

YOSHI'S COOKIE

GENRE(S): Puzzle

AVAILABLE ON: GB, NES, SNES

DEVELOPED BY: Tose, Bullet-Proof Software (SNES)

PUBLISHED BY: Nintendo, Bullet-Proof Software (SNES)

RELEASED: November 21, 1992 (GB, NES)

One year after *Yoshi*, Nintendo commissioned the development of another puzzle game with Yoshi's name. Instead of settling with another *Tetris* clone, Nintendo had Tose pick up on a cancelled arcade game by the name of *Hermetica*, originally developed by Home Data, and adapt it to a Nintendo-brand game. Once again, what we have here is essentially a Mario game with the actual character of Yoshi never making an appearance during gameplay, but we'll let that pass 'cause the game works.

First, I have a little story to tell. I know this game quite well back from a time when I was about nine years old, and my sister was a member in a film club that sometimes offered good deals on a selection of console games, even games that were brand new or considered greatest hits on their respective platforms. I was into *everything* Mario-related back in that time – some would say I still am – and the game of the month (or something along those lines) was *Dr. Mario*, a game I had never played, from a genre that really wasn't my favourite. But, it was a Mario game. I had to have it. Well, they ran out of stock in half a day, and instead delivered a substitute game, which was *Yoshi's Cookie*. Needless to say, I was so thoroughly, ridiculously disappointed. I almost threw the game in the trash, I was so pissed. It had Yoshi on the cover. His name on the cover. It didn't even look like *Dr. Mario*. Well, after calling my sister all sorts of names a nine-year old shouldn't even know for a couple of hours, I actually tried the game. What do you know, it's still a Mario game. ...Where the hell is Yoshi, anyway...? Fast forward a little over 30 years, and I'm glad to have made this game's acquaintance, and I hold it in much greater esteem than the overrated *Dr. Mario*.

Yoshi's Cookie is addictive as it is, but it has even better potential as a handheld game. It's exactly what today's fans of mobile gaming would just eat up. Think of mainstream hits such as *Candy Crush*, or more sophisticated, not quite as widely known titles like *Bejeweled*. The concept of the game is extremely simple, and there's only one game mode. Cookies appear on the screen, both vertically and horizontally, and your goal is simply to empty the screen by organizing them into straight identical lines, from two to seven snacks – the larger the combo, the better your score. Eventually the game itself gets harder – you start off with more initial clutter, with a deliberately small amount of the same types of cookies, which will make it much trickier for you to organize them in time. The game is much more flexible than, say, the previous *Yoshi*, as you can move the cookies in any direction. A cookie shaped like Yoshi's face (I guess this is "Yoshi's Cookie") serves as a wild card which you can use as a substitute within any line.

After surviving ten rounds, with ten stages in each, the game is done. Again, there's no endless mode, nothing like that, just this one challenge. Speaking of challenge, there's no notable increase in the game's difficulty level until maybe round 5 or 6. Good cognition and motor skills will take you far, probably right to the end in very little time. That which *Yoshi's Cookie* lacks in challenge, it covers for the cost with fun gameplay, just what you need to pass a little time.

It's quite likely the best Mario-related puzzle game as a concept, but I'll have to be honest with you; I think the SNES version, which came out a year later, is slightly more worthy of your time. You'll find a short piece of insight on that game and the fundamental differences between it and the original article in the SNES folder.

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