= Final Fantasy VII =

Final Fantasy VII is a role @-@ playing video game developed and published by Square (now Square Enix) for the PlayStation platform . Released in 1997 , it is the seventh installment in the Final Fantasy series and the first in the series to use 3D computer graphics , featuring fully rendered characters on pre @-@ rendered backgrounds . It was also the first game in the main series to be released in Europe . The story follows Cloud Strife , a mercenary who joins the eco @-@ terrorist rebel organization AVALANCHE to stop the world @-@ controlling megacorporation Shinra from draining the life of the planet to use as an energy source . Cloud and his allies become involved in a larger world @-@ threatening conflict and face off against Sephiroth , the main antagonist .

Development of Final Fantasy VII began in 1994 . It was originally developed for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System , but was moved to the Nintendo 64 ; since the Nintendo 64 's cartridges lacked the required storage capacity for substantial prerendered movie footage , Square moved the game to the CD @-@ ROM based PlayStation . It was directed by Yoshinori Kitase , written by Kazushige Nojima and Kitase , and produced by Hironobu Sakaguchi . The music was composed by Final Fantasy veteran Nobuo Uematsu , while the series ' long @-@ time character designer , Yoshitaka Amano , was replaced by Tetsuya Nomura .

Helped by a large pre @-@ release promotional campaign , Final Fantasy VII was a critical and commercial success . It was released in 1997 for the Sony PlayStation , in 1998 for Windows , in 2009 on the PlayStation Network , in 2012 on PC Digital Download , and in 2013 on Steam . In 2014 , the game was released for Android and iPhone devices through the Japan @-@ only streaming service " Dive In " . On December 6 , 2014 , it was announced that Final Fantasy VII would be released on the PlayStation 4 , with upscaled graphics . It has continued to sell solidly , with more than 11 million copies sold by 2015 , making it the best @-@ selling title in the series . Final Fantasy VII has been praised for its graphics , gameplay , music and story . Criticism has primarily pertained to its English localization . The iOS version of Final Fantasy VII was released on August 19 , 2015 , adding touch controls , an auto @-@ save feature and the ability to disable random encounters . This was followed by the PlayStation 4 port with high speed mode finally releasing in December 2015 and on Android in July 2016 .

The game is acknowledged for having boosted the sales of PlayStation consoles and popularizing Japanese role @-@ playing video games outside Japan . It is widely considered to be one of the greatest games of all time . The game 's popularity has led to a series of prequels and sequels under the collective title Compilation of Final Fantasy VII . Square Enix announced a high @-@ definition remake of the game at E3 2015 for the PlayStation 4 .

= = Gameplay = =

As with previous installments of the Final Fantasy series , Final Fantasy VII consists primarily of three major areas : an overworld map , field maps , and a battle screen . The overworld map is a 3D model , featuring a scaled @-@ down version of the game 's fictional world , across which the player travels between the game 's locations . As with preceding games in the series , the world map can be traversed by foot , on chocobos and in an airship or sea vessel (in this case , a submarine and a plane used as a boat) . It also includes an additional means of transportation ? a buggy .

On field maps , characters are directed across realistically scaled environments , consisting of 2D pre @-@ rendered backgrounds which represent locations such as towns or forests . Initially , the player is restricted to the city of Midgar , but as the game progresses the entire world becomes accessible . Progression through the game 's storyline is largely developed by way of scripted sequences , although pre @-@ rendered cinematic cutscenes are also used .

= = = Battle system = = =

Battles , which either occur randomly on the field or are triggered by certain events , pit the player 's party against one or more enemies . Winning the battle by means of defeating all the enemies earns

experience , gil , and items . However , if all party members are simultaneously KO 'd or are otherwise unable to battle (such as by petrification) , the game ends and the player must resume from their last save file . The battle screen is a 3D representation of an area , such as a building 's interior or an open grassland , in which the player commands the characters in battles against CPU @-@ controlled enemies . While characters are super deformed on maps , the character models are more realistic and normal @-@ scaled in combat . Final Fantasy VII is the first game in the series to have character models with fully rendered polygons , rather than 2D sprites . During battle sequences , the game uses the series ' traditional Active Time Battle (ATB) system first featured in Final Fantasy IV . Unlike previous games in the series , which allow 4 @-@ 5 playable characters to participate in battle , Final Fantasy VII only allows three characters per battle .

 Final Fantasy VII 's skill system is built around the use of Materia ? magical orbs composed of condensed Mako (life energy from the Planet) , that are placed in special slots on weapons and armor , allowing players to customize their party 's ability to use magic , summons , and special abilities . Materia is divided into five categories ; Green Magic Materia for performing offensive and defensive spells , Yellow Skill Materia which grants new abilities , Red Summon Materia , which lets the character summon powerful deities to aid in battle , Purple Support Materia which gives the equipped character stat boosts , and Blue Junction Materia , which enhances other Materia when placed in connecting slots (for example , linking Fire Materia with All Materia allows the player to attack all enemies with the Fire spell simultaneously) . However , most magic @-@ based Materia also lowers an equipped character 's physical attributes . Like the characters , Materia can level up with experience , opening up stronger abilities and functionality , with new Materia created once they reach the maximum level . Summon spells feature in the game , equippable as Materia , with elaborately animated attacks . A modified form of Final Fantasy VI 's " Desperation Attacks " appears in Final Fantasy VII as the " Limit Break . " Every playable character has a bar that gradually fills up as they suffer damage in battle . When the bar is completely filled , the character is able to unleash his or her Limit Break , a special attack which generally inflicts significantly more damage on enemies than normal attacks , or otherwise aids the party in battle . Unlike Materia , each character has their own unique set of Limit Breaks , which are divided into four levels of strength , although one character , Cait Sith , has only two levels .

 = = Plot = =

 = = = Setting = = =

 The game 's setting is similar to that of Final Fantasy VI insofar as it is a world with considerably more advanced technology than the first five games in the series . Overall , the game 's technology and society approximates that of an industrial or post @-@ industrial science fiction milieu . The world of Final Fantasy VII , referred to in the game as " The Planet " , but retroactively named " Gaia " , is composed of three main land masses . The eastern continent is home to the city of Midgar , an industrial metropolis that serves as the capital city and hosts the headquarters of the Shinra Electric Power Company , which operates as much of the world 's de facto government . Other locations on the eastern continent are Junon (Shinra 's major military base) , Fort Condor (a fort with a huge condor covering up a Mako reactor on top of it) , a Chocobo ranch , and Kalm (a small town inspired by medieval Europe) .

 The western continent features the Gold Saucer (an amusement park with Corel Prison below) , Costa Del Sol (a seaside resort) , Gongaga (a small town containing the remains of a destroyed Mako reactor) , Nibelheim (a town residing at the base of Mt . Nibel) , Rocket Town (the location of Shinra 's failed space rocket launch) , and Cosmo Canyon . The tribe inhabiting Cosmo Canyon emphasize living in harmony with nature and dedicating themselves to the planet 's well @-@ being . Their settlement features an observatory and serves as a research facility for those who wish to participate in a philosophy known as the " Study of Planet Life " , a lifestyle that encourages deference for nature and teaches that the planet has a life and energy of its own .

Wutai , a village inspired by pre @-@ modern Japan and China , is located on a large island off the western continent . The northernmost continent is a heavily glaciated landmass , and its few settlements include Bone Village (an excavation site) , Icicle Inn (a ski resort town) , the mythical " City of the Ancients " , and the Northern Crater , where the game 's climax takes place . There are also underwater locations accessible only by submarine ; for example , a sunken Shinra plane transporter .

= = = Characters = = =

The nine main playable characters in Final Fantasy VII are Cloud Strife , an unsociable mercenary who claims to be a former 1st Class member of Shinra 's SOLDIER unit ; Barret Wallace , the leader of the anti @-@ Shinra rebel group AVALANCHE ; Tifa Lockhart , a martial artist and a member of AVALANCHE , also a childhood friend of Cloud 's ; Aerith Gainsborough , a flower merchant who has been pursued by Shinra 's special operations unit , the Turks , since childhood ; Red XIII , a wise lion @-@ like creature who was experimented on by Shinra scientists ; Cait Sith , a fortune @-@ telling robotic cat who rides an animated moogle doll ; Cid Highwind , a pilot whose dreams of being the first man in outer space were not realized ; Yuffie Kisaragi , a young ninja and a skillful thief ; and Vincent Valentine , a former member of Shinra 's Turks unit , who was experimented on 30 years prior to the start of the game . The game 's main antagonist is Sephiroth , a former member of SOLDIER who reappears several years after he was thought dead .

= = = Story = = =

The game begins with Cloud Strife , working as a mercenary for hire , helping the eco terrorist group AVALANCHE in a raid against the Mako reactors surrounding the city of Midgar , which is governed by a company known as Shinra . Barret , the group 's leader , believes the Mako energy the reactors consume to be the planet 's lifeblood , and the reactors are killing the planet . Cloud 's childhood friend , Tifa , is also in the group . Although the first mission is successful , AVALANCHE is ambushed at the next reactor during a subsequent raid . When the reactor explodes , Cloud drops down into Midgar 's slums . He is found by Aerith (aka Aeris) , a girl he briefly met selling flowers after his first mission with AVALANCHE . Prompted by the arrival of the Turks , who have been sent to capture Aerith , Cloud agrees to act as her bodyguard and defends her from their assault . Meanwhile , Shinra learns the location of AVALANCHE 's hideout in Sector 7 and subsequently destroys it by dropping the upper plate of Sector 7 onto the slums , killing its population . The Turks also capture Aerith , who is revealed to be the last surviving " Cetra " , an ancient near @-@ dead tribe closely attuned with the planet . President Shinra and Professor Hojo believe Aerith is the key to finding the " Promised Land " , a mythical land of fertility they see as an abundant source of Mako . The remaining AVALANCHE members ? Cloud , Barret and Tifa ? infiltrate Shinra to rescue Aerith , in the process encountering a specimen simply labeled " Jenova " . Joined by Red XIII , a sentient tiger @-@ like creature on whom Hojo had been conducting experiments , the party rescues Aerith but is captured by the Turks while trying to escape and detained within the building . In the morning , they find their cells open and most of the personnel , including President Shinra , killed : the perpetrator appears to be Sephiroth , a legendary SOLDIER leader who was presumed dead several years ago.The group discovers that the Jenova specimen is also missing , presumed stolen by Sephiroth .
While the president 's son , Rufus Shinra , assumes control of the company , the party leaves Midgar and pursues Sephiroth across the planet . They are joined by Cait Sith , a cat @-@ robot secretly controlled by repentant Turk Reeve Tuesti ; Yuffie Kisaragi , a teenage ninja from Wutai ; Vincent Valentine , a former Turk ; and Cid Highwind , a chain @-@ smoking pilot . At a Cetra temple , the party encounters Sephiroth , who reveals his plan : if the world is significantly damaged , the Lifestream , made of pure Mako energy , will gather in an attempt to heal the wound . Sephiroth intends to use the legendary Black Materia to cast a spell called " Meteor " to cause a massive injury , enabling him to merge with the planet 's Mako energy and be reborn as a god . The party drives off

Sephiroth , acquiring the Black Materia , but Sephiroth manipulates Cloud into giving him the Materia . While the party recovers from the encounter , Aerith sets off to stop Sephiroth on her own , following him to an ancient Cetra city . The party follows and finds Aerith praying to the planet for aid . Just as they reach her , Sephiroth kills her . Cloud and his allies track Sephiroth to the North Crater . During their journey , they find out that Jenova is an interstellar creature who crashed on the planet roughly two thousand years ago , intent on taking over completely . Attempting to defend itself , the planet created giant monsters called Weapons . While most humans fled , the Cetra managed to defeat Jenova and entomb its remains . A few decades before the present , the remains of Jenova were unearthed by Professor Gast , a researcher for Shinra . Mistaking Jenova for a Cetra , Gast attempted to clone Jenova , assisted by Hojo . Even though Gast abandoned the project , Hojo successfully managed to use his assistant 's unborn child for the experiment : the baby was Sephiroth . Approximately five years before the present day , while on a Shinra mission with Cloud to Cloud 's and Tifa 's hometown of Nibelheim , Sephiroth encountered Hojo 's failed test subjects and learned of his origins . Mistakenly believing that Jenova and he were Cetra , he was driven insane and destroyed Nibelheim as an act of vengeance on the normal human population . Cloud and Tifa confronted Sephiroth during the massacre , after which Sephiroth vanished , presumed dead until his reappearance in the present day .

 When the party reaches the Northern Crater to confront Sephiroth for killing Aerith , they learn he is but one among many Jenova clones Hojo created from both animals and humans . Upon reaching Sephiroth , who has been killing and absorbing the Jenova clones to instantiate the " Reunion " of Jenova 's cells , Cloud is manipulated into delivering The Black Materia to a legless Sephiroth chimera (all such apparitions being the shape @-@ shifter Jenova employing his spectre to achieve this goal) . The act proves Cloud himself a Jenova clone and unwitting Reunion participant , evidence of which Sephiroth exhibits in memories of the Nibelheim incident featuring a black @-@ haired SOLDIER in Cloud 's place . Instantly Sephiroth summons Meteor , activating the planet 's Weapons , but he blinds them to his posing its prime threat , despite being physically right before their eyes ; the Weapons disperse in search of its source . The ensuing earthquake separates Cloud from his companions and he tumbles into the Lifestream . The rest of the party and the Turks that had followed them to the Crater escape on the airship , the Highwind , where the party members are placed under arrest . As Meteor approaches the planet , the Weapons turn on humanity in an attempt to return as much Mako energy to the Lifestream as possible to aid the planet . Shinra focuses its efforts on protecting humanity from the Weapons and attempting to destroy Meteor directly , which eventually costs the lives of the majority of Shinra 's personnel . Tifa , Barret and the others are sentenced to be executed , but escape . They find a catatonic Cloud at a hospital in a tropical resort , where he washed up following the events at the North Crater . Tifa stays behind to help Cloud recover while the rest of the party continue their fight against Shinra . An attack by the Weapons destroys the island , and Cloud and Tifa both fall into the Lifestream . There , Tifa helps Cloud reconstruct his memories and learns the truth about his past .

 It is revealed that Cloud was not accepted into SOLDIER and that the SOLDIER in Sephiroth 's visions was Aerith 's first love and Cloud 's friend , Zack Fair . The two were present during the Nibelheim incident , with Cloud managing to critically wound Sephiroth , who only survived through Jenova 's cells : Zack and Cloud were severely wounded and later taken and used by Hojo to perfect his SOLDIER and Jenova experiments . Zack tried escaping with Cloud but was killed by Shinra soldiers . Cloud recovered , took Zack 's sword and made his way to Midgar : Cloud 's aspirations to SOLDIER and Zack 's memories and stories combined , with the help of the Jenova treatment , to create a false personality . Realizing and accepting his past , Cloud is able to recover . After Cloud and Tifa emerge from the Lifestream , the party regroup and learn that Aerith , in her final moments , was attempting to use the White Materia to cast the spell " Holy " , the only means of opposing Meteor . It turns out she was successful in casting the spell , but Sephiroth has been preventing its release . The group decides first to stop the rampage of the Weapons . Alongside this , the party confronts Hojo , revealed to be Sephiroth 's father , as the scientist attempts to aid his son by feeding Mako energy to him . After mutating himself with Jenova cells , he is killed in combat . After this , they launch their final assault on Sephiroth , who is defeated by Cloud after a series of

battles . The party escapes from the crater as Holy is released . Holy attempts to block Meteor above Midgar , but Meteor has drawn too close for Holy to combat it alone . Just before Meteor 's impact , the Lifestream rises from the planet to aid Holy in destroying Meteor . Five hundred years later , Red XIII is seen with two cubs looking out over the ruins of Midgar , which are now covered in greenery , showing the planet has healed .

= = Development = =

 Planning sessions for Final Fantasy VII began in 1994 after the release of Final Fantasy VI . At the time , the game was intended to be another 2D project for the Super NES . Series creator Hironobu Sakaguchi originally planned for the story to take place in New York in the year 1999 , and as such , the original script of Final Fantasy VII , which was written by Sakaguchi , was completely different from the finished product . Tetsuya Nomura recalled how Sakaguchi " wanted to do something like a detective story . " The first part of the story involved a " hot blooded " character named " Detective Joe " who was in pursuit of the main characters , after they had blown up the city of Midgar , which had already been developed for the story . The final scenario was written by Kazushige Nojima and Yoshinori Kitase , based on the story by Sakaguchi and Nomura . Masato Kato was brought into the project later and wrote three scenes for the game .
 However , several of the staff members were working in parallel on Chrono Trigger , and development for Final Fantasy VII was interrupted when the other project became significant enough to require the help of Kitase and other designers . Some of the ideas originally considered for Final Fantasy VII ultimately ended up in Chrono Trigger instead . Other ideas , such as the New York setting and the sorceress character Edea , were kept unused until the later projects Parasite Eve and Final Fantasy VIII respectively .
 Development resumed in late 1995 , and required the efforts of approximately 120 artists and programmers , using PowerAnimator and Softimage 3D software . The group worked out of both Japan and Square 's new American office in Los Angeles , with the American team primarily responsible for city backgrounds . It was the most expensive video game of its time , with a development budget of around US $ 45 million , equivalent to $ 67 million in 2015 . Kitase was concerned the franchise might be left behind if it did not catch up to the 3D graphics being used in other games , and production began after the completion of a short , experimental tech demo called Final Fantasy SGI for Silicon Graphics Onyx workstations . The demo featured polygon @-@ based 3D renderings of characters from Final Fantasy VI in a real time battle .
 The experimental SGI demo led the development team to integrate some of the design mechanics into Final Fantasy VII . However , due to the high quantity of motion data , only the CD @-@ ROM format had the capacity for the project 's needs . Nintendo , for whom Square had developed previous titles in the Final Fantasy series , had decided to continue to use cartridges for its upcoming Nintendo 64 console . This eventually led to a dispute that resulted in Square ending its relationship with Nintendo . Instead , they announced on January 12 , 1996 that they would be developing Final Fantasy VII exclusively for Sony 's PlayStation console . Square officials explained that even the 64DD lacked sufficient storage for Final Fantasy VII , as more than thirty 64DD discs would be needed to hold all the game 's data .

= = = Design = = =

 For the first time since having worked on Final Fantasy on the Famicom , Sakaguchi made the gameplay systems a priority over the story , as the team 's main concern during the development of the game was how to implement the 3D . The transition from 2D graphics to 3D environments overlaid on pre @-@ rendered backgrounds was accompanied by a focus on a more realistic presentation . While the extra storage capacity and computer graphics gave the team the means to implement more than 40 minutes of full motion video (FMV) movies , this innovation brought with it the added difficulty of ensuring that the inferiority of the in @-@ game graphics in comparison to the FMV sequences was not too obvious . Kitase has described the process of making the in @-@

game environments as detailed as possible to be " a daunting task . " The series ' long @-@ time character designer , Yoshitaka Amano , was opening art workshops and exhibitions in France and New York , which limited his involvement in the game . As a result , Tetsuya Nomura was appointed as the project 's character designer , while Amano aided in the design of the game 's world map .

Several of Nomura 's designs changed during development from their initial conceptions . For example , Cloud 's original design of slicked @-@ back black hair with no spikes was intended to serve as a contrast to Sephiroth 's long , flowing silver hair . Nomura feared , however , that such masculinity could prove unpopular with fans , and therefore he changed Cloud 's design to feature a shock of spiky , bright blond hair . Vincent changed from researcher to detective to chemist , and finally to the figure of a former Turk with a tragic past . Nomura has indicated that Cid Highwind 's fighting style resembles that of a Dragoon Knight , a character class which was chosen because his last name is the same as that of two previous Dragoon Knights featured in the Final Fantasy series , Ricard Highwind of Final Fantasy II and Kain Highwind of Final Fantasy IV .

= = = Music = = =

The music for Final Fantasy VII was composed , arranged , and produced by Nobuo Uematsu . Instead of using recorded music and sound effects for the game , Uematsu opted for sequenced audio (similar to MIDI) , using the PlayStation 's internal sound chip . Final Fantasy VII was the second game in the series (after Final Fantasy VI) to include a track with sampled vocals ; with " One @-@ Winged Angel " , which has been described as Uematsu 's " most recognizable contribution " to the music of the Final Fantasy series . Uematsu said the soundtrack has a feel of " realism " , which prevented him from using " exorbitant , crazy music . "

The game 's soundtrack was released as a four @-@ disc set on February 10 , 1997 . A single @-@ disc album of selected tracks from the original soundtrack and three arranged tracks , entitled Final Fantasy VII Reunion Tracks , was released separately . Piano Collections Final Fantasy VII , a piano arrangement of selected tracks , was released in 2003 . Several tracks from the game have been remixed in subsequent Square productions , including Final Fantasy IX , Final Fantasy VII : Advent Children , Crisis Core : Final Fantasy VII and Kingdom Hearts . In 2012 , music from the soundtrack entered the Classic FM Hall of Fame at number 16 .

= = Release = =

In early August 1996 , a demonstration disc called " Square 's Preview " was released in Japan as a bonus pack @-@ in with the PlayStation game Tobal No. 1 . The disc contained the earliest playable demo of Final Fantasy VII and previews of other upcoming games such as Bushido Blade and SaGa Frontier . The demo allowed players to play through the first part of Midgar . However , there were some noticeable differences from the final version , namely that Aerith was featured in the initial party and the ability to use Summons had not yet been implemented .

The game 's release in North America was preceded by a massive three @-@ month marketing campaign , which consisted of three 30 @-@ second television commercials on major networks , a one @-@ minute long theatrical commercial , a holiday promotion with Pepsi , and printed ads in publications such as Rolling Stone , Details , Spin , Playboy and comic books published by Marvel and DC Comics . Several additions to gameplay and story were made for the game 's North American release , such as easier exchange of materia , arrows highlighting exits on field screens , and an extra cutscene , prompting a re @-@ release in Japan under the title Final Fantasy VII International . On December 18 , 2012 this version was re @-@ released as part of the Final Fantasy 25th Anniversary Ultimate Box Japanese package .

In 1998 , Final Fantasy VII was ported to Windows @-@ based PCs . This re @-@ release featured smoother graphics , and also fixed translation and spelling errors , as well as gameplay @-@ related glitches . However , the PC version suffered from diminished audio quality due to its use of the MIDI format and errors in the display of some FMVs when rendering in hardware mode on certain graphics chipsets . Since the original PC release of the game , fans have created hundreds

of mods for the PC version of the game . The most prominent community being the Qhimm.com forum community , featuring various mods including game patches (for better compatibility with modern Windows and graphics cards) , PC @-@ PS save game converter , save game editor , game trainers , character models , world map , cutscenes , music , and battle stages .

In addition to the PlayStation and PC releases , the game was released onto the PlayStation Network in Japan on April 10 , 2009 , in North America on June 2 , 2009 , and in Europe and Australia on June 4 , 2009 . The Japanese release is the International version . The PSN release of the game was downloaded 100 @,@ 000 times during its first two weeks of release , making it the fastest @-@ selling PlayStation game on the PlayStation Network .

On July 4 , 2012 , Square Enix revealed that a PC re @-@ release was forthcoming . It was subsequently released on August 14 . The game features 36 new achievements to be unlocked , optional " Cloud Saves " , and a " Character Booster " feature . This enhanced release for modern PCs was developed by DotEmu and was available exclusively via the Square Enix store . The game can be played at Full HD (1920x1080) resolution with upscaled original graphics . The release is primarily aimed to port the classic game into a downloadable game to be run on modern Windows OSs (XP / Vista / 7) and DirectX 9.0c. On July 4 , 2013 , the game was released on the Steam digital distribution platform for Windows PCs . This version of the game was released for iOS devices in mid @-@ 2015 and for PlayStation 4 in December 5 , 2015 and added in a cheats , a feature that is missing on the PC release .

= = Reception = =

= = = Initial reception and sales = = =

Final Fantasy VII was both a critical and commercial success , and set several sales records . Within three days of its release in Japan , the game had sold 2 @.@ 3 million copies . This popularity inspired thousands of retailers in North America to break street dates in September to meet public demand for the title . In the game 's debut weekend in North America , it sold 330 @,@ 000 copies , and had reached sales of 500 @,@ 000 units in less than three weeks . The momentum established in the game 's opening weeks continued for several months ; Sony announced the game had sold one million copies in North America by early December , prompting business analyst Edward Williams from Monness , Crespi , Hardt & Co. to comment , " Sony redefined the role @-@ playing game (RPG) category and expanded the conventional audience with the launch of Final Fantasy VII . " As of December 25 , 2005 , the game had sold over 9 @.@ 8 million copies worldwide , making it the highest @-@ selling game in the Final Fantasy series . By the end of 2006 , the bargain reissue of the International version of the game alone had sold over 158 @,@ 000 copies in Japan . Final Fantasy VII is credited as " the game that sold the PlayStation , " as well as allowing role @-@ playing games to find a place in markets outside Japan . As of May 2010 , it had sold 10 million copies worldwide , making it the most popular title in the series in terms of units sold . As of 2015 , the Steam version has sold over 1 million copies , and the game has sold over 11 million units in total .

Upon release , the game received widespread acclaim from critics . It was referred to by GameFan as " quite possibly the greatest game ever made , " a quote which continues to feature prominently on the back cover of the game 's jewel case . GameSpot commented that " never before have technology , playability , and narrative combined as well as in Final Fantasy VII , " expressing particular favor toward the game 's graphics , audio , and story . IGN 's Jay Boor insisted the game 's graphics were " light years beyond anything ever seen on the PlayStation , " and regarded its battle system as its strongest point . Computer and Video Games 's Alex C praised the story , stating that the " many characters that come and go throughout the story are well developed , and players will feel the ups and downs of the protagonists as if it were a film , " and that the " structure of the story is such that , just when you think you 've seen it all , something even more awesome comes along to totally knock your socks off . " Edge noted , " The ? interactive movie ? has long

been a dirty term to anyone who values a playable videogame , but FFVII succeeds in coming closer than any title yet , " with the " highly complex , melodramatic story and excellently orchestrated chip music " combining " to make players feel real empathy with the characters , " a " task usually shied away from by the action / comedy @-@ orientated western graphic adventures . " RPGamer praised the game 's soundtrack , both in variety and sheer volume , stating that " Uematsu has done his work exceptionally well " and " is perhaps at his best here . " Electronic Gaming Monthly 's panel of four reviewers gave the game scores of 9 @.@ 5 out of 10 each , adding up to a score of 38 out of 40 in total .

Reviewers also praised the game 's PC conversion , but criticized it for its lower @-@ quality pre @-@ rendered visuals and audio , and for its framerate and installation problems . Computer Games Magazine said that " [no] game in recent memory " had such a " tendency to fail to work in any capacity on multiple [computers] . " Computer Gaming World complained that the " music , while beautifully composed , is butchered by being dependent on your sound card , " and Next Generation Magazine found the game 's pre @-@ rendered backgrounds significantly less impressive than those of the PlayStation version . However , the latter magazine found the higher @-@ resolution battle visuals " absolutely stunning , " and Computer Games Magazine said that they " [show] off the power of [a] PC equipped with a 3D card . " All three magazines concluded by praising the game despite its technical flaws , and PC Gamer summarized that , while " Square apparently did only what was required to get its PlayStation game running under Windows , " Final Fantasy VII is " still a winner on the PC . "

Final Fantasy VII has received some negative criticism as well . Square 's announcement that it would be produced for Sony rather than Nintendo and that it would not be based on the Final Fantasy SGI demo was met with discontent among some gamers . Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine (OPM) and GameSpot questioned the game 's linear progression . OPM considered the game 's translation " a bit muddy " and felt the summon animations were " repetitive . " RPGamer cited its translation as " packed with typos and other errors which further obscure what is already a very confusing plot . " GamePro also considered the Japanese @-@ to @-@ English translation a significant weakness in the game , and IGN regarded the ability to use only three characters at a time as " the game 's only shortcoming . "

= = = Awards and accolades = = =

Final Fantasy VII was given numerous Game of the Year awards in 1997 . It won in the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences ' first annual Interactive Achievement Awards in the categories " Console Adventure Game of the Year " and " Console Role Playing Game of the Year " (it was also nominated in the categories " Interactive Title of the Year " , " Outstanding Achievement in Art / Graphics " and " Outstanding Achievement in Interactive Design ") . In the Origins Award , it won in the category " Best Roleplaying Computer Game of 1997 . " It was also awarded the " Readers ' Choice All Systems Game of the Year " , " Readers ' Choice PlayStation Game of the Year " and " Readers ' Choice Role @-@ Playing Game of the Year " by EGM , which also gave it other awards for " Hottest Video Game Babe " (for Tifa Lockheart) , " Most Hyper for a Game " , " Best Ending " and " Best Print Ad " .

Since 1997 , it has been selected by many game magazines as one of the top video games of all time , including as 91st in EGM 's 2001 " 100 Best Games of All Time " , and as fourth in Retro Gamer 's " Top 100 Games " in 2004 . In 2005 , it was ranked as 88th in IGN 's " Top 100 Games of All Time " and as third in PALGN 's " The Greatest 100 Games Ever " . Final Fantasy VII was included in the " The Greatest Games of All Time " list by GameSpot in 2006 , and ranked as second in Empire 's 2006 " 100 Greatest Games of All Time " , as third in Stuff 's " 100 Greatest Games " in 2008 and as 15th in Game Informer 's 2009 " Top 200 Games of All Time " (down five places from its previous best games of all time list) . GameSpot placed it at the top of its list of the most influential games ever made in 2001 , and as second in 2002 ; in 2007 , GamePro ranked it 14th on the list of the most important games of all time , and in 2009 it finished in the same place on their list of the most innovative games of all time . In 2012 , Time named it one of " All @-@ TIME

100 Video Games " .

It has also appeared in numerous other greatest game lists . In 2007 , Dengeki PlayStation gave it the " Best Story " , " Best RPG " and " Best Overall Game " retrospective awards for games on the original PlayStation . GamePro named it the best RPG title of all time in 2008 , and featured it in their 2010 article " The 30 Best PSN Games . " In 2012 , GamesRadar also ranked it as the sixth saddest game ever . On the other hand , GameSpy ranked it seventh on their 2003 list of the most overrated games (in 2011 , Destructoid argued " why Final Fantasy VII is not overrated ") .

Final Fantasy VII has often placed at or near the top of many reader polls of all @-@ time best games . It was voted the " Reader 's Choice Game of the Century " in an IGN poll in 2000 and placed second in the " Top 100 Favorite Games of All Time " by Japanese magazine Famitsu in 2006 (it was also voted as ninth in Famitsu 's 2011 poll of most tear @-@ inducing games of all time) . Users of GameFAQs voted it the " Best Game Ever " in 2004 and in 2005 , and placed it second in 2009 . In 2008 , readers of Dengeki magazine voted it the best game ever made , as well as the ninth most tear @-@ inducing game of all time .

= = Legacy = =

In addition to the PlayStation and PC releases , the game was released onto the PlayStation Network in Japan on April 10 , 2009 , in North America on June 2 , 2009 , and in Europe and Australia on June 4 , 2009 . The Japanese release is the International version . The PSN release of the game was downloaded 100 @,@ 000 times during its first two weeks of release , making it the fastest @-@ selling PlayStation game on the PlayStation Network . The game has also inspired an unofficial version for the NES by Chinese company Shenzhen Nanjing Technology . This port features the Final Fantasy VII game scaled back to 2D , with some of the side quests removed . On the 5th of December 2015 , an upscaled version of the original game , complete with trophies and integrated cheats , was released on the PS4 . It is based on the enhanced PC version released on Steam in 2013

The game 's popularity and open @-@ ended nature also led director Kitase and scenario writer Nojima to establish a plot @-@ related connection between Final Fantasy VII and Final Fantasy X @-@ 2 . The character Shinra from Final Fantasy X @-@ 2 proposes the concept of extracting the life energy from within the planet Spira . Nojima has stated that Shinra and his proposal are a deliberate nod to the Shinra Company , and that he envisioned the events of Final Fantasy X @-@ 2 as a prequel to those in Final Fantasy VII . The FMV sequences and computer graphics used in Final Fantasy VII allowed Sakaguchi to begin production on the first Final Fantasy film , Final Fantasy : The Spirits Within . The game also introduced settings suffused with modern @-@ to @-@ advanced technology into the Final Fantasy series , a theme continued by Final Fantasy VIII and The Spirits Within . Re @-@ releases of Square games in Japan with bonus features would occur frequently after the release of Final Fantasy VII International . Later titles that would be re @-@ released as international versions include Final Fantasy X (as " International ") , Final Fantasy X @-@ 2 (as " International + Last Mission ") , Kingdom Hearts (as " Final Mix ") , Kingdom Hearts II (as " Final Mix ") , and Final Fantasy XII (as " International Zodiac Job System ") .

Several characters from Final Fantasy VII have also made cameo appearances in other Square Enix titles , most notably the fighting game Ehrgeiz and the popular Final Fantasy @-@ Disney crossover series Kingdom Hearts . Additionally , fighting video game Dissidia Final Fantasy includes Final Fantasy VII characters such as Cloud and Sephiroth , and allows players to fight with characters from throughout the Final Fantasy series , and its follow @-@ up , Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy , included Tifa as well . On the November 12 , 2015 , Nintendo Direct , it was announced that Super Smash Bros. for Nintendo 3DS and Wii U would receive Cloud as a downloadable content character in 2015 , along with a stage based on Midgar . Aerith 's death in the game has often been referred as one of the most emotional moments from any video game , while Sephiroth remains one of the most popular villains in video game history .

= = = Related media and merchandise = = =

Compilation of Final Fantasy VII is the formal title for a series of games , animated features and short stories based in the world of Final Fantasy VII . The series consists of several titles across various platforms , all of which are extensions of the original story . The first title in the Compilation is the mobile game Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII , a prequel focusing on the Turks ' activities six years prior to the original game , including their first encounter with AVALANCHE . The CGI film sequel Final Fantasy VII : Advent Children , set two years after the events of the game , was the first title announced in the series , but it was the second to be released . Special DVD editions of the film included Last Order : Final Fantasy VII , an original video animation that recounts the destruction of Nibelheim . Dirge of Cerberus : Final Fantasy VII and its mobile phone counterpart , Dirge of Cerberus Lost Episode : Final Fantasy VII , are third @-@ person shooters set three years after the events of Final Fantasy VII and one after the events of Advent Children . Dirge focuses on Vincent Valentine , and goes into more detail regarding his backstory than the original Final Fantasy VII . The most recent title is the PlayStation Portable game Crisis Core : Final Fantasy VII , an action role @-@ playing game that revolves around Zack 's past . Also included in the Compilation is On the Way to a Smile , a collection of seven short stories written by Kazushige Nojima , and set between the end of Final Fantasy VII and the beginning of Advent Children . Originally only three stories were released : " Case of Barret " , " Case of Tifa " and " Case of Denzel " , but with the release of Advent Children Complete , four more stories were written ; " Case of Nanaki " , " Case of Yuffie " , " Case of Shinra " and " Case of Lifestream - White & Black " .

Releases not under the Compilation label include , Maiden Who Travels the Planet , which follows Aerith 's journey in the Lifestream after her death at the hands of Sephiroth , taking place concurrently with the second half of the original game . Final Fantasy VII Snowboarding is a mobile port of the snowboard minigame featured in Final Fantasy VII , which contains different course than the original minigame . The game is downloadable on V Cast @-@ compatible mobile phones , and was first made available in 2005 in Japan and North America . Final Fantasy VII G @-@ Bike is a mobile game released for iOS and Android in December 2014 , based on the motorbike minigame featured in FFVII .

= = = Remake = = =

With the announcement and development of the Compilation of Final Fantasy VII , speculation spread that an enhanced remake of the original Final Fantasy VII would be released for the PlayStation 3 . This speculation was sparked at the 2005 E3 convention by the release of a video featuring the opening sequence of Final Fantasy VII recreated using the PlayStation 3 's graphical capabilities . A high definition remake was officially confirmed at E3 2015 , for the PS4 . The game will be more than a high definition remaster , with director Tetsuya Nomura stating that the game will have changes made to its story and combat system .