

# Rubik's Cube

Forty-three quintillion configurations.  
Only one solution.



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**In the mid 1970s Erno Rubik, a lecturer in the Department of Interior Design at the Academy of Applied Arts and Crafts in Budapest, set himself a challenge.**

He wanted to create a three dimensional object, of a high aesthetic value, which was not only richer in configuration variations and more of a mental challenge than any puzzle in existence, but also one which would continue to be a self-contained whole, all through its manifold transformations. He succeeded and, as it would turn out, had just invented the world's biggest-selling toy.

Rubik and what he then called his 'Magic Cube' caught the imagination of friends and students alike. It also proved popular in the toyshops of Budapest and went on to make its international debut in 1980 at the toy fairs of London, Paris, Nürnberg and New York. In May that year, Rubik's Cube was launched in the US at a Hollywood party hosted by Hungarian actress Zsa Zsa Gabor.

The Cube's success began to rapidly snowball, winning the highest prize for outstanding inventions in Hungary as well as top toy awards in Germany, France, Britain and the US. In 1981 it was entered as an exhibit in the hallowed halls of the New York Museum of Modern Art.

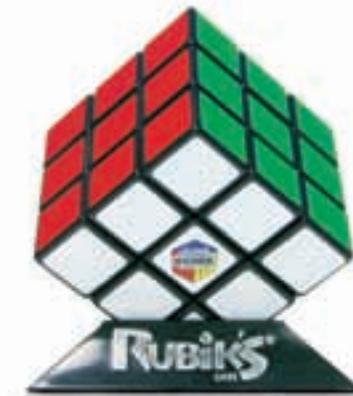
By 1982, the Cube had become a phenomenon. It achieved universal presence and was a household name, even gaining its own entry in the Oxford English Dictionary. Seven Towns Ltd became co-owners and custodians of the brand in the 1980s – a position which the company still holds today.

Brand development then took place, with variants of the original such as the Rubik's Snake, as well as many other puzzles like the two-dimensional Rubik's Magic which have garnered considerable success in their own right.

In 1982 the inaugural World Rubik's Championships were staged in the Cube's physical and spiritual birthplace, Budapest. October 2007, 25 years later, sees the official World Cubing Championship returning, where the competitors will be looking to solve a Rubik's Cube in well under 20 seconds to take the title.

Today, fascination with the Cube continues – seen as 'the' generic name for intriguing puzzles, its images are used under license in TV, film and advertising, on t-shirts, lottery scratch cards, jewellery and in mobile gaming. Internet solutions are offered on around 50,000 sites, giving even the most hopeless of puzzle fans a way to return their Cubes to their natural state.

The most expensive Rubik's Cube was the Masterpiece Cube, produced by Diamond Cutters International in 1995. This actual size, fully-functional cube features 22.5 carats of amethyst,



34 carats of rubies, and 34 carats of emeralds, all set in 18-carat gold, and was valued at approximately 1.5 million US dollars.

Erno Rubik, who still lives in his native Budapest, remains proud of his creation 30 years on. He comments, "Nobody has been able to improve on the basic design, which pleases me as a designer... or on the engineering, which pleases me as an engineer". Yet Rubik's Cube remains a mystery to so many.