

As one of the most iconic video game characters of all time, Mario has an extensive history both inside and outside the industry. With The Super Mario Bros Movie now showing in cinemas, **The Sunday Times** takes a journey through his game-changing milestones. Let's-a go!

It's-a me, Mario!

1981

- Jumpman is introduced in the arcade game Donkey Kong, created by Japanese video game designer Shigeru Miyamoto.

1982

- In Donkey Kong Jr, the sequel to Donkey Kong, Jumpman is referred to as Mario for the first time.
- Mario's foray into handheld games is through the Game & Watch port of the Donkey Kong arcade game.

1983

- Mario stars in his own arcade game Mario Bros, which introduces his twin brother, Luigi. For the first time, the brothers are depicted as Italian plumbers.

1985

- Mario gets his own home console release – Super Mario Bros on the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). This game also unveils the iconic theme song by Japanese composer Koji Kondo.

1986

- Mario's first animated film in Japanese, Super Mario Bros: The Great Mission To Rescue Princess Peach!, airs in Japan.

1988

- Super Mario Bros 2, the sequel to the original NES game, marks the first time Princess Peach and Toad – characters other than the titular brothers – are playable.

1991

- Mario's first 16-bit game, Super Mario World, introduces his dinosaur companion, Yoshi.
- Japan releases Mario's first manga series called Super Mario-kun, which is still ongoing.

1990

- Mario is more popular than Mickey Mouse among American kids, according to the Q Score survey, a measurement of the familiarity and appeal of a brand, celebrity, company or entertainment product used in the United States.

1989

- Mario makes his way to Nintendo's new handheld device, the Game Boy, in Super Mario Land.
- Footage of the then unreleased game, Super Mario Bros 3, is used in the climactic scene of the 1989 movie The Wizard, and becomes marketing for the game before its release two months later.

1992

- Super Mario Kart marks Mario's start in kart racing. The series becomes one of Mario's most popular secondary games.

1993

- Super Mario Bros, Hollywood's first attempt at a live-action Mario feature film, stars Bob Hoskins and John Leguizamo as Mario and Luigi. It is a critical and commercial failure.

1995

- Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island, the Super NES sequel to Super Mario World, unveils Baby Mario. It is Nintendo's take on Mario's origin story.

1996

- Nintendo's new 64-bit home console, the Nintendo 64 (N64), debuts Mario's jump from 2D to 3D in Super Mario 64. Actor Charles Martinet voices Mario in this game and every Mario game since then.

1999

- Super Smash Bros, a franchise crossover fighting game for the N64 which features Mario as one of the fighters, is released.

2003

- Mario becomes the first video game character to be honoured with a wax statue at the Hollywood Wax Museum.

2020

- Lego releases its first Super Mario-themed play sets that feature an interactive figurine. Its eyes, mouth and chest use LED screens to display different emotions and messages.

2016

- At the closing ceremony of the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is dressed as Mario as he introduces Tokyo as the host city for the 2020 Olympic Games.

2015

- March 10 is declared Mario Day (written as MARIO Day) by Nintendo to celebrate the franchise.

2007

- Mario's love interest Princess Peach makes it to the Forbes Fictional 15 list of richest fictional characters. Her overall wealth is estimated to be around US\$1.3 billion.
- Mario teams up with former rival Sonic the Hedgehog in Nintendo Wii's Mario & Sonic At The Olympic Games, coinciding with the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China.

2021

- Super Nintendo World, a Mario-themed zone in Universal Studios Japan in Osaka, opens its doors after a slight delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- A sealed copy of the N64 game, Super Mario 64, was sold at an auction for an eye-watering \$2 million. A few months later, a sealed copy of Super Mario Bros for the NES broke the record and sold for \$2.7 million.

2023

- The Super Mario Bros Movie opened in Singapore cinemas last Thursday.

A MAN OF MANY TALENTS

Mario is best known as a plumber who rescues Princess Peach from the clutches of main antagonist Bowser, but he has also taken on myriad professions. Here are some of them.

