

= Katamari Damacy =

Katamari Damacy ( ?? , Katamari Damashii , lit . " clump soul " ) is a third @-@ person puzzle @-@ action video game developed and published by Namco for the PlayStation 2 . It was first released in Japan and then later in North America . The game resulted from a school project from the Namco Digital Hollywood Game Laboratory , and was developed for less than \$ 1 million . In designing Katamari Damacy , the development team aimed to maintain three key points : novelty , ease of understanding , and enjoyment .

The game 's plot concerns a diminutive prince on a mission to rebuild the stars , constellations , and Moon , which were accidentally destroyed by his father , the King of All Cosmos . This is achieved by rolling a magical , highly adhesive ball called a katamari around various locations , collecting increasingly larger objects , ranging from thumbtacks to people to mountains , until the ball has grown great enough to become a star . Katamari Damacy 's story , characters , and settings are bizarre and heavily stylized , rarely attempting any semblance of realism , though the brands and items used are based on those current in Japan during the game 's production .

Overall , Katamari Damacy was well received in Japan and North America . The game was dubbed a sleeper hit , and won several awards . Katamari Damacy inspired the development of other video games , and led to the release of eight sequels in Japan and other territories : We Love Katamari ( PlayStation 2 ) , Me & My Katamari ( PlayStation Portable ) , Beautiful Katamari ( Xbox 360 ) , i Love Katamari ( iOS , Windows Phone 7 , Android ) , Katamari Forever ( PlayStation 3 ) , Katamari Amore ( iOS ) , Touch My Katamari ( PlayStation Vita ) , and Tap My Katamari ( iOS , Android )

= = Synopsis = =

The primary story in Katamari Damacy deals with the aftermath of the planet @-@ sized King of All Cosmos ' binge drinking spree that wiped out all the stars and other celestial bodies from the sky . The King ( who appears to be chronically dissatisfied with his 5 @-@ cm @-@ tall son 's small size ) charges the Prince to go to Earth with a " katamari " ? a magical ball that allows anything smaller than it to stick to it and make it grow ? and collect enough material for him to recreate the stars and constellations . The Prince is successful , and the sky is returned to normal .

A side @-@ story follows the Hoshino family as the Prince works at his tasks . The father , an astronaut , is unable to go to the moon after it is wiped out by the King , and the daughter , whose name is Michiru , " senses " the Prince 's work ? she can feel when each constellation returns to the sky . Ultimately , the family , along with their house and town , are rolled up in the katamari that is used to remake the moon .

= = Gameplay = =

The player controls the Prince as he rolls the katamari around houses , gardens , and towns in order to meet certain parameters set by the King of All Cosmos . The player uses the two analog sticks on the DualShock controller in a manner similar to the classic arcade game Battlezone to control the direction the katamari rolls . Other controls can be triggered by the player to gain a quick burst of speed , flip the Prince to the other side of the katamari , and more .

Objects that are smaller than the katamari will stick to it when the player comes into contact with them , while greater objects can be hurdles ; colliding at high speed with any may cause objects to fall off the katamari , slowing the player 's progress . The game uses size , weight , and surface area to determine if an object will stick to the katamari . This allows slender objects , such as pencils , that are longer than the katamari is wide , to be picked up , and these will alter how the katamari rolls until more objects are picked up . Animals such as cats will chase the katamari , knocking things from it , but once the katamari is great enough , it will scare the animals away , and they can be rolled up once they are chased down . As objects stick to the katamari , the katamari will grow , eventually allowing objects that were once hurdles to be picked up , and creating access to areas that were formerly blocked . In this manner , the player might start the game by picking up

thumbtacks and ants , and slowly work up to the point where the katamari is picking up buildings , mountains , and clouds .

The typical mission given by the King of All Cosmos is the " Make a Star " mode , where the player needs to grow the katamari to a specific size within a given timeframe . Other missions have more specific collecting rules , such as collecting as many items ( swans , crabs , pairs ) as possible within a given time , or collecting the largest item possible ( such as a cow or bear ) . The player can attempt a score attack mode for any level , in which they try to make the greatest katamari possible in the time allotted . Certain levels can unlock an " eternal mode " by creating an exceptionally large katamari . In eternal modes , the player can explore the level with no time limit .

Each level features two secret items that can be found . The first item is a royal present that contains an object that the Prince can wear . Most gifts are non @-@ functional , but one includes a camera that can be used to take in @-@ game screenshots . The other secret item is a cousin of the Prince , which , once rolled up in main gameplay , can be used as a character in the various multiplayer modes . However , cousins can only be found and rolled up after the game is beaten . The game also tracks which objects the player has collected at any time , allowing them to review all the various objects within the game .

In the two @-@ player mode , a player can choose to play as either the Prince or one of his numerous Cousins . The screen is split vertically ; player one , and player two is on the right . Players compete simultaneously in a small arena to collect the most objects within three minutes . The playfield is replenished with new objects periodically . Players can ram into each other , knocking items from their opponents ' katamaris , and if one player leads by a fair amount , then it is possible to roll up the opponent 's katamari .

= = Development = =

Toru Iwatani , head of research and development for Namco , stated that the idea for Katamari Damacy resulted from Keita Takahashi 's school project from the Namco Digital Hollywood Game Laboratory , a sponsored institute for game development education . Keita Takahashi 's final thesis bore out the core gameplay ideas , while a team of ten ( including the student ) developed the final product . The game was developed for less than US \$ 1 million , a tenth of the cost of Namco blockbuster titles such as Ridge Racer or Soulcalibur . The game took a year and a half to develop , with eight months of prototyping .

Lead developer Keita Takahashi said that the team was aiming for four key points in developing the game : novelty , ease of understanding , enjoyment , and humor . Iwatani compared the game to Namco 's Pac @-@ Man , which focused on simplicity and innovation , and served as a template for future games from the company . At one point during development , Takahashi " proactively ignored " advice from Namco to increase the complexity of the game .

The core gameplay of Katamari Damacy is the subject of U.S. Patent 7 @,@ 402 @,@ 104 , " Game performing method , game apparatus , storage medium , data signal and program " . The patent , issued in 2009 , primarily describes how the game maintains the roughly spherical nature of the katamari when objects are picked up , though extends to concepts such as tracking objects collected based on temperature or weight values , which were modes included with later games of the series .

= = = Reveal and release = = =

Katamari Damacy was first revealed at the 2003 Tokyo Game Show , at which the press dubbed it a " snowball simulator " . The image featured on the cover of the pre @-@ release demo showed the large red ball used in " Tamakorogashi " , a game played at Japanese school sports meets ( undokai ) that was an influence for the game . Plans for releasing the game in Western countries were tied to its performance in Japan . Katamari Damacy was first shown in the United States at the Experimental Gameplay Workshop during the March 2004 Game Developers Conference . Due to its popularity at trade shows and a write @-@ in campaign , Namco decided to release the game in

the United States .

== Name ==

In Japanese , Katamari ( ? ) means " clump " or " clod " and Damashii is the rendaku form of tamashii ( ? ) which means " soul " or " spirit " . Therefore , the phrase approximates to " clump soul " . The two kanji that form the name look similar ( sharing the same right @-@ side element ? ) , in a kind of visual alliteration . The name is officially transliterated as Katamari Damacy in most releases . In an interview with Dengeki Online , producer Keita Takahashi said that when asked about the title , " It just popped into my head suddenly , and this is what it has been from the beginning . "

== Soundtrack ==

The music in Katamari Damacy was widely hailed as imaginative and original ( winning both IGN 's and GameSpot 's " Soundtrack of the Year 2004 " awards ) , and was considered one of the game 's best features . The soundtrack was released in Japan as Katamari Fortissimo Damacy . Its eclectic composition featured elements of traditional electronic video game music , as well as heavy jazz and samba influences ( Shibuya @-@ kei ) . Most of the tracks were composed by Yuu Miyake , and many feature vocals from popular J @-@ pop singers , such as Yui Asaka from the Sukeban Deka 3 TV series , and anime voice actors , including Nobue Matsubara and Ado Mizumori . One track is sung and written by Charlie Kosei , composer of the Lupin III soundtrack .

== Reception ==

Katamari Damacy enjoyed moderate success in Japan . The game was sold at about two @-@ thirds of the price of a new game at the time . It was the top selling game the week of its release with 32 @,@ 000 units sold , and sold over 155 @,@ 000 copies in Japan by the end of 2004 . However , Namco originally estimated that over 500 @,@ 000 units would be sold in Japan .

Katamari Damacy was one of the recipients of the 2004 Good Design Award in Japan , the first time a video game has won this award . The game was included at a 2012 exhibit at the New York Museum of Modern Art , entitled " Century of the Child : Growing by Design " , and was used to demonstrate the change in toys and playthings over the 20th century , specifically praising the game for its " quirky manipulations of scale " that makes it accessible for all ages . In 2015 , the game placed 13th on USgamer 's The 15 Best Games Since 2000 list .

The game was not released in PAL territories such as Europe and Australia , since publishers thought it was too " quirky " for these markets ; however , Electronic Arts picked up both sequels , We Love Katamari and Me & My Katamari , for release in Europe .

The North American release of the game was very well received by professional reviewers , was mentioned and praised on TechTV , and was a featured sidebar in the May 23 , 2004 , edition of Time magazine . Time continued to praise the game in its November 22 , 2004 " Best games of the year " special , calling it " the most unusual and original game to hit PlayStation2 " . Most retailers underestimated the demand for such a quirky game , and only purchased a few copies of this sleeper hit ; it rapidly sold out nationwide , with sales surpassing 120 @,@ 000 units in North America . It also won the U.S. award for " Excellence in Game Design " at the 2005 Game Developers Choice Awards , and G4 awarded Katamari Damacy its " Best Innovation " prize in its G @-@ Phoria of that year .

Although the game has rapidly achieved a cult following and has been praised by many reviewers , it also has its share of criticism . A common complaint is that the game is relatively short and repetitive ? it can be completed in under ten hours , and the gameplay stays virtually the same all the way through . However , others , such as Electronic Gaming Monthly reviewer Mark McDonald ( who gave the game 8 @.@ 5 out of ten with his EGM staff ) , argue that the game 's limitations are made up for by its strengths : " Sure , you 're basically doing the same thing each mission , but Katamari 's elegant controls , killer soundtrack , and wicked humor make it perfectly suited for replay

. " As a well @-@ executed , non @-@ traditional game , Katamari Damacy has been influential in the game development community . Since its release , a number of designers have developed works inspired by Katamari : one example is The Wonderful End of the World .

= = Sequels = =

Katamari Damacy has spawned numerous sequels on the PlayStation 2 and newer game consoles . The game 's direct sequel on the PlayStation 2 , We Love Katamari ( ???????? , Minna Daisuki Katamari Damashii , literally Everyone Loves Katamari Damacy ) , was released internationally in 2005 and 2006 . Its story is self @-@ referential , following on the success of the first game , most of the levels are based on requests from newfound fans of the King and the Prince . Though sharing the same mechanics , We Love Katamari introduces new gameplay features , such as co @-@ operative play , and new goals , such as collecting the most valuable objects , that would continue through its sequels . Me & My Katamari ( ?????? , Boku no Watashi no Katamari Damashii , literally My My Katamari Damacy using the two words in Japanese for " I " which connote a masculine ( ' boku ' ) or neutral ( ' watashi ' ) speaker ) was released for the PlayStation Portable in 2005 and 2006 , featuring levels based on helping the animals of an island devastated by a tsunami .

Beautiful Katamari ( Beautiful Katamari Damacy ( ????????? , By?tifuru Katamari Damashii ) ) was an Xbox 360 title released in 2007 and 2008 , following the Royal Family using katamaris to close up a black hole created while the King was playing tennis . The newer console allowed for higher @-@ resolution graphics and support for online network play , leaderboards , and downloadable content . While PlayStation 3 and Wii ports were planned for Beautiful Katamari , these never were released . Katamari Forever ( Katamari Damacy Tribute ( ??TRIBUTE , Katamari Damashii TRIBUTE ) ) was released for the PlayStation 3 internationally in 2009 . Katamari Forever incorporates a mix of previous levels from the series , framed around the King trying to recover from amnesia , and new levels where the katamari is needed to repair damage done by a rampaging " RoboKing " . It further improved on the graphics capabilities of Beautiful Katamari , and introduced new moves for the player .

Korogashi Puzzle Katamari Damacy was released for the Nintendo DSi via DSiWare in 2009 . Similar in play to Tetris , the player used the prince to drop a katamari into the playing field to clear the puzzle field . Touch My Katamari ( Katamari Damacy No @-@ Vita ( ?????? , Katamari Damash? Nob?ta ) ) is a regional launch title for the PlayStation Vita portable game system in late 2011 and early 2012 . The No @-@ Vita moniker is a play on the Vita console name and the Japanese word nobita , meaning " to lengthen or extend " . While the core mechanics are similar to other games in the series , Touch My Katamari allows the player to use the rear touch @-@ pad on the Vita to temporarily stretch the katamari into an ovoid shape , allowing it to roll through narrow spaces or collect small objects .

Several mobile versions have also been released . Rolling With Katamari was released in Japan in 2007 for the Mitsubishi P904i series of phones , using their tilt @-@ sensitive technology to let the player control the katamari . It was ported to J2ME for release in other countries . Katamari Damacy Mobile was released in 2009 for several wireless devices , and is a 2D side @-@ scrolling version of Katamari Damacy similar to a mini @-@ mode included with Me & My Katamari . I Love Katamari was released in 2008 for the iPhone and iPod Touch , with later patched for the iPad and other iOS devices and for Windows Phone 7 . Another iOS game , Katamari Amore , was released in early 2011 .

WindySoft , a South Korean developer , announced plans for a Katamari Damacy Online game , which was due to be released in 2007 . It was never brought to the US .

= = Legacy = =

The character of the Prince became a mascot for Namco alongside Pac @-@ Man , and makes an appearance in some other Namco @-@ Bandai games , such as Pac @-@ Man World Rally , Noby Noby Boy , the Taiko no Tatsujin series and Keroro RPG : Kishi to Musha to Densetsu no Kaizoku .

