

RETRO REARVIEW: THE LEGEND OF ZELDA



That's right fans! In celebration of Nintendo's legendary franchise I'm taking a look back at Nintendo's world-reknowned action-RPG series! So hit the jump below to travel to a fantasy world filled with fairies, octoroks, and dodongos!!

Our story begins in 1986. The NES had only been released a year in the US (and it had already been out in Japan three years by this point) and for the most part games had been ports of arcade games (Mario Bros., Donkey Kong, Xevious, etc.) That's when Shigeru Miyamoto decided to try something different.

Set in the land of Hyrule, the story goes that Zelda has been kidnapped, and the legendary artifact the 'Triforce' has been split into eight pieces and scattered all throughout Hyrule. It's up to our hero Link to reassemble the Triforce and save Princess Zelda from the evil sorcerer Ganon!

The Legend of Zelda was quite a different game from most all the other games released at the time. Instead of just going from point a to point b, the player had almost complete and total freedom to go wherever he wanted. Sure there were some areas inaccessible without the right item, but for the most part our young hero Link had free roam of the overworld map.

But the only way to make progress through the game was to locate each of the eight underworld dungeons before you could take on Ganon's lair high atop Death Mountain. Each guarded by a different creature, such as the serpent-with-legs Aquamentus, or the armor-plated Dodongo. Learn the pattern to defeating them, and your reward is an extra Heart Container and a piece of the Triforce!

Locate all eight, and Ganon will put out the welcome mat and grant the player access to the rest of his Death Mountain fortress. Within is a maze of corridors and passageways filled with

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Written by DarkTetsuya

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enemies, hopefully you've gone in with full hearts (did you find them all?) and the most powerful sword in the game, the Magic Sword. Hopefully you also remembered to find the Silver Arrows before taking on Ganon, there's no other way to defeat him!

Of course after his first defeat, he actually managed to come back in several games:

- Zelda II: The Adventure of Link - Released in 1987, this game was a vast departure from the original, as instead of being a completely overhead game like its predecessor, the bulk of Zelda II's action took place from a side-scrolling viewpoint, and to this day still receives mixed reviews from players.

- Zelda: A Link To The Past - Released in 1991, this was the series' first foray on Nintendo's newly released Super Nintendo Entertainment System. As the title implies, this game actually takes place prior to the events of the first two Zelda games. Fortunately Link also gets several new items to play with, like the Hookshot (a grappling hook of sorts) and the Magic Mirror which allows him to warp between 'Light' and 'Dark' worlds.

- Zelda: Link's Awakening - Released on the Gameboy in 1993 (and later given a Color update when that version of Nintendo's handheld was released in 1998) sadly this is one I haven't personally played myself. But the visuals do look just like the SNES' LttP. There's actually an interesting story behind one of the characters that makes a cameo (he appeared in another game composed by the same person) perhaps you'll see a writeup about that in a future RR!

- BS Satellaview: Zelda no Densetsu (Legend of Zelda) - Released on the Japan-only 'Broadcast Satellite' system in Japan (think SEGA Channel, but for the Super Famicom, and more awesome) there were several Zelda-themed games released for the service. Interestingly each episode had different random events that triggered as you played, something that hasn't really yet been implemented correctly in emulators.

- CD-i Games: Rather than pretend these games don't exist (as I'm sure many of you already do) I think it'd be way more fun to talk about them!! Nintendo granted Phillips the license to produce three Zelda spinoffs for their CD-based multimedia system, the CD-i. Sadly the games just did not live up to Nintendo's pedigree for the typical Zelda title. (with animation that pales in comparison to the [animated cartoon](#) !)

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- Zelda: Ocarina of Time - Came out in 1998 for the Nintendo 64, the best part of this game's release was the initial printing of the games actually came on a gold cartridge just like the original NES version (and the sequel, Zelda II). In his N64 debut, Link tackles his first 3D adventure. HEY! LISTEN! This time Link also had the help of Navi, a small fairy. Though how much help she actually *was*, is still debatable. The one other special thing about this release were the initial copies had a song not unlike the one that got pulled from Little Big Planet upon its release... and for much the same reason! (Sacreligious reasons)

- Zelda: Majora's Mask - Haven't really had much experience with this sequel to OOT, apparently it involves rewinding time to save the world from an impending death via meteor. Luckily after rewinding time all your items/progress will still be intact.

- Zelda: 'Oracle' Games - Released on the Gameboy Color in 2001, while similar in style to 'Link's Awakening', the game actually came in two parts. You could beat each one in either order, but if you beat both games (taking a password from one when starting the other so you could beat the games multiple times to get the full experience.

- Zelda: The Wind Waker - Perhaps the most controversial Zelda title since Adventures of Link on the NES, The Wind Waker had a very different art style with its cartoony, cel-shaded graphics. Interestingly in this game, Link did most of his travelling by boat.

- Zelda: The Minish Cap - Sadly never got a chance to play this one, I just know it involved a magic hat.

- Zelda: Phantom Hourglass - Another one I never got around to, this one featured heavy usage of the DS' touchscreen.

- Zelda: Spirit Tracks - Some of these I admit to missing... like this one affectionately referred to as 'Link's on a Train' as the main gameplay mechanic seemed to entail riding on a train.

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- Zelda: Twilight Princess - Here's one I did actually get to play, the first Nintendo Wii release of the Zelda series, this one featured a new character and the ability to turn into a wolf for solving puzzles and whatnot.

- Zelda: Skyward Sword - Due out sometime this year, this is Nintendo's latest entry in their Legendary franchise. Word has it Link can actually fire shots with his sword again, an ability not seen since Link to the Past (at the earliest, if it came back in a more recent game I don't remember it)

So, that's basically all there is to tell about Link's legacy for now.... stay tuned to OLR for new articles every so often, and be sure to tune into our show LIVE! sunday nights at 6!