

STAR WARS: FORTY YEARS OF CELEBRATING

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This past weekend, we celebrated the death and resurrection of Christ, which is a beautiful, hope-filled time. However, it also happened to overlap with another highly anticipated and celebrated event: the Star Wars Celebration in Orlando. The event took place from April 13-16 and was jam-packed full of panels and screenings. Those who were lucky enough to attend dressed up as their favorite characters, and those who had to carry on their daily lives at home anxiously watched the internet for new information. This was also a special time because it marks 40 years of Star Wars. Here is a breakdown of everything we learned from this year's celebration.



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THE LAST JEDI

Ever since Disney bought the Star Wars franchise and revamped it, their movies have become some of the most anticipated each year. This movie is no different. The Force Awakens left fans excited and nostalgic, but also full of questions about the next generation of characters. Why doesn't Luke speak? Who are Rey's parents? Why did Ben Solo go bad? We got two minutes and twelve seconds of Luke's monologue and orchestral hints of the original movies. From the trailer, we see glimpses of Rey using the force and training with Luke. We get a look at Kylo Ren with his new scar. We see the Millennium Falcon racing through the sky, a new planet with red soil and Poe's ship exploding. Finn is still in his healing chamber, and the base appears to be under attack. Perhaps the most surprising part about the trailer was with Luke's monologue. At the end, he says "it's time for the Jedi to end." What could this possibly mean? Has he turned to the dark side? Is he cutting himself off from the force all together? Or is it something different—is he seeking a balance between the dark side and the light side? Perhaps he is trying to do what his father failed—bring balance to the force once and for all. This is the first of a few trailers, and we have until December to dissect them.

STAR WARS THEME PARKS

Disney is planning theme parks in both Florida and California. Fans learned that it will be more interactive than any of the other parks. Visitors can pilot the Millennium Falcon, make decisions about their "life" in the universe and interact with characters as if they were also a part of the story. The park is set on a planet we have not seen yet and takes place during the most recent trilogy.

CARRIE FISHER

Carrie Fisher's daughter, Billie Lourd, took the stage for a tribute to her mother. She dressed in an outfit similar to Leia's dress in Episode IV, and John Williams and the London Symphony Orchestra played part of Leia's theme. It was touching, and a video was released for the public to see. While Carrie finished filming for Episode VIII before her untimely death, she will not be appearing in Episode IX.



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BATTLEFRONT III

In the past, this game allows people to choose if they want to be a part of the light side or the dark side. With the revamping of the Star Wars universe comes an expansion to the gaming world. In the campaign, players play from the perspective of Iden, an imperial trooper who is devastated by the destruction of the second death star. The game itself looks like it has a lot to offer, and anyone can view the trailer on YouTube. Time will tell if the game does well. For those curious about the new story elements getting added to the canon, a book, titled "Battlefront: Inferno Squad," will come out as well.

NEW CHARACTER

The biggest new character in the Star Wars universe, appearing in the Last Jedi, is named Rose. She is played by actress Kelly Marie Tran, and while fans didn't see her in the trailer, they got to see a still from the movie that featured her.

The Celebration brought together stars from across the generations: Warwick Davis, Hayden Christensen, Ian McDiarmid, George Lucas, Samuel L. Jackson, Liam Neeson, Mark Hamill, Daisey Ridley, John Boyega and many, many more. Fans didn't learn about the upcoming Han Solo standalone or the future of the franchise beyond Episode IX, but it brought a lot of hope and excitement to fans everywhere.