

The Most Obscure Titles in Long-Running Gaming Franchises

Highlights:

- Through a mixture of retail releases, arcade experiences, and expanded demos all developers have titles which slipped through the cracks and didn't receive as much attention.

- From Racing Spin-offs to early titles in unexplored genres, these games prove that even the biggest franchises can suffer from commercial defeats.

- Although with failure comes closure, and some of these titles are either extremely obscure to find or are unable to procure due to server cancellation.

1. Jak X: Combat Racing

While the antics of the Playstation 2's dynamic duo mascots (no, not Ratchet in Clank, the other ones [\[Link: PlayStation: 5 Things Jak & Dexter Does Better Than Ratchet & Clank \(& 5 That Ratchet & Clank Is Best At\)\]](#) have become synonymous with Sony's best-selling platform, Naughty Dog weren't finished with the wise-mouthed protagonists yet.

Many don't know that only a year after the original trilogy of games ended, Naughty Dog released a much-praised (and much-loved) spin-off in the Jak and Dexter series – a combat racing game by the name of Jak X. [\[Link: Comparing Ratchet Deadlocked and Jak X Combat Racing\]](#)

If the premise of Lucid Games' semi-launch title for the Playstation 5 'Destruction AllStars' [\[Link: Destruction AllStars Review\]](#) caught your eye, but its lacklustre execution left you underwhelmed, then Naughty Dog may well have the scratch to that bombastic vehicular combat shaped itch ready and waiting in Jak X.

2. Super Princess Peach

Not too long ago – before Nintendo's recent announcement of the upcoming Princess Peach: Showtime [\[Link: Princess Peach is Getting Her Own Video Game \]](#) – the only title in the Mario series which allowed you to properly possess the Mushroom Kingdom's reigning monarch was a under-selling DS title: Super Princess Peach.

While Peach has been playable in many forms throughout her gaming tenure – from kart racing, invites to Smash Bros., and even as an option in multiple Mario titles [\[Link: 10 Best Mario Games With Playable Princess Peach\]](#) – Super Princess Peach allowed players to finally play as the Princess as the sole protagonist of her own title.

While the game itself is a solid Nintendo outing, with many clamouring for its return in some shape or form [\[Link: Super Princess Peach Would Make An Excellent Switch Remaster\]](#), the way in which Peach interacts with the world does feel like Nintendo themselves didn't do Princess Toadstool the justice she deserved. Through the enhancement of her emotions – you heard me right – Peach can interact with her environment in volatile and engaging ways; creating some dynamic (if somewhat sexist) gameplay.

However, with the upcoming Switch title seemingly giving Peach a more grounded role in her newest title, it seems like those who wanted a sequel have been heard and have been rewarded. [\[Link: The Case For Super Princess Peach 2\]](#)

3. Halo: Fireteam Raven

While Microsoft's flagship Halo franchise is no stranger to the annals of multimedia storytelling – from books, graphic novels, and Mega Bloks sets – the First-Person Shooter series has also never shyed away from branching out into games in other genres.

From the much-loved Halo Wars franchise, to a cancelled third-person project using the Mega Bloks licence [\[Link: Cancelled Halo Mega Bloks Game Footage Surfaces\]](#) Microsoft has always been curious as to how to expand the Halo franchise beyond its bounds – including an on-rails arcade experience called Fireteam Raven [\[Link: New Halo Game Announced But It's Not What You Think\]](#).

While the announcement of the title led some fans of the franchise to worry that development was being shifted from the next 'core' title at the time [\[Link: Halo 6 Development Isn't Affected by Fireteam Raven Arcade Game\]](#) – now known as 'Halo: Infinte' – the title proved very popular. Although it may not include the Master Chief, instead dropping you into the boots of the UNSC's Orbital Drop Shock Trooper (or ODST) [\[Link: A Look Back At Halo 3: ODST\]](#), it even expanded past its initial boundaries as a 'Dave & Busters' exclusive cabinet.

4. Pokemon Trozei!

It's been almost a decade since the latest entry in this Pokemon puzzle series [\[Link: Catch 'Pokemon Battle Trozei' on Nintendo 3DS\]](#) but its Nintendo DS debut was a valiant showcase for the system's touchscreen controls while also proving a cute Pocket-monster themed spin on the typical match-four puzzle formula.

Yet that was in 2005 – nearly 20 years ago – and, while the Pokemon franchise has reached new heights since then, there is something to be said about this quaint little touch-screen puzzler featuring all 386 varieties of the critters! [\[Link: 10 Pokemon Games Most Fans Forgot Existed\]](#)

While the puzzle formula is nothing new, and certainly not something the Pokemon franchise is against trying again – with the most recent puzzle title, Pokemon Café Mix [\[Link: Pokemon Café Mix is Available Now\]](#) releasing on both mobile phones and the Nintendo Switch – the surprisingly deep Story Mode alongside the minute-to-minute gameplay make Pokemon Trozei! one to remember.

5. Gears Pop!

Well before Microsoft took the Gears of War Franchise into the strategy genre with their Xbox Series X/S launch title 'Gears Tactics' [\[Link: Gears Tactics Review\]](#) fans were given an impromptu dose of strategy gameplay in the GoW universe through a strange partnership with the Funko Pop collectable figures. [\[Link: 13 Rarest Funko Pops of All Time\]](#)

While it may not have been widely lauded as a surprise hit in the Gears of War fanbase, Gears Pop! [\[Link: Gears of War Pop Mobile Game Revealed\]](#) garnered lukewarm reviews as it played on mobile phone devices; however, as of April 2021 the game and its servers were discontinued and the cutesy, bobble headed strategy game was no more. [\[Link: Every Gears of War Game, Ranked\]](#)

However, with the franchise reportedly making strides into differing waters into the next mainline entry it could mark a change of pace in the creation of similar, smaller projects in the future! [\[Link: Gears of War 6 Rumor Suggests Massive Change for the Franchise\]](#)

6. NHL '94: Rewind

While it may sound peculiar to call any sports title 'obscure' or 'overlooked', what with the genre's domination of the video game sales charts every year [Link: [The Most Downloaded Playstation Games of 2021 Emphasize Sports Games Are Far From Niche](#)], the annual series relating to the National Hockey League (NHL) have a few hidden gems buried in its long history.

First being leaked, and then announced, as a preorder bonus for purchases of NHL 21 [Link: [NHL 94 Rewind Leaked Online](#)] the pixel-perfect reimagining of NHL 94 – complete with more current players – captured NHL fans and general enthusiasts alike.

Setting itself apart from the 'Anniversary Mode' [Link: ['NHL 14' Trailer Reveals Throwback 'NHL 94 Anniversary Mode'](#)] revealed for NHL 14, a decade ago, this nostalgic hockey havoc is now also available separately through Microsoft's partnership with EA Play – creating a similar sensation to playing the updated Sensible World of Soccer release for the Xbox 360. [Link: [SWOS Store Page - Microsoft](#)]

7. Metroid Prime Hunters: First Hunt

While physical demo bundles may have gone the way of the proprietary memory card (or, maybe not? [Link: [New Seagate Storage Expansion Card Costs Almost As Much As An Xbox Series X Console](#)]) there was a time when Nintendo was anxious to show off their new Nintendo DS handheld as a competent platform for all the most popular gaming genres – including first person shooters. [Link: [A History of Call of Duty Games on Nintendo Consoles](#)]

As such, in the creation of a new handheld entry to their rapidly successful Metroid Prime franchise, Nintendo decided to release an expanded demo of the game within certain bundles of DS systems. Specifically to showcase the system's WiFi connectivity for multiplayer, this demo also introduced players to the game's incredible gameplay and was a precursor to the surprisingly strong final title. [Link: [Every Metroid Game Ever Made From Worst to Best, Ranked](#)]

Although the demo was no doubt successful in its portrayal of the DS as a confident system for FPS fans to lay their hat, the game – and its demo – remains fairly overlooked. However, fans (and its designer) [Link: [Designer of Metroid Prime Hunters Wants to See the Nintendo DS Game Remade](#)] are clamouring for the game to receive the attention it deserves – and, with a hearty remaster of the first console Prime title released there is more reason than ever to be optimistic. [Link: [Metroid Prime Remastered: Complete Guide & Walkthrough](#)]