

Import-ant Stuff

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Yep, it's **Nintendo 64** month folks, as we finally see it launched in Japan. But what good is that to us, with no UK release date as yet announced? Well, if you're anything like us, you may well be considering an import purchase...

If you're a regular reader of CVG, you should have at least some clue about the 'import scene'. Months before a game gets its UK release, we often cover the already-available Japanese or American versions of the game. For some of you, this parallel universe of games releases may make perfect sense. For others though, the continual references to NTSC versions, PAL borders and 17.5% slowdown, may well leave you perplexed, wondering what you're missing out on. With a UK release of the Nintendo 64 looking unlikely until next spring (that's OUR expert opinion, anyway), the only option for the more eager N64 groupie is to consider an import one. For those of you who've never entered the 'grey import' market before, this might seem like a daunting prospect. So what better time for CVG to offer a guiding light into the world of imports, and, while we're at it, clear up some of the more confusing points about the differences between official and import games.

Import Stuff



THE NEXT BIG THING!

Rest assured, right now importers are desperately putting in their orders for Nintendo 64s. As many as they can get hold of! You can guarantee though, they won't get many in, so DEFINITELY expect high prices. We've done some investigating and can tell you that most reputable importers claim to be expecting machines on the launch day - June 23rd (although we'd realistically add a week to that). Prices have been quoted at £800 to £1500. Yep, that's how much an import N64 is going to cost you. We seriously recommend you DON'T pay that kind of extortionate figure. Bear in mind, it was the same story with the Saturn and PlayStation. The first import machines cost between £600 to £1200. Within a couple of months most import machines were £500. Two years on, you can pick them both up for just under £200. It all depends on how long you're prepared to wait.



☛ The Japanese N64. Out on June 23rd. Priced at ¥25,000. That's £170.



☛ The US N64, set for a Sept 30th release. Price: \$250. That's about £175.



☛ Look! LOOK! That's what 'YOUR' N64 could look like in its box. If you spent £1000 on it. Wait a few months.



THE GAMES!

At the time of going to press, no importers were able to give us a set price for N64 games, although some estimated £100 (and we'd judge that to be a minimum). At the end of the day, it all comes down to how many they can get and how much demand there is.



SUPER MARIO KART R



SUPER MARIO 64



ZELDA



☛ SNES Mario Kart is the biggest-selling game ever. The sequel is going to be in demand.



☛ The hottest launch game. Possibly the best game ever. Expect this one to cost a ton.



☛ Hopefully prices will have eased slightly by the time this game arrives.



FORKING OUT!

There's a price to pay for the privilege of getting games before they're released in this country. And that price is... money. A lot of it. Importers can charge extortionate prices for the latest killer games and you've got to be prepared to shop around for the best prices. To give you a better idea of how prices can vary, here's how much the current 'hot' import titles are clocking in at.



One of the newest PS releases in Japan. Jumping Flash 2 is demanding anything up to £80 at the moment. You get the original Jumping Flash packaged with it, though.



SATURN

- Vampire Hunter £50 - 70
- Gun Griffon £55 - 70
- King Of Fighters '95 £70 - 80
- Legend Of Thor £60 - 70
- Victory Goal '96 £60 - 70
- Street Fighter Zero £55 - 70
- Guardian Heroes £60 - 70



PLAYSTATION

- Tekken 2 £70 - 80
- Bio Hazard (Resident Evil) £60 - 75
- Jumping Flash 2 £70 - 80
- Namco Museums £40 - 70
- Street Fighter Zero £70
- Darkstalkers £70 - 75
- Return Fire £55 - 70



SUPER NES

- Super Mario RPG £70 - £100

Import-ant



IMPORTANT! THINGS TO BE AWARE OF!

1 TV COMPATIBILITY!

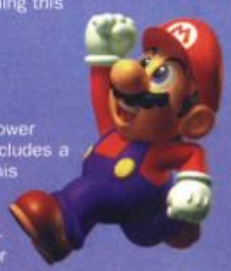
When buying a Japanese or American games machine, make sure you've got an NTSC compatible TV! If you don't understand what we're talking about, all you have to know is what kind of inputs your TV has. If you only have a standard RF aerial input, it's not good enough. You need a 21-pin Euroconnector socket (rectangular-shaped). Note: a scart socket, which looks the same, is not necessarily correct. It must be Euro AV-compatible. Your instruction manual should tell you this.

2 THE RIGHT LEADS!

Japanese consoles come packaged with a TV lead that ends in three separate plugs (one for video, two for stereo). Some TVs have inputs for these. Most don't. Make sure the importer you buy the machine from provides a lead that connects to a Euro AV socket. Sometimes they wire a ribbon-cable with the plug on, directly into the machine. Providing this is done well, it's fine.

3 POWER SUPPLY

The Japanese use a different power supply too, so make sure your importer includes a step-down converter with your machine. This converts the 240V UK power supply to 100V for the Japanese machine. It normally looks like a large metal box connected to a normal 3-pin British plug. Whatever you do, never plug a British power supply straight into a Japanese machine. You'll blow it up! Trust us, we know.



Kirby is going to be released on N64 after all. This one could be popular.



Having undergone a major transformation, this is part of the US launch line-up.

THE COMPLETE IMPORT BUYER'S GUIDE

FEATURE

WEIGHING UP THE ODDS!

Is it really worth going to all that trouble? Check out the pro and cons and decide for yourself...

THE PROS



1. You get the machine and games long before anyone else.
2. The games run the way they were intended. Full speed, full screen.
3. The Japanese packaging is better! (colourful manuals, ace illustrations).

Note - US packaging is always 'The Worst' though!

4. You get the uncut, uncensored versions of games.
Have you seen Japanese Bio Hazard? Talk about gore!

THE CONS



1. You have to pay through the nose for everything.
2. Japanese games are sometimes too incomprehensible to play!
3. Once the official machines come out, import software gets harder to find.
This happened with Megadrive and SNES. Not yet with PS and Saturn, simply because the games still come out in Japan so much earlier.
4. Your machine isn't compatible with official software (see conversions).
5. No manufacturer's warranty! Make sure the importer gives you at least a one year guarantee.

CONVERSIONS!

One final point. UK, Japanese and US machines are never compatible with each others games. You can guarantee this will be the case with N64 too. Importers do, however, perform conversions, allowing machines to play all games. There are also Datel converters which do the same. Note though - these converters do not change the game speed on Saturn, so UK games on a Jap machine run too fast. And Jap games will run slower on a UK machine. Therefore, ask about having speed switches fitted too!



Play Jap games on a UK Saturn and the screen squashes like this, with 17.5% speed loss. With PS, the machine automatically switches to the game's format. So Japanese games play at Japanese speed, even on a UK machine, providing it's fixed to play the game.



Import-ant Stuff

CONTACTS

Here's a selection of game import shops to help you get started. Ads for others can be found throughout our magazine.

COMPUTER EXCHANGE

32 RATHBONE PLACE
LONDON
W1P 1AD
TEL: 0171 636 2666

Estimated N64 price - (£800 - £1500)
Conversion cost - Saturn Datel adaptor (£30), PS switch (£75)
Game prices - reasonable for Saturn, expensive for PS

COLIN DIMOND CONSOLES

16 THE IRON MARKET
NEWCASTLE
STAFFS
ST3 1RF
TEL: 01782 717783

Estimated N64 price - (£250 deposit must be sent on first week of arrival)
Conversion cost - Sat Datel adaptor (£60), PS switch (£60)
Game prices - quite expensive

OTAKU (MAIL ORDER ONLY)

PO BOX 9573
LONDON
SE23 3ZF
TEL: 0181 699 2199

Estimated N64 price - £800
Conversion cost - not available
Game prices - quite expensive

VIDEO GAME CENTRE

838 WINBOURNE ROAD
BOURNMOUTH
BH9 2DR
TEL: 01202 527314

Estimated N64 price - unconfirmed
Conversion cost - doesn't do Saturn, PS switch (£30)
Game prices - reasonable for Saturn, some reasonable PS deals.

ACE CONSOLES

CARNABY STREET
LONDON
WC1
TEL: 0171 439 1185

Estimated N64 price - unconfirmed
Conversion cost - Sat switch (£55), PS switch (£95)
Game prices - reasonable for Sat, slightly pricey for PS

FEATURE BUYER'S GUIDE

WIN AN N64!

COMPO

WIN!
ONE OF THE FIRST N64s
IN THE WORLD!



Yep, play your cards right and you won't have to pay £1000 to get your hands the most wanted gaming machine on Earth. In fact, you won't have to pay anything. You'll have won one, see! Plus, we'll throw in a copy of red-hot launch game, Mario 64! All you have to do to become the duke, the pimp, the D-pad daddio of your district, is invent a new power-up for Mario that transforms him into something new. What does the power-up look like? What effect does it have on Mario? SHOW US!! When you've done that, just answer this tie-breaker question. How did Yoshi acquire arms to steer his Mariokart? Use your imagination! And send your entries to: **YOSHI USES HIS OWN EGGS IN HIS COOKIES COMP.** CVG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Get your entries in by the 23rd of July!

