

= Banjo @-@ Kazooie =

Banjo @-@ Kazooie is a platform video game developed by Rare and originally released for the Nintendo 64 video game console on 29 June 1998 in North America and 17 July 1998 in Europe . It is the first instalment in the Banjo @-@ Kazooie series and follows the story of the title characters Banjo and Kazooie as they try to stop the plans of series antagonist Gruntilda , who intends to switch her beauty with Banjo 's sister Tooty . The game features nine nonlinear levels where the player must complete a number of challenges like solving puzzles , jumping over obstacles , gathering objects , and defeating opponents .

Banjo @-@ Kazooie was originally designed as an adventure game named Project Dream for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System , but was later changed for the Nintendo 64 . The game was a critical and commercial success , selling nearly two million copies in the United States and receiving an aggregated review score of 92 out of 100 from Metacritic . The game was praised for its detailed graphics , immersive sound , and intricate level design . In 1999 , it received two awards from the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences : Console Action Game of the Year and Outstanding Achievement in Art / Graphics . A sequel , Banjo @-@ Tooie , was released for the Nintendo 64 in 2000 . In 2008 , Banjo @-@ Kazooie was re @-@ released for the Xbox 360 through its Xbox Live Arcade download service . The game is also included in the Rare Replay video game compilation , released for the Xbox One in 2015 .

= = Gameplay = =

Banjo @-@ Kazooie is a single @-@ player platform game where the player controls the protagonists Banjo and Kazooie from a third @-@ person perspective . The game is split into nine levels where the player must gather musical notes and jigsaw pieces , called " Jiggies " , to progress . Players transit from one level to another through Gruntilda 's lair , which acts as the game 's central overworld . Jiggies allow the player to complete jigsaw puzzles which open doors to new levels , while musical notes grant players access to new inner sections of the overworld . Like in Super Mario 64 , the gameplay of Banjo @-@ Kazooie is very open and allows the player to collect Jiggies and musical notes in a nonlinear order . It is also possible to skip certain levels as long as the player has enough of these items to reach a farther one .

Each level is composed of a number of challenges that involve solving puzzles , jumping over obstacles , gathering objects , and defeating opponents . The game also features some elements of action @-@ adventure games . Players often have to speak with NPCs and then figure out a way to help them . It is also possible to increase Banjo and Kazooie 's energy bar by collecting extra honeycombs that are hidden throughout the levels . Banjo and Kazooie can perform a wide range of abilities , such as jumping , climbing , swimming , flying , and rolling into enemies . Most of these moves are learned by finding Bottles , a friendly mole , inside the worlds . Some moves require specific items so that they can be performed . For instance , red feathers allow Banjo and Kazooie to fly , while gold feathers protect them from damage . Some items also allow the character to gain temporary abilities in a particular moment . For instance , the turbo trainers provide a speed burst to reach a certain destination on time .

Banjo and Kazooie are occasionally aided by their friend Mumbo Jumbo , a shaman who can use magical powers to transform them into several creatures like a termite , a pumpkin , a bee , a walrus , and a crocodile . These transformations have their own special features and allow the player to access areas that were previously inaccessible . For instance , the walrus can resist the effects of icy @-@ cold water . Mumbo Tokens that are scattered throughout the game allow the transformation process . The game also includes cheats that the player can unlock by finding Gruntilda 's spellbook , Cheato .

= = Plot = =

Banjo @-@ Kazooie is set in the Spiral Mountain and follows the story of Banjo , a male brown

honey bear , and Kazooie , a red @-@ crested Breegull who is always kept in Banjo 's backpack . The game begins when a foul @-@ tempered witch named Gruntilda learns from her cauldron Dingpot that Tooty , Banjo 's younger sister , is more beautiful than her . Jealous , Gruntilda creates a machine that can transfer a person 's level of beauty to another , which she intends to use with Tooty . She then abducts Tooty from Banjo 's house while he is sleeping . In response to the kidnapping , Kazooie wakes Banjo up and the two set out to rescue her . Banjo and Kazooie learn from Tooty 's friend , Bottles the mole , that she was captured by Gruntilda and suggests they need some training to collect musical notes and jigsaw pieces to progress through Gruntilda 's lair . Along the way , they are aided by Mumbo Jumbo , a shaman and Gruntilda 's former teacher .

By the time most of the musical notes and jiggies are gathered , Banjo and Kazooie face Gruntilda in a trivia game show named " Grunty 's Furnace Fun " . The game presents questions and challenges related to certain aspects of the game . After going through several game boards , the two win the game and Gruntilda flees . Reunited with Tooty , Banjo and Kazooie return home and celebrate their victory with their friends and a barbecue . However , Tooty reminds everyone that Gruntilda has fled and orders Banjo and Kazooie to defeat her . The duo returns to Gruntilda 's lair and reach the top of the tower , where they face a battle with Gruntilda . With the help of some friendly creatures called Jinjos , Banjo and Kazooie defeat Gruntilda , trapping her underneath a boulder . Returning to their home , Banjo and Kazooie go on vacation at a beach with their friends and celebrate their victory . The game ends with Gruntilda swearing revenge against Banjo and Kazooie and calling for her henchman Klungo to move the boulder that is covering her .

= = Development = =

Banjo @-@ Kazooie was developed by Rare and designed by Gregg Mayles . The game evolved from Project Dream , a cancelled adventure game for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System that was being developed by Rare 's Donkey Kong Country 2 : Diddy 's Kong Quest team . Project Dream used Rare 's ACM ( Advanced Computer Modeling ) graphics technology , first used in Donkey Kong Country , to a very advanced level and was originally intended to star a boy named Edison who would own a wooden sword and get into trouble with a group of pirates . However , as development of the game continued , Edison was replaced by a rabbit and later a bear , who became Banjo . Although the project was in development for more than one year , it was ultimately cancelled with the introduction of the Nintendo 64 , which made the ACM technology obsolete .

Actual work on Banjo @-@ Kazooie started in March 1997 with a development team of 10 people . However , as development progressed , the team grew to a total of 15 members , which included seven engineers , five artists , two designers and one musician . The team was composed of both experienced and inexperienced people ; some had been working at Rare for 10 years while others had never previously worked on a video game . The 3D world of Super Mario 64 was a major inspiration for Banjo @-@ Kazooie , as Rare intended to combine it with the look of Donkey Kong Country . The game was designed to appeal players of all ages in a similar vein to Walt Disney Animation Studios films . According to Rare , " We wanted the characters to primarily appeal to a younger audience but , at the same time , give them enough humour and attitude not to discourage older players . " The music of the game , composed by Grant Kirkhope , was designed to gradually fade from one style to the next without pause , while the overall composition loops continuously .

Rare decided to make an action @-@ based game that focused totally on Banjo and his abilities . Kazooie was later conceived during the planning of such abilities . According to Mayles , " We came up with the [ ... ] idea that a pair of wings could appear from his backpack to help him perform a second jump . We also wanted Banjo to be able to run very fast when required [ so ] we added a pair of ' fast @-@ running ' legs that appeared from the bottom of the backpack . [ And soon after ] we came up with the logical conclusion that these could belong to another character , one that actually lived in Banjo 's backpack . " The character was named after a kazoo , which was considered an annoying instrument , " much like the personality of the bird " , Mayles explained . Instead of actual dialogue , all the characters in the game feature " mumbling " voices . This choice was made to convey their personalities without them actually speaking , as Rare felt the actual

speech " could ruin the player 's perception of the characters . " The witch Gruntilda was inspired by Grotbags from the Grotbags British television series .

Banjo @-@ Kazooie employs a very advanced technique to render its graphics . The characters were created with minimal amounts of texturing to give them a sharp and clean look , while the backgrounds use very large textures split into 64 × 64 pieces , which was the largest texture size the Nintendo 64 could render . As a result , this technique caused significant memory fragmentation issues . However , the developers managed to create a proprietary system that could " reshuffle " memory as players played through the game to solve the fragmentation . According to lead programmer Chris Sutherland , " I 'd doubt many N64 games of the time did anything like that " . The fact that the player could be transformed into small creatures was implemented to give some of the worlds a different sense of scale .

Rare originally planned to include a multiplayer mode and more worlds to the game , but these features were not implemented due to time constraints ; some of these would later be included in the sequel Banjo @-@ Tooie instead . In addition , a feature called " Stop ' N ' Swop " , which would have allowed data to be transferred between both Banjo @-@ Kazooie and Banjo @-@ Tooie , remains incomplete in the game . The feature was never fully implemented due to technical difficulties in the Nintendo 64 hardware . The actual development of the game took overall 17 months to complete after Rare discarded Project Dream , the first two of these being spent experimenting with Dream 's graphic technology . A working version of the game was shown at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in June 1997 . The game was initially scheduled for a release in late 1997 , but was eventually delayed . It was released on 29 June 1998 in North America and 17 July 1998 in Europe .

= = Reception = =

Banjo @-@ Kazooie was a critical and commercial success , selling more than 1 @. @ 8 million copies in the United States and more than 405 @, @ 000 units in Japan . The game has an aggregated score of 92 out of 100 at Metacritic , which is considered " universal acclaim " . GamePro described Banjo @-@ Kazooie as a " more complex , more fluid , and more attractive game than its plumber predecessor Super Mario 64 . It 's sure to have even the staunchest [ Nintendo 64 ] critics raising their eyebrows . " Journalist Peer Schneider , writing for IGN , awarded the game a rating of 9 @. @ 6 out of 10 , stating that the game " is the best 3D platformer [ he has ] ever played , and a more than worthy successor to Super Mario 64 " .

The graphics were seen as one of the strongest aspects of the game . Jeff Gerstmann of GameSpot wrote : " graphically , Banjo @-@ Kazooie takes it to another level . The game maintains the look and feel of Mario 64 , but instead of flat , shaded polygons , [ Banjo @-@ Kazooie ] uses a lot of textures " . The game 's long draw distance , solid frame rate , and differently themed worlds were highlighted very positively . Critics also praised the game 's dynamic soundtrack . Schneider remarked that this feature " lets players know where they are going . This happens all the time and in every level . It 's all very Disney @-@ esque . " The sound effects received similar praise , with several editors crediting the unique and diverse speech patterns of the characters . The writing was also praised for its double @-@ meanings in several character interactions .

The game was often called a Super Mario 64 clone for its similarity in gameplay . Gerstmann compared it favourably to Mario , saying that " it doesn 't stray too far from the formula , but it makes the logical progressions you would expect Nintendo to make . " Game Informer observed that , while both games are very similar , Banjo @-@ Kazooie has less emphasis on the platforming and more on exploration . Schneider noted that the worlds in Banjo @-@ Kazooie are " bigger , more detailed and are filled with interactive characters at every corner . " Colin Williamson of AllGame stated similar pros , crediting the level design as " simply delightful , loaded with creativity , secrets , and memorable characters . " James Ashton of N64 Magazine highlighted the game 's replay value , noting that the game can take 40 or 50 hours to fully complete . One habitually @-@ criticized aspect of the game was its flawed camera system . Game Revolution remarked it can occasionally be in a bad angle to gauge a jump properly .

In 1999 , Banjo @-@ Kazooie received two awards from the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences : Console Action Game of the Year and Outstanding Achievement in Art / Graphics . Similarly , IGN awarded the game Overall Best Graphics of 1998 , Best Texture Design of 1998 , and Best Music of 1998 . In 2000 , the game was ranked number seven on IGN 's list of The Top 25 N64 Games of All Time . In 2009 , Game Informer ranked the game 71st in their list of the Top 100 Games Of All Time .

= = Legacy = =

Banjo @-@ Kazooie 's critical and commercial success led Rare to begin development of a sequel titled Banjo @-@ Tooie , also for the Nintendo 64 . Banjo @-@ Tooie was released on 20 November 2000 to very positive reviews , and largely adopts the gameplay mechanics of its predecessor . The characters Banjo and Kazooie proved to be popular and made cameo appearances in subsequent Rare games such as Conker 's Bad Fur Day and Grabbed by the Ghoulies . The series continued to be developed with the release of the handheld games Banjo @-@ Kazooie : Grunty 's Revenge and Banjo @-@ Pilot for the Game Boy Advance . In 2008 , a third main game titled Banjo @-@ Kazooie : Nuts & Bolts was released for the Xbox 360 to generally favourable reviews . The gameplay of Nuts & Bolts is a departure from the previous games in that , rather than learning new moves to continue , the player must instead build vehicles of all shapes and sizes to complete challenges .

An Xbox Live Arcade version of Banjo @-@ Kazooie , developed by 4J Studios , was also released for the Xbox 360 on 3 December 2008 . This version runs in a full widescreen mode , includes achievements , and supports the " Stop ' N ' Swop " connectivity that was incomplete in the Nintendo 64 game , used now to unlock features in both Banjo @-@ Kazooie : Nuts & Bolts and the then @-@ upcoming Xbox Live Arcade version of Banjo @-@ Tooie . The Xbox Live Arcade version was generally well received by critics , featuring an aggregate score of 77 out of 100 at Metacritic . While some publications such as Eurogamer considered the relatively unchanged game to be outdated , several agreed that the Xbox Live Arcade version is a solid resurrection of a classic . In 2009 , IGN ranked it seventh on its list of Top 10 Xbox Live Arcade Games , with editor Cam Shea stating that while the game is " not perfect , it was a landmark title for a reason " . The Xbox Live Arcade version of Banjo @-@ Tooie was released in 2009 to a similar critical reception . In 2015 , the Xbox Live Arcade version of Banjo @-@ Kazooie was included as part of the Rare Replay video game compilation for Xbox One .

On 10 February 2015 , a group of former Rare employees announced their formation of a new studio named Playtonic Games , planning a " spiritual successor " to the Banjo @-@ Kazooie franchise titled Yooka @-@ Laylee , formerly code @-@ named Project Ukulele . The game reached its initial funding goal of £ 175 @, @ 000 within thirty @-@ eight minutes and is currently set to be released in the first quarter of 2017 on Microsoft Windows , Mac , Linux , PlayStation 4 , Xbox One and Wii U.