . The Kanagawa Philharmonic Orchestra played the song in the Press Start 2008 -Symphony of Games- concert as part of the " When Nobuo Uematsu Was Young " medley , while the " Main Theme " was played alongside " Save the World " from Final Fantasy Legend II on July 9 , 2011 at the Symphonic Odysseys concert .

= = = Merchandise = = =

Several items of merchandise have been released for the game , including books and telephone cards . Futabasha Publishers Ltd. released a book in February 1990 titled Makai Toushi Sa · Ga ? Boukenshatachi no Rekuiemu (??????????? ? , Requiem of their Adventures) . Written by Misa Ikeda , the 287 @-@ page book was part of Futabasha 's Game Boy Adventure series for children , and detailed a hero 's trek to the top of the tower to reach Paradise . In August , Square featured the game in Final Fantasy Ry?kishi Dan - Knights (= ??????????????? ? , Final Fantasy Dragon Knights) , a fan book which consisting of reactions and artworks to the series . The game was one of four titles featured in October 1992 by Game Player 's magazine on a video tape named Game Player 's Gametape for Game Boy Games , which demonstrated the game and offered a gameplay tutorial .

= = Versions and re @-@ releases = =

Square released the game December 1989 in Japan as Makai Toushi Sa · Ga and included a map for the four major worlds in the game ; a revised version followed shortly after . Square translated it to English in March 1990 , and planned to release it in North America with new artwork as The Great Warrior Saga . Square retitled it The Final Fantasy Legend before releasing it on September 30 , 1990 to tie into the popularity of the Final Fantasy video game . Developers made slight modifications for this version , such as removing the game 's credits and adjusting the longevity of certain weapons . Changes to the text were also made , including the omission of some of Ryu @-@ O 's riddles , removal of mention about self @-@ sacrifice and a hint of the Tower 's true purpose . Notably , the exchange between the player 's party and the Creator , where the latter reveals that he created Asura simply out of boredom , is altered . In 1998 , Sunsoft acquired the license to the Game Boy " Final Fantasy " games , re @-@ releasing them in North America the same year . Despite advertising compatibility with Nintendo 's Game Boy Color handheld , the re @-@ released version featured no enhancements .

Square announced in September 2001 a re @-@ release of The Final Fantasy Legend for Bandai 's WonderSwan Color unit ; the Japan @-@ exclusive port debuted March 2002 under the Japanese title . Toshiyuki Itahana redrew the concept art and graphics , and Square added animated cutscenes . Developers also enabled players to see in advance what a monster would transform into before eating meat left behind after battle . The port allowed playthrough of the intact original Game Boy version . Among other changes and additions were gameplay tweaks , a bestiary , and an added feature that allowed players to automatically target an enemy for attack in combat .

As of January 30 , 2007 , Square Enix had renewed their trademark on the Japanese name for the game , and at Square Enix 's 2007 Tokyo Game Show in September made a mobile phone port of the Wonderswan version available for play . Square released the game for download in late 2008 for Japanese i @-@ mode , EZweb compatible phones , and Yahoo ! Mobile compatible phones . The port removed the bestiary mode and original Game Boy version of the game , and condensed some of the in @-@ game cutscenes . It added Japanese kanji support and extra shops with new equipment throughout the quest .

= = Reception = =

The Final Fantasy Legend is Square 's first game to sell over a million copies ; the Game Boy version alone shipped 1 @.@ 37 million copies worldwide (1 @.@ 15 million in Japan) as of March 31 , 2003 . Square quickly released two sequels for the Game Boy , and marketed subsequent SaGa games on other video game consoles . The one @-@ eyed monster featured on the Japanese box art later became the series ' mascot , appearing in the sequel as a character named " Mr. S " . Game Freak founder Satoshi Tajiri cited the game 's influence behind the Game Boy Pokémon series , stating it gave him the idea that the system could handle more than action games .

Upon release , Makai Toushi Sa · Ga was acclaimed by Japanese critics . Famitsu awarded the game an overall score of 35 out of 40 . Among its panel of four reviewers , three gave it 9 out of 10 , while one gave it 8 out of 10 . This made it one of their two highest @-@ rated games of 1989 , along with Ys I & II . In addition , up until 1989 , it was one of only seven games to have received a score of at least 35 out of 40 or above from Famitsu .

Western critics had a few complaints , but gave mostly positive reviews . The Chicago Tribune called the game " a little slow in spots , but , like Final Fantasy , worth your patience " , and a " good quest " . The newspaper gave the game ratings of 8 out of 10 and 7 out of 10 . German gaming magazine Power Play gave the game a score of 78 % , and praised it for showing potential for the Game Boy as the first role @-@ playing game on the platform . IGN called The Final Fantasy Legend a " compelling RPG with a complex gameplay system and a solid soundtrack " , but complained about the game 's difficulty and " dated " graphics . Allgame praised the title on its merits as a role @-@ playing game , but criticized its high difficulty and lack of a sense of direction . 1UP 's Retronauts described its gameplay as a successor to Final Fantasy II 's , though added that the systems involved were not properly refined until its sequel ; they further stated that the randomness of the mutant and monster character classes made the game very difficult .

Other Western publications reacted to The Final Fantasy Legend more favorably . Author Jeff Rovin heavily praised the title in the book How to Win at Game Boy Games , citing the thorough manual and considering the game a " masterful achievement for the Game Boy unit , and a superlative game of [its] kind " , though not as complex as The Legend of Zelda . Spencer Yip of Siliconera named it as a game he was thankful for playing , citing it as opening his mind to story @-@ based games more so than titles like Dragon Quest , and in part led to the creation of the website . In May 1991 , Nintendo Power named the game the third all @-@ around best Game Boy game of the previous year , and in September 1997 they ranked it 70th on their list of the " Top 100 " games to appear on a Nintendo system , stating that it had " stayed true to the Square Soft tradition " . TechnoBuffalo 's Ron Duwell acknowledged while it was regarded less favorably than its sequels , its flaws could be worked around and added " There is nothing quite like The Final Fantasy Legend . Not before it , [...] and only a single sequel to follow up on its ideas . " . 1UP.com 's Jeremy Parish

called it one of the " essential " games for the Game Boy as well as one of the best of 1989 , noting its introduction of new ideas that contrasted the Final Fantasy series and calling it " a pretty decent portable RPG in its own right " . GameDaily named it a definite game for Game Boy alongside the related Final Fantasy titles , describing it as providing " hours of role @-@ playing excitement , whether you were waiting in a dentist 's office or on the way to Grandma 's house . " Andrew Vanden Bossche described the game as " unusual " amongst Japanese roleplaying games , describing its narrative as " loosely connected experiences rather than the sort of epic narrative the RPG genre is commonly thought of " . As a result , the off @-@ screen deaths of non @-@ player characters felt more " poignant " and an example of memento mori . However , he also felt the monster class system as counter @-@ intuitive , as frequently said classes emphasized the point of enemies as " designed to pose challenges , not overcome them " . Electronic Gaming Monthly , Game Informer , Pocket Games , and GameSpot shared this sentiment ; the latter three named it one of the top fifty games for the Game Boy .

The difficulty and significance of the game 's final boss , the Creator , has elicited several mentions . GamePro named him one of the " 47 Most Diabolical Video @-@ Game Villains of All Time " , placing him 37th on the list and adding " You gotta wonder ... how many hit points did the developers give God ? " 1UP.com described the battle as " epic " , considering it part of a recurring theme of Japanese role @-@ playing games in which characters band together to kill God . Comedian Jackie Kashian referenced the Creator on Comedy Central Presents , describing the game 's final battle as " the worst premise ever of any video game " , and recalling how she still tried for eight months to defeat the boss . Despite the final boss ' difficulty , it can be killed easily by the instant @-@ death " chainsaw " weapon . In 2009 , Square Enix battle planner Nobuyuki Matsuoka paid homage to the fact in the game Final Fantasy XIII , by deliberately giving the title 's final boss a similar vulnerability .