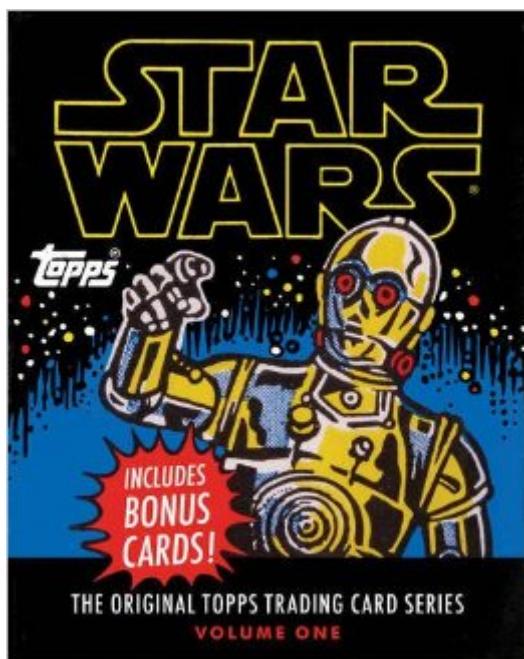


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Star Wars: The Original Topps Trading Card Series, Volume One (Topps Star Wars)



Synopsis

Star Warsâ "the original trading card series from Topps first published in 1977 and 1978â "is reprinted here in its entirety for the first time, featuring all five sets of collectible cards and stickers. This deluxe compilation includes the fronts and backs of all 330 cards and 55 stickers (originally sold one per pack), including movie facts, story summaries, actor profiles, and puzzle cards featuring all your favorite characters and scenes from the very first Star Wars movie. Also features four bonus trading cards, as well as an introduction and commentary by Gary Gerani, the original editor of the Star Wars Topps series. A special afterword by Robert V. Conte spotlights the rare Star Wars Wonder Bread trading cards, also reprinted for the first time. Â Images courtesy of the Robert V. Conte Collection. Also available from Topps: Star Wars: Return of the Jedi, Volume Three; Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back, The Original Topps Trading Card Series, Volume Two; and Star Wars Galaxy: The Original Topps Trading Card Series.

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Customer Reviews

"Star Wars" has become an unprecedented popular culture phenomenon. Those who were present during its humble beginnings probably can't believe that it still makes headlines almost forty years later. Some of the original cast have passed on, most notably Sir Alec Guinness, and everyone else has aged right along with their favorite characters. And somehow another installment will appear very soon, rebooting yet again a seemingly timeless series. Those old friends will grace our

imaginings once more in almost surreal geriatric form. Nostalgia inevitably creeps in for those whose childhoods were encased in Star Wars as densely as Han Solo's iconic carbonite block. Generations grew up with this modern movie myth, and it's still growing. Who knows if it will ever stop. Times were of course very different back in 1977 when what we now know as "Episode Four" appeared out of nowhere onto eager big screens. CGI remained a decade away. Claymation and puppetry still dominated special effects departments. And trading cards still reigned as revenue generating marketing devices. These mere flaps of wafer thin printed cardboard preserved precious images glimpsed fleetingly in movie theaters. Once the movie ended, one could either see it again (as many definitely did in the case of "Star Wars") or try to remember it fondly through memory, magazine photos or these nearly sacred trading cards. Something about "Star Wars" made fans want to purchase everything associated with it instantaneously without question. Action figures soared off of shelves and boxes of trading cards found their way into countless homes. Almost instantly, the famous "blue series" of cards appeared. Just as instantly, fans gobbled them up. As years have rolled by, items relating to the first "Star Wars" movie have grown more hallowed. After all, no one then knew what this innocent science fiction tale that waxed a simple good versus evil morality would amount to. Many probably collected the multiple series of ensuing trading cards as though they represented a mere passing fad. Now, decades later, Topps has reissued these same solemn relics in book form, proving that they were indeed much more than a passing fad.

Thankfully, they didn't include any not so nostalgia-inducing gum. This medium sized but nonetheless hefty book reproduces all 330 of the original blue to orange series cards, all 55 stickers and even the wax packages that once encased them. The dust jacket even feels like a wax pack. The front of all cards and stickers are shown in original size, one to a page. Most of the card backs also retain their original size, except for those featuring puzzle pieces, which are included fully assembled, though reduced in size. This book pretty much has everything a "Star Wars" trading card fanatic could ever want. But there's more. Beneath most of the cards, running commentary from Gary Gerani, who remained deeply involved in photo selection, design and a myriad other aspects of these cards, provides fascinating background information. As the pages progress, he hilariously discusses the lack of photos available for these series, so Topps did their best by cropping, slightly altering and even outright repeating images. By series four the situation had become almost desperate as cards 248 - 252 clearly demonstrate. Not only that, card 259 merely shows a wider shot of card 258. No one really cared at the time. Any image of Luke Skywalker or Han Solo, redundant or not, felt like a blessing in a non-internet age. There was a time, a long time ago in a culture that seems very far, far away, when images had scarcity. Cards thus served as

mini-museums that preserved cinematic memory. Luckily, many additional images became available for series five, including fascinating behind the scenes shots, which now show historical film making techniques. The card depicting Chewbacca taking a breather between takes remains particularly memorable. One card even shows an on-location celebration of Alec Guinness' 62nd birthday. Of course, many probably remember the shot of George Lucas attending to Greedo, who seems to have a long filtered cigarette in his mouth, though it's probably just a drinking straw or a functional part of the costume. And, speaking of costumes, yes, both versions of the much discussed mysteriously naughty C-3PO card appear. These have made number 207 a legend. In general, the cards' captions now exude a quaint cheesy charm, bursting with fulminations such as "Solo aims for trouble!" "Roar of the Wookiee!" "'Deadly Blasters!" "Chewie aims for danger!" and other suspenseful catch phrases riddled with exclamation points. Even George Lucas himself has an interesting quote on one of the "Movie Facts" blurbs in the second series: "I have a strong feeling about interesting people in space exploration. I want them to get beyond the basic stupidities of the moment and think about colonizing Venus and Mars. And the only way it's going to happen is to have some kid fantasize about getting his ray gun and flying off into outer space." Many other interesting movie and story facts permeate the text alongside and within the cards. Some cards even feature scenes later cut from the film, or scenes without special effects added. Cards 45 and 46 feature the bare sticks, devoid of effects, used by Alec Guinness and David Prowse for the film's climactic light saber battle. Apparently Topps' photographers were allowed on set and so captured some stills that never made the final cut, such as C-3PO standing next to his silver twin. These cards and this book not only capture the original "Star Wars" movie, but also the times in which both appeared. An introduction by Gerani sets the scene and an afterword showcases the less common 16 Wonder Bread cards from the same year. To finish it all with pizzazz, underneath the waxy dust jacket, the hardcover front features a solid piece of classic gum. The back shows that same gum in its often encountered state: shattered. A better and more exhaustive reproduction of these memorable cards is hard to image. This book remains incredibly fun through and through. The pages even have a great smell. Probably the only downside relates to the condition of some of the depicted cards. A few are miscut, off center, have dinged corners or slightly blurred images. This doesn't ruin the book at all, but trading card perfectionists may furrow their brows now and again. Finally, the book includes bonus cards in the back, wrapped tightly in waiting-to-be-ripped-open-immediately plastic. Anyone who collected these cards will revel in reliving them through this book. Those who didn't yet exist can learn some fascinating things about 1970s culture and marketing as well as new "Star Wars" tidbits. And the fun isn't over. Topps has a

volume two planned for "The Empire Strikes Back" card series. Now we need to wait for new books in the same agonizing way that we wait for movies. So go the vacillations of pop culture frenzy.

From the dust jacket, to board art to essays, to every page of content, and on back to the bonus material this book is perfection. Those of us that collected the cards as they came out will be in nostalgia heaven. The fronts and backs of every card and sticker are shown. Captions throughout comment on creative be decisions, the card making process, legal concerns, and Topps relationship with the studio. Bonus material includes an epilogue that covers the Wonderbread cards, and 4 actual cards affixed to the back cover.I can't recommend this highly enough.

I'm a big fan of the Topps/Abrams line of nostalgic trading card books that have been coming out over the last few years (Wacky Packages, Garbage Pail Kids, and the Mars Attacks), and this first volume in a series covering the Topps Star Wars card sets of the 70s & 80s are a great addition to that series. I love that they're carrying over the fun graphic design elements from book to book (the faux wax wrapper dust covers, the imagery of the gum on the covers, etc.) and that they volumes are becoming increasingly more comprehensive. In the past the books have focused on 1-3 sets of cards per book, but this Star Wars volume collects all five series of the 1977-1979 cards. I also love that they exponentially increased the amount of commentary contained within the book (past books featured introductions and afterwards, but not much else in the way of "new" content to accompany the card imagery.) The only minor quibbles I have with this volume are that they end up wasting a bit of space by not blowing up the card scans to fill out more of the pages, and they didn't take care to feature keep corresponding cardbacks with their fronts. As for the former, I know a lot of folks suggest that the card scans are presented at full size, but they're actually larger than standard trading cards. So if they were going to go ahead and present them in a larger format they might as well have gone ahead and made them even larger to fill out the book. With the latter, I understand that a large number of the cards feature puzzle-backs that would not make sense to showcase individually next to the card fronts, but they could have at least done this with the cards that had story or fun-fact card backs. It would keep the reader from having to flip around in the book to get the feel of the card set. Just my two cents. All in all, this is a wonderful addition to the Topps/Abrams trading card series and I hope that we'll soon see an announcement for a third volume concentrating on the Return of the Jedi sets after they release volume two this coming April.

I own most of these cards but seeing them all together with the stickers is very near but most of the

pictures in the book seem to be out of focus which really killed it for me. I wouldn't recommend it unless you get it as a gift.

Nice book. Brought back a lot of memories seeing these cards. I still have a few of them packed away, but some I remember my cousin owning. If I have one complaint, the actual card reproductions could have been bigger. There is a bit of white space on the page. Some interesting facts included with some of the cards, although the author incorrectly called dewbacks banthas.

Fantastic book. I was lucky enough to pick up an autographed copy at New York Comic Con before the official release date and loved it. I purchased these cards (and still have them) as a child and the book brought back memories of scraping nickels and dimes together to walk to the corner store hoping he had the packs in stock. I especially liked the story about how Topps got the Star Wars license and why we never got pictures of the ships and creatures until later series. Looking forward to the next book in this series.

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