

## Video Game Review: Kid-Friendly 'Rio' Brings Animated Party Home

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 18, 2011 - 12:00pm

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CHICAGO – The video game tie-in for the movie “Rio” should be a total disaster. It has three strikes against it being a movie tie-in, having gameplay aimed primarily at elementary school kids, and the fact that it’s yet another collection of mini-games. So, I’m happy to report that “Rio” isn’t that bad. It’s not going to be any child’s favorite game but it adequately translates the good will they have towards the hit movie into their living room.



Video Game Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Like the movie, “Rio” is a simple affair built around bright colors, loud sounds, and wacky humor. It’s really nothing more than a collection of mini-games organized in several modes. You can play through them on your own or with 1-3 friends through a very loose “Story” that tries to connect them based primarily on locations. You can jump into “Party” mode and simply play your favorites with your buddies. Or you can try a spin-the-wheel contest that essentially just randomizes the Party mode and offers a different point system.



Rio  
Photo credit: THQ

“Rio” boasts over 40 action-packed mini-games but there are really only a few varieties that are then repeated. All of the games are built around four players (although you can play solo with three A.I. combatants if your friends have better things to do) and most of them feature a point system. Collect the most fruit. Hit the most monkeys. Stay on the moving cable car long enough. Every game has such a simple concept that most high school age players won’t even need to read the instructions before winning it.



And yet we need to remember who the game is designed for. It's based on a G-rated film and so one wouldn't want the mini-games to be complex enough that they just made little kids angry. No parent wants to spend money on something that's only going to frustrate their child. And so the developers have to balance being just easy enough for young gamers to play while also reasonably entertaining their babysitters. Surprisingly, they accomplish just that balance. Some of the mini-games are annoyingly simple and repetitive but just as many are enjoyable. I liked playing dodgeball, shooting fireworks, and dropping things on fleeing marmosets more than most comparable mini-game collections out there.

It is a bit disappointing that none of the voice talent from the film could come on-board and a few of the actors tasked with trying to sound like Jemaine Clement or Tracy Morgan, just as examples, fall pretty flat. Voice work only exists in the transitional scenes that connect the mini-games in the "Story" mode, which also features clips of the movie itself without dialogue. They really didn't want to pay Jesse Eisenberg or Anne Hathaway, did they?

Movie tie-ins based on family entertainment are almost always disastrous. I should know, I've played titles related to "Megamind," "Rango," "Monsters vs. Aliens," and much more. I sat down to play "Rio" with low expectations. It's a brief affair, especially if you're on your own (no more than 2 hours to play through every mini-game), but this is designed for kids to play with their friends on a rainy Saturday, and with that in mind, it works.

The movie "Rio" disappointed a bit at the box office on opening weekend, falling short of recent hits like "How to Train Your Dragon," indicating it may not be the timeless hit that Blue Sky Studios were hoping for (the bunch-up of animated movies early in 2011 was mostly to blame...it's a crowded marketplace this year) when they put it on the schedule. This may be the rare occasion when the little one on your family tree enjoys playing the game with his friends more than watching the movie on which it is based.

*"Rio" was developed and released by THQ. It was released on April 12th, 2011 for the PS3, Xbox 360, Nintendo DS, and Nintendo Wii. The version reviewed was for the PS3. It is rated E 10+ (Everyone 10 and Older).*



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