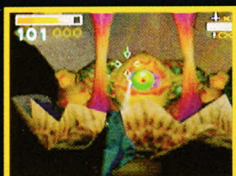
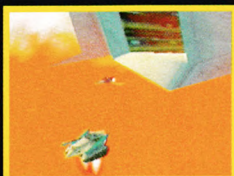


This might just be the greatest winged shoot-em-up you'll ever play...

STARFOX64



What better to have as a boss than a giant oyster?



Intromation! Who says the N64 can't do decent link scenes?



Foxy! You'll have to fly back to the boss to try again.



The explosion effects are chuffin' brilliant.

Star Fox 64 is a great game. Not 'great' in the sense of looking brilliant (although it's one of the most visually impressive N64 games to date). Not 'great' in the sense of having a superb license (although it's a sequel to the superb SNES Star Fox). It's not even 'great' in the originality stakes (although you'll never have played a game like it before). No, Star Fox is 'great' because if you took away all the flash stuff – the graphics, the sound effects and the sampled speech – you'd find underneath a blueprint for a perfect action adventure game. Star Fox 64 is great from the ground up.

Basics first, though. You play Fox McCloud. Your mission is to rescue your home planet, Corneria from the invading armies of self-proclaimed 'Emperor' Andross who, incidentally, also murdered your father. Once your planet is saved you must fly into the heart of Andross' empire and destroy the evil overlord himself. Good stuff.

The Arwing space fighter is your main weapon in this task – although a tank and submarine also come into play at certain stages. Some levels are 'on rails' – fairly linear but fast and packed with full-on shoot-em-up action – whilst others allow you full 360° control of your space fighter and

A-Z

It's easy to finish Star Fox 64. If 'finish' means 'get to the final boss, defeat him, watch the closing credits' then every gamer should be able to 'finish' Star Fox in their first evening's play. However, if you complete certain game targets (scores etc), you can take alternative routes to the final boss and find whole new levels. Accessing all of these may take a week or two. After that, there's the Expert Mode which requires you to score a set amount of points on each level – a Herculean task that might occupy you for many months.

In other words, Star Fox 64 is another perfect Nintendo production – easy to get into and have some success at but impossibly difficult to master with a lifespan as long as a tree.



Level 1: Corneria – Fox's home planet is under attack from Andross' forces. Fly over the planet, blowing away anything that stands in your way.

This screen shows the alternate routes out of your level.



Level 2: Meteo – General Pepper sends the team out to investigate enemy forces in a nearby asteroid field. Avoid rocks and shoot the baddies.



Level 5: Titania – Slippy has crash-landed on Titania and must be rescued. Fox jumps into his Landmaster tank and rolls into battle.



Level 3: Fortuna – The team make their way to Fortuna, an occupied planet closer to Andross base. Take part in a full 360° dogfight on this level.



Level 6: Volus – Take out this enemy base in another 360° dogfight. Things are a bit confusing because the base is rotating. Nice.



Level 4: Sector X – Back into space and the strange junkyard that is Sector X. Beat an enormous giant robot at the end.



Level 7: Venom – At last, Andross' planet. Battle through the aliens, a long corridor guarded by rockmen and onto the final confrontation (gulp).

Fly around this base knocking out the beams of electricity emanating from its centre.



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second reason behind its greatness.

Which is that, however much you play the game, if you want to, there's always more to do. For instance, there are more 'extra' levels than there are if you just play from start to finish. What's more these extras can only be accessed by completing certain game tasks such as achieving certain points scores, shooting all of a particular enemy or flying through a set number of hoops. Some extra levels can lead on to further extra levels themselves – all you've got to do is find the performance key to unlock them. Even when you've flown every mission there is in the game, there's still the super-hard Expert Mode to conquer. *Star Fox 64* is a lot of game for your money.

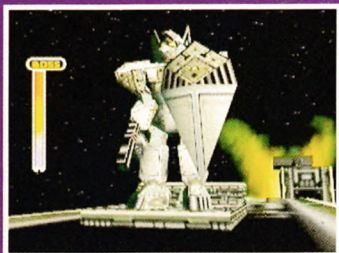
The final reason for *Star Fox's* greatness is the way it develops its plot, characters and storyline. It's the first game to take the idea of the 'interactive movie' to its most satisfying

Your friends, Peppy, Slippy and Flaco pop up on your intercom as does General Pepper and the Star Wolf gang.

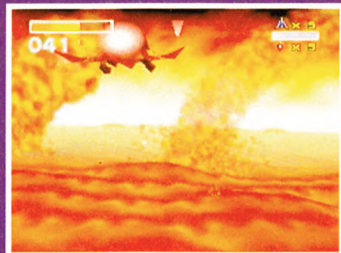


Extra levels

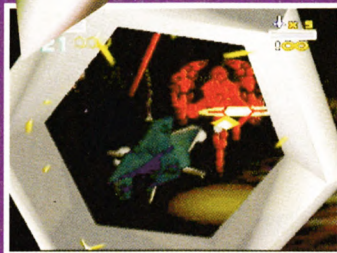
The extra levels can be accessed by completing set tasks within levels one to seven. What are they? Ah that'd be telling.



Name: Sector Y
Robotic exoskeletons, enormous spaceships and lots of guns. Boss robot waiting for you at the end.



Name: Sol
A lava world and your energy is constantly being eaten by the heat. The boss is terrifying to behold.



Name: Aqua
The Blue Martin is Fox's personal attack sub and you'll need it to defeat the marine creatures.



Name: Sector Z
Defend your Great Fox ship from Andross' alien attacks. This time it's personal.



Name: Katarina
An Independence Day rip-off. Thousands of enemy ships in another 360° dogfight level.



Name: Maku Base
Out with the Landmaster once again and time to take on some railway-mounted baddies.



Name: Zone S
Skim the waves, take out anything in the way. Kill a sea serpent at the end. You'll meet Cat here.



Name: Area 6
It's extremely difficult and the boss at the end has the biggest laser beam you've ever seen.



Four-mation flying

Another N64 game, another split-screen four-player option. Star Fox 64 for four players consists of a dogfighting race to rack-up a set amount of kills as quickly as possible. Each player plays as a member of the Star Fox team and you can choose either a space or low-level theatre of engagement.

We haven't found them yet, but it's said that completing the game on Expert opens up further options in the four-player mode. These might allow players to use the Landmaster tank or even run around on foot.



All the aerobatic manoeuvres of the game are in the four-player mode and success is dependent on mastering them.



Power-ups are scattered through the levels which wrap-around to give a never-ending arena in which to fly.



Star Fox experts can opt to start multi-player games with their energy bars reduced as a handicap to give others a chance.

Animal farm

Name: Fox McCloud
Your character through the game. Although Fox desperately wants to save his home planet, Corneria, he's also motivated by the memory of his father who was killed at the hands of the evil Emperor Andross.

Name: Poppy Hare
The oldest and most experienced of the four pilots. Poppy flew with Fox's father on the mission that he was betrayed and killed. He's handy to have around as he'll give you hints and advice throughout the game. Providing he lives.



Name: Slippy Toad
The least experienced of the team, Slippy is prone to getting into trouble and will often rely on Fox to rescue him. If Slippy survives to the end of the level, though, he'll provide power bars for the boss, allowing Fox to judge how well he's doing in his fight.

Name: Falco Lombardi
Corneria's best pilot (after Fox). Falco has a bit of a temper on him and is responsible for quite a bit of grumpy radio banter. He really comes into his own when Fox and the gang have to fight the Star Wolf team later on in the game.

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conclusion – to blend story sequences with live action. There are no breaks for pre-rendered scenes to load, or sudden differences in quality between intro and action because the engine used to generate both is the same. The cart/CD argument looks even skewed towards carts when you realise that the lack of FMV in N64 games has forced designers to use as a replacement, something that actually bleedin' enhances the game.

With its Rumble Pak (surprisingly good fun) and its four-player mode on top of everything else, Star Fox 64 is the second only to Super Mario 64 in the 'mate impressing' stakes. The only problem for UK gamers is how long we'll have to wait for a PAL version – until after summer, basically. The universal adaptor cart from Spectra Video isn't compatible with the game, making the wait even more annoyingly compulsory. Nintendo make great games certainly, but they have a strange attitude towards their poor beleaguered European fans.

James Ashton



This boss'll taunt you with his giant robotic arms. Bring him on...

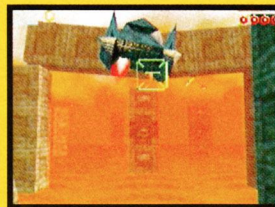


Tanker!

New to the N64 version of Star Fox is the Landmaster – a Tank (or Drop Ship, like in Aliens) – driven by Fox in the ground-based missions. The Landmaster has an elevating, swivelling turret which can be used to pick off ground and air targets as well as a jet propulsion unit mounted on its underside, allowing it to float sweetly over ground-based obstacles.



The analogue stick is used to steer the Landmaster left and right, and to raise or lower the gun turret. It takes some getting used to but it's the best way.



Z and R can be used to roll the Landmaster left and right. Holding both buttons together activates the jet unit giving you extra lift.



The Landmaster's gun can be powered-up in the same way as the Arwing. Holding down A (the fire button) will also produce a lock-on-able guided missile.

STARFOX 64

VERSION REVIEWED N64
NO. OF PLAYERS 1 to 4
FROM Nintendo
PRICE £40
AVAILABLE Now (Jap Import)

GRAPHICS

Fantastic explosions and the biggest, scariest bosses you've ever seen in a computer game.

91

SOUNDS

Buries the 'carts can't do speech' rumour. Music reacts brilliantly. Overall: superb.

93

GAMEPLAY

Well-pitched difficulty curve and plenty of acrobatic and shooting subtlety. Classy stuff.

90

LIFESPAN

Easy to complete but it'll take you ages to finish – if you want to work at perfection.

88

OVERALL

89

JUDGEMENT

Nintendo's finest N64 game after Super Mario 64 and the finest shoot-em-up 'with wings' you'll play for a long, long time.