

= The Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past =

The Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past , known as The Legend of Zelda : Triforce of the Gods ( Japanese : ?????? ?????????? , Hepburn : Zeruda no Densetsu : Kamigami no Toraifu ) in Japan , is an action @-@ adventure video game developed and published by Nintendo for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System video game console . It is the third installment in The Legend of Zelda series and was released in 1991 in Japan and 1992 in North America and Europe .

The plot of A Link to the Past focuses on Link as he travels on a journey to save Hyrule , defeat Ganon and rescue maidens related to the Sages . A Link to the Past uses a 3 / 4 top @-@ down perspective similar to that of the original The Legend of Zelda , dropping the side scrolling elements of Zelda II : The Adventure of Link . A Link to the Past introduced elements to the series that are still commonplace today , such as the concept of an alternate or parallel world , the Master Sword and other new weapons and items .

Released to critical and commercial success , A Link to the Past was a landmark title for Nintendo and is widely considered today to be one of the greatest video games of all time . Over four million units of the game have been sold worldwide . A Link to the Past was ported to the Game Boy Advance with slight changes , and is available for the Wii , Wii U , and New Nintendo 3DS via the Virtual Console .

A successor to the game , titled The Legend of Zelda : A Link Between Worlds , was released for the Nintendo 3DS in November 2013 .

= = Gameplay = =

Instead of continuing to use the side @-@ scrolling perspective introduced to the series by Zelda II : The Adventure of Link , A Link to the Past reverts to an overhead perspective similar to that of the original . While A Link to the Past still uses mechanics and concepts from the original game , it also introduces new elements and innovations . For instance , arrows are now separate items , as bombs are in the original , instead of using a Rupee to fire an arrow . A Link to the Past also takes concepts from The Adventure of Link , such as the magic meter , which is used by items such as the Lamp . Control of Link is more flexible than in previous games , as he can walk diagonally and can run with the aid of the Pegasus Boots ( Pegasus Shoes in the GBA version ) . Link 's sword attack was improved to swing sideways instead of merely stabbing forward ; this gives his sword a broader range and makes combat easier . Link swings his sword as the default attack in future Zelda games , although stabbing is also possible in the later 3D incarnations .

Recurring items and techniques were introduced for the first time in A Link to the Past , such as the Hookshot , the Master Sword , the Spin Attack technique , the Flute ( even though its icon is an ocarina ) , and the Pegasus Boots . Heart Containers that increase the player 's maximum health ( hit points ) in the earlier two games are present , but many are split into " Pieces of Heart " , four of which make up one Heart Container . Most of them are well hidden , adding replay value to the game . All dungeons are multi @-@ level , requiring Link to walk between floors and sometimes fall through holes to land on lower levels .

A Link to the Past is the first appearance of what would subsequently become a major Zelda trademark : the existence of two parallel worlds between which the player travels . The first , called the Light World , is the ordinary Hyrule where Link grew up with his uncle . The second is what was once the Sacred Realm , but became the Dark World when Ganon acquired the Triforce . The Dark World is a corrupted version of Hyrule ; the water is a dark , unpleasant blue @-@ green color , the grass is dead , skulls replace rocks and pots , and trees have faces . People change forms in the Dark World based on their nature ; without an item to prevent it ( in this case , the Moon Pearl ) , Link turns into a pink rabbit . Each location in the Light World corresponds to a similar location in the Dark World , usually with a similar physical structure but an opposite nature ( e.g. a desert in the Light World corresponds to a swamp in the Dark World , a peaceful village in the Light World corresponds to a dilapidated town of thieves in the Dark World ) .

Link can travel from the Dark World to the Light World at almost any outside location by using the

Magic Mirror , and can travel back to the Dark World again from the same location using a temporary portal left behind on the map at the point where he reappears in the Light World . Otherwise , Link must use hidden warp locations throughout the Light World to travel from the Light World to the Dark World . Travel between worlds allows for puzzles in A Link to the Past that exploit structural differences between the Light and Dark Worlds , as Link may travel to otherwise inaccessible areas in one world by warping from parallel but accessible locations in the other world .

= = Plot = =

= = = Characters = = =

Players assume the role of hero Link , a young boy living with his uncle south of Hyrule Castle . Princess Zelda , a descendant of the seven sages , is held captive in the castle dungeon by Agahnim , a treacherous wizard who has set forth a chain of events to unleash Ganon . Sahasrahla , a descendant of those who forged the Master Sword , mentors Link on his quest . Series antagonist Ganon remains sealed in the Dark World .

= = = Story = = =

A Link to the Past is a prequel to the original The Legend of Zelda and Zelda II : The Adventure of Link . At the beginning of the game , a young boy named Link is awakened by a telepathic message from Princess Zelda , who says that she is locked in the dungeon of nearby Hyrule Castle . As the message closes , Link finds his uncle ready for battle , telling Link to remain in bed . After his uncle leaves , however , Link ignores his uncle 's command and follows him to the dungeons under Hyrule Castle . When he arrives , he finds his uncle mortally wounded . Link 's uncle tells Link to rescue Princess Zelda from her prison , giving him his sword and shield . Link navigates the castle and rescues Zelda from her cell , and the two escape into a secret passage through the sewers that leads to a sanctuary .

Link is told by a man in the sanctuary that Agahnim , a wizard who has usurped the throne , is planning to break a seal made hundreds of years ago by the Seven Sages . The seal was placed to imprison a dark wizard named Ganon in the Dark World , a near @-@ mirror of Hyrule which was once known as the Sacred Realm before Ganon invaded it , obtained the legendary Triforce held there , and used its power to turn the realm into a land of darkness . Agahnim intends to break the seal by sending the descendants of the Seven Sages who made the seal into the Dark World . The only thing that can defeat Agahnim is the Master Sword , a sword forged to combat evil . To prove that he is worthy to wield it , Link needs three magic pendants , hidden in dungeons guarded by mythical defenders . On his way to retrieve the first , he meets an elder , Sahasrahla , who becomes Link 's mentor offering hints and advice at key stages of the journey . After retrieving the pendants , Link takes them to the resting place of the Master Sword . As Link draws the sword from its pedestal , Zelda telepathically calls him to the Sanctuary , informing him that soldiers of Hyrule Castle have arrived . Link arrives at the Sanctuary moments after the soldiers have vacated , where he learns from the dying Sanctuary keeper that Zelda has been taken to Hyrule Castle . Link goes to rescue her but arrives too late ; Agahnim sends Zelda to the Dark World . Link then faces Agahnim in battle and defeats him , but Agahnim 's last act is to send Link to the Dark World as well .

To save Hyrule , Link is required to rescue the seven descendants of the Seven Sages from dungeons scattered across the Dark World . Once the seven maidens are freed , they use their power to break the barrier around Ganon 's Tower , where Link faces Agahnim , who creates two ghostly specters each as powerful as he is . After Link defeats Agahnim for a second time , Ganon rises up from Agahnim 's body , turns into a bat , and flies away . Link chases him , finally confronting him inside the Pyramid of Power at the center of the Dark World . After a battle resulting in Ganon 's demise , Link touches the Triforce and restores both the Dark World and Hyrule to their state before Ganon intervened .

## == Development ==

In 1988 , development of a new NES Zelda began , but one year later , the project was brought to Nintendo 's next console ; the Super Famicom in Japan , the Super Nintendo Entertainment System in other regions . Due to the success of previous titles in the series , Nintendo was able to invest a large budget and ample development time and resources into the game 's production . At the time , most SNES game cartridges had 4 Mbit ( 512 KB ) of storage space . This game broke the trend by using 8 Mbit ( 1 MB ) , allowing the Nintendo development team to create a remarkably expansive world for Link to inhabit . Like Super Mario World , this game used a simple graphic compression method on the SNES by limiting the color depth of many tiles to eight colors instead of the SNES 's native 16 @-@ color tiles . The tiles were decompressed at runtime by adding a leading bit to each pixel 's color index . Storage space was also saved by eliminating duplication : The Light World and the Dark World are almost identical in layout ( though using differing texture tiles ) , and the Dark World exists in the game 's ROM only as an " overlay " of the Light World .

The script of the game was written by series newcomer Kensuke Tanabe , while Yoshiaki Koizumi was responsible for the background story explained in the instruction manual . The English language localization included changes to the original Japanese game . The most common change was the removal of religious references to conform with Nintendo of America 's content guidelines . The most obvious change was made to the subtitle of the game , which was renamed from Kamigami no Triforce ( lit . " The Triforce of the Gods " ) to A Link to the Past . The " Sanctuary " in which Zelda hides during the first act is quite obviously modeled on the Christian chapel , with rows of pews , stained glass windows , a raised chancel and altar , but it contains no overt religious symbols , and the dialogue of characters within it was simplified to remove any religious implication . The font used to represent an unreadable language , Hylian , originally had designs of a vulture and an ankh . These designs were based on Egyptian hieroglyphs which carry religious meanings , and they were altered in the English version . The localization also changed plot details included in the instruction manual . The priest Agahnim became a wizard , and his background , which originally implied that he was sent by the gods , was altered to remove any celestial origin .

## == Music ==

The score to A Link to the Past was composed , arranged , and produced by Koji Kondo . The overworld theme of The Legend of Zelda ( " Hyrule Overture " ) returns in A Link to the Past , redone in S @-@ SMP style . The theme is also featured in " Light World Overworld " and in " End Credits " . A Link to the Past helped to establish the musical core of the Zelda series . While the first game originated the " Hyrule Overture " , many recurring motifs of the Zelda scores come from A Link to the Past , including " Zelda 's Lullaby " ( Princess Zelda 's Theme ) , " Ganondorf 's Theme " , " Hyrule Castle " ( Royal Family Theme ) , " Kakariko Village " and " Select Screen / Fairy Cave " . These themes have been used in subsequent The Legend of Zelda games . A soundtrack to Kamigami no Triforce , entitled The Legend of Zelda : Sound and Drama , was released by Sony Records in Japan on June 22 , 1994 . The first disc is 44 minutes long and features rearranged versions of a selection of the game 's themes , along with a bonus drama track . The second disc features 54 minutes of the original arrangements for the game and those of the original NES game , The Legend of Zelda .

## == Legacy ==

### === Chris Houlihan Room ===

Nintendo Power held a contest which selected a winner at random to appear in the next The Legend of Zelda game . A certain single room in A Link to the Past contained 45 Blue Rupees and a

note bearing a greeting from Chris Houlihan , the winner of the contest . The room has been found through five different methods , and was intended as a crash prevention measure ; the game would send players to this room if it couldn 't determine where Link was going when he goes to another area . The message reads : " My name is Chris Houlihan . This is my top secret room . Keep it between us , okay ? " There was not wide awareness of the room until more than a decade after the release of A Link to the Past after the increased popularity of the Internet and Super NES emulators . The Game Boy Advance re @-@ release of A Link to the Past titled The Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past & Four Swords removed the ability to access the room , though it could still be found in the game 's code . The Virtual Console re @-@ releases on the Wii and Wii U of A Link to the Past however allowed players to access the room .

GamesRadar included it in its lists of the greatest video game Easter eggs and the nine " video game secrets that were almost never found . " GamesRadar 's Jason Fanelli called it " one of the Zelda franchise 's biggest mysteries . " GamesRadar 's Justin Towell included it in his list of the top seven secret rooms in video games at number two . He felt that the contest prize was exciting , and called it " one of the coolest and most exclusive secrets in the Zelda universe . " 1UP.com featured it in its list of " 25 things you didn 't know about The Legend of Zelda . " American Broadcasting Company 's Good Game , The Escapist , IGN , GameSpy , G4TV , PALGN , and Nintendo Life referenced it in articles which discuss video game Easter eggs and secrets .

= = = Comics = = =

A comic book adaptation of A Link to the Past illustrated by Shotaro Ishinomori was published in Nintendo Power that was serialized for 12 issues from January to December 1992 . The comic was then re @-@ released as a trade paperback in 1993 . The comic is a loose adaptation of the original game 's story , featuring several plot changes and new characters . Two other manga were released in Japan : a manga by Ataru Cagiva from 1995 to 1996 that was serialized in Enix Corporation 's Monthly GFantasy and later collected into three volumes and a one @-@ volume manga by the duo Akira Himekawa released in 2005 corresponding with the release of Game Boy Advance version . Both follow the game 's plot more closely , and the latter introduced a new character called " Ghanti " , a thief with a single devil 's horn and a star under her eye .

= = = Related games = = =

A French version of this game was released in Canada , making it the only French @-@ only release in North America for the SNES . This version had the same case as the English release in North America , but the whole game was translated in French . On December 2 , 2006 in Japan and January 22 , 2007 in America , the game was added to the Wii Shop Channel 's Virtual Console . Players can download the game for 800 Wii Points , or US \$ 8 . The English version is nearly identical to the English SNES version , with none of the GBA additions or changes . The next Zelda title , Link 's Awakening was released in 1993 for the Nintendo Game Boy . It retained many of A Link to the Past 's gameplay mechanics , including the top @-@ down perspective , as well as an overworld which resembled that of A Link to the Past . After traveling to train abroad , Link is shipwrecked and awakens on an island called Koholint . Beginning on March 2 , 1997 a simple unaltered re @-@ release of the original Japanese version of A Link to the Past was broadcast via Satellaview . The game would be rebroadcast more often than any other Zelda title on the Satellaview , and was the only Zelda title broadcast by St.GIGA after ties with Nintendo were broken in April 1999 . Unlike the two other Satellaview Zelda titles , Kamigami no Triforce lacked SoundLink support . In 2011 Shigeru Miyamoto expressed desire to have A Link to the Past remade for the Nintendo 3DS , stating how attractive the two layers would look . In April 2013 , Nintendo announced in its Nintendo Direct presentation that a new game based on the same world as A Link to the Past is currently in development for Nintendo 3DS , featuring new 3D visuals . Apart from official sequels and re @-@ releases made or licensed by Nintendo , A Link to the Past has proven to be very popular within the game @-@ modding community , inspiring the development of

numerous fangames , such as the unofficial 2007 sequel The Legend of Zelda : Parallel Worlds .

== Inishie no Sekiban ==

In 1997 , a follow @-@ up entitled BS Zelda no Densetsu : Inishie no Sekiban ( lit . " BS The Legend of Zelda : Ancient Stone Tablets " or " Stone Tablets of Antiquity " ) was released in Japan . Designed exclusively for the Super Famicom 's Satellaview peripheral , the game would make notable use of a voice broadcast system called SoundLink to provide voice @-@ acting for several of the characters from A Link to the Past . The game takes place six years after the events in A Link to the Past and it is set in Hyrule 's Light World . The game notably lacks a Link character , and instead the player character is known as the Hero of Light . The available player @-@ characters are actually the male and female BS @-@ X avatars that also featured in BS Zelda no Densetsu . The game was divided into four weekly episodes . These episodes were played live , and a voice @-@ acted soundtrack simultaneously ran on the satellite network , sometimes containing suggestions , clues , and plot development for the game currently being broadcast . Each week , the player could only access certain portions of the overworld . Areas shrouded in clouds were unreachable . Two dungeons were accessible per week , however the episode ended only when time expired and not when the player had completed all the objectives for that week . The game could only be played during the set hours because the SoundLink content was central to gameplay ( and not stored on the base unit or flash @-@ RAM cartridge in any way ) , and the timer was based on a real @-@ time clock set by the satellite itself .

== A Link to the Past and Four Swords ==

The game was re @-@ released for the Game Boy Advance in 2002 in North America and 2003 in other territories as part of The Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past and Four Swords , a collaborative development effort between Nintendo and Capcom . The port of A Link to the Past contains minor changes from the original , including the addition of vocal grunts and other sound effects taken from Ocarina of Time and Majora 's Mask . Four Swords is a multi @-@ player adventure that interacts with the single @-@ player adventure . Accomplishments can be transferred between the two ; for example , if the player learns a new sword technique , it is made available in both modes . By completing Four Swords , a new dungeon called the Palace of the Four Sword is unlocked in A Link to the Past . Dungeons are randomly generated and are affected by the number of players . If only two players are active , the game ensures that all puzzles generated do not require a third or fourth player to solve . The plot of Four Swords revolves around the wind mage Vaati who escapes from the Four Sword he is sealed in and captures Princess Zelda to marry her . Link uses the Four Sword to create three copies of himself and rescues Zelda , trapping Vaati in the sword once again . At the time of its release , the story of Four Swords was considered the oldest tale in the series ' timeline .

== A Link Between Worlds ==

On November 22 , 2013 , Nintendo released The Legend of Zelda : A Link Between Worlds , which takes place in the same world , but features a new storyline , new puzzles and original dungeons . Height and depth play a large role in the game by taking advantage of the 3DS ' 3D feature , while maintaining the traditional top @-@ down perspective . IGN gave the game a score of 9 @. 4 out of 10 .

= Reception =

A Link to the Past is one of the best @-@ selling SNES games , with 4 @. 61 million units sold worldwide , and has had an exceptionally long stay on Nintendo Power 's top games list ( ranking number 2 in Nintendo Power 's last issue ) : when the SNES list was finally retired , A Link to the

Past had more than five consecutive years in the number one spot . It was re @-@ released as a Player 's Choice title in North America , indicating that it has sold a minimum of one million copies there .

A Link to the Past was critically acclaimed upon release for its graphics and gameplay , and has since been recognized by critics as one of the greatest video games of all time . In 2005 , IGN editors placed it 11th in its " Top 100 Games " , while readers voted it to 5th place . The following year Entertainment Weekly chose it as the best game of all @-@ time . Members of GameFAQs ranked it the 4th best , and readers of Japanese magazine Famitsu ranked it 31st in a 2006 poll . It also placed 3rd in Electronic Gaming Monthly 's list , 23rd in Game Informer 's , and 3rd in a best 200 Nintendo games list by Nintendo Power . In July 2007 , readers of the magazine Edge voted it sixth in a poll of the 100 best games of all time . ScrewAttack placed it 2nd on their list of top 20 Super Nintendo games . GamesRadar named A Link to the Past the 3rd best Super NES game of all time , losing only to Chrono Trigger ( 2nd ) and Super Metroid ( 1st ) . It was awarded Best Sequel of 1992 by Electronic Gaming Monthly . The game placed eighth ( the second @-@ highest Zelda game on the list ) in Official Nintendo Magazine 's " 100 greatest Nintendo games of all time " list . In 2009 , Game Informer put A Link to the Past 12th on their list of " The Top 200 Games of All Time " , saying that it " remains a blast today " . This is 11 places ahead of the rank it had back in 2001 . The game was reviewed in 1993 in Dragon No. 198 by Sandy Petersen in the " Eye of the Monitor " column . Petersen gave the game 5 out of 5 stars .

A Link to the Past & Four Swords for the Game Boy Advance received positive reviews and sold over 1 @.@ 81 million units . IGN praised it for being a faithful conversion of the original , but noted that the audio did not sound as crisp on the Game Boy Advance , and found the frequent sound effects tiresome . The game holds the top spot of Metacritic 's all @-@ time high scores for Game Boy Advance games with a score of 95 . In 2007 , IGN named A Link to the Past & Four Swords the third best Game Boy Advance game of all time . GamePro 's Star Dingo called it a " masterpiece , " as well as an " important part of the Grand Renaissance of the Second Dimension . " He also praised the overworld for its secrets and " quirky random characters , " adding that playing it required patience and exploring . Star Dingo praised the port of A Link to the Past 's ability to retain its visuals . He specifically praises its " clean sprites , " calling its overworld a " colorful , happy place , " sarcastically calling it kiddy . He also questioned how the series ' cartoon style was abnormal for the series . Star Dingo called the sound effects " indelible , " though he noted that they were " a little dated . " UGO Networks compared Four Swords to The Legend of Zelda : Oracle of Ages and Oracle of Seasons , calling it " similarly gimmicky " . They commented that the best Four Swords brought was its sequel , The Legend of Zelda : The Minish Cap . CNET praised both the original A Link to the Past release as well as the Four Swords multiplayer mode , calling the former a " great handheld port of one of the greatest games ever released for Nintendo 's 16 @-@ bit system " , while describing the latter as " an exciting , replayable multiplayer experience " .