



Ask 100 baseball card collectors when their all-time favorite cards were issued, and you're liable to get 100 different answers. But chances are pretty good that most of those responses will point to cards printed during the **Golden Age** of baseball cards, roughly 1948-1994.

Why that *specific* date range?

Well, these things are somewhat subjective, of course, but this one isn't too tough to figure out ...

After World War II and its paper rations, the fledgling hobby took a few years to get back on track. But in 1948, both Leaf and Bowman **issued cards** with bubble gum to set the stage for the modern pastime.

Baseball cards grew in popularity over the coming decades against a varied landscape of manufacturers and a changing game. By 1994, it seemed like every baseball fan was also a collector until ... BOOM! ... the strike changed everything.

Even though the game itself recovered and reached new heights, collecting has never been quite the same since, at least in the eyes of those who lived through the build-up and boom, and then the fall.

So that's the deal with my definition of the hobby's Golden Era.

Now, here's the deal with *this guide* ...

I've always loved to read about baseball cards, and I also enjoy writing about them. Naturally, I *most* love to read about cards from 1948-1994, and there are some great articles out here on the wild web.

But these awesome posts are scattered all over the place. Wouldn't it be neat if you could go *one place* and read about any of the sets that made our hobby so fascinating for nearly 50 years?

I sure thought so, and that's why this guide was born — to give us access to the **best** article about each of the regular-issue sets from 1948-1994, all from one page.

What follow are **101 articles** from across the web chronicling the most important years of the baseball card industry, divided into four “generations”:

- **Post-War** (1948-1955)
- **Topps Monopoly** (1955-1980)

- **Hobby Boom** (1981-1986)
- **Junk Wax** (1987-1994)

A good swath of these are articles *I've* written, and my eventual goal is to write an “ultimate guide” type of post for each of these sets, right here on Wax Pack Gods.

For now, though, I'm confident you'll love *these* articles.

After all, they're the best, just like the cards themselves.



POST-WAR (1948-1955)

After Leaf and Bowman broke the seal on the hobby in 1948, Topps joined the fray in 1951. After a bitter battle for collectors' hearts that lasted a bloody five years, the younger company dispatched Bowman to the [scrapheap of history](#).

From 1948-1955, though, the hobby grew and changed and jockeyed for its place in the tableau of American boyhood, and we're all the better for it.

- [1948 Bowman Baseball Set Launched Post-War Card Market](#) by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- [1948-49 Leaf Baseball Cards](#) via Just Collect
- [1949 Bowman Baseball Cards](#) by Ryan Cracknell via Cardboard Connection
- [Baseball Cards – 1948 Leaf](#) via PSA CardFacts
- [1950 Bowman Baseball a Trend Setter](#) by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- [Classic Card Sets: 1951 Bowman](#) by T.S. O'Connell via Sports Collectors Digest
- [1951 Topps Blue Backs Baseball Cards](#) by Trey Treutel via Cardboard Connection
- [1951 Topps Red Backs Baseball Cards](#) via Cardboard Connection
- [1952 Bowman Baseball: Underrated Elegance](#) by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- [1952 Topps Baseball Card Set Launched an American Icon](#) by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- [Collecting the Beautiful 1953 Bowman Color Baseball Card Set](#) by Greg Bussineau via PSA
- [1953 Topps Baseball Cards Are Palm-Sized Masterpieces](#) by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- [The Virtual Card Collection – 1954 Bowman Baseball](#) by Dan Austin via Vintage Card Traders
- [1954 Topps Baseball Cards: Big Stars and Dual Images](#) by Dean Hanley via Sports Collectors Digest

- **1955 Bowman Baseball Set Marked Company's Farewell** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **1955 Topps Baseball Set: Small but Mighty** by Rich Mueller via Sports Collectors Daily



TOPPS MONOPOLY (1955-1980)

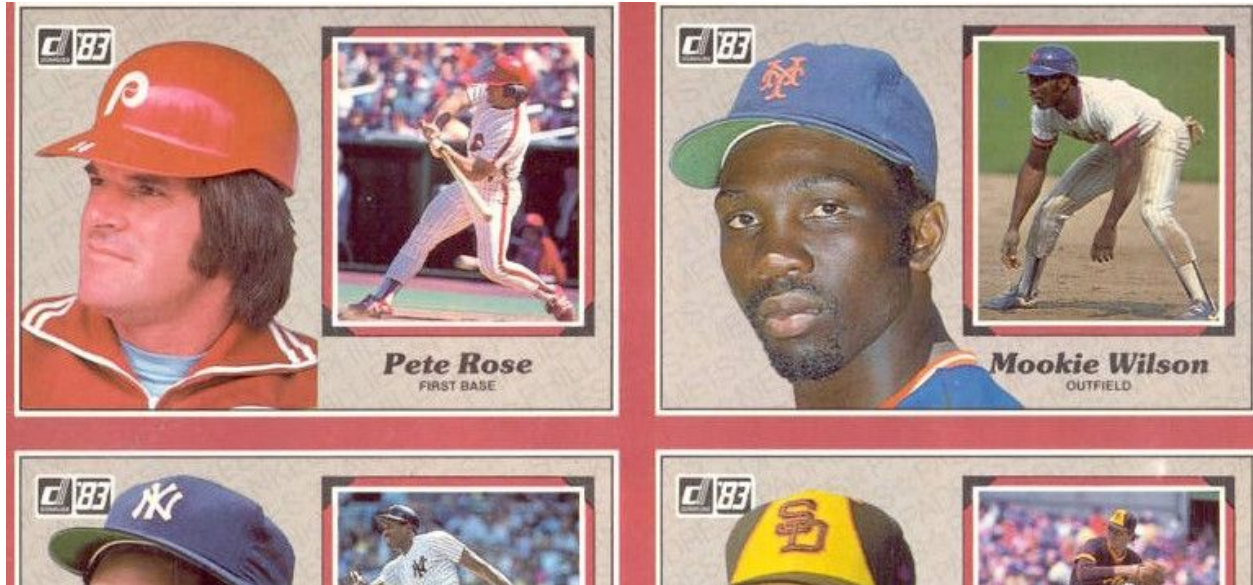
From 1955 through 1980, Topps reigned nearly unchallenged as the only major manufacturer of baseball cards. Even though they faced limited competition, The Old Gum Company continually experimented with innovative ideas to entice new collectors to take the wax-pack plunge.

Without a doubt, some of the most iconic cards of all time were produced during Topps' quarter century alone on top of the mountain.

- **1956 Topps Baseball Card Set – Topps After the War** by Bill Szczepanek via The Golden Age of Baseball Cards
- **1957 Topps: Setting the Standard** by John McMurray via Sports Collectors Digest

- **An Infusion of Color: A Look at the 1958 Topps Baseball Card Set** by Jim Churilla via PSA
- **1959 Topps Baseball Set Took Collectors Through the Porthole** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **The Sunshine Set: 1960 Topps Baseball PSA Set** by Scott Alpaugh via Just Collect
- **1961 Topps Baseball a Sign of the Times** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **1962 Topps Baseball Ingrained in Hobby Lore** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **Celebrating a Golden Anniversary: 1963 Topps Baseball** by Dean Hanley via Sports Collectors Digest
- **1964 Topps Baseball Might Rub Off on You** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **1965 Topps Baseball a Pennant Winner** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **1966 Topps Baseball an Underrated Classic** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **A Closer Look at the 1967 Topps Baseball Card Set** by Joe Orlando and Alan Cowart via PSA
- **1968 Topps Baseball Set Headlined by Ryan, Bench** by Rich Mueller via Sports Collectors Daily
- **1969 Topps Baseball – A Blog** via 1969 Topps Baseball
- **1970 Topps Baseball Card Checklist – Vintage Set Review** via Sports Card Radio
- **1971 Topps Baseball Was a Dark Ride for Collectors** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **1972 Topps (you're a fine set)** via Night Owl Cards
- **1973 Topps Baseball Set Bid Farewell to Clemente, Hello to Schmidt** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **1974 Topps Baseball a One-Series Wonder** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily

- **1975 Topps** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1976 Topps Baseball a Bubble Gum Champ** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **1977 Topps Baseball Heavy on Intrigue** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **1978 Topps Baseball Cards – The Ultimate Guide** by Adam Hughes via Wax Pack Gods
- **1979 Topps Wrapped Up Last Decade of Monopoly** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily
- **1980 Topps Baseball Marked the End of a Monopoly** by Adam Hughes via Sports Collectors Daily



HOBBY BOOM (1981-1986)

When Fleer defeated Topps in an **antitrust lawsuit** in 1980, it set the stage for new manufacturers to crash the baseball cards party. In 1981, both Fleer and Donruss entered the fray, with Sportflics, Score, and Upper Deck joining them later in the decade.

As the 1980s progressed, fans and speculators from all walks of life jumped into the hobby with both feet, and “baseball cards” became synonymous with “investment.”

Competition and increased collector scrutiny changed the way baseball cards were conceived, manufactured, and distributed, resulting in a leap in quality that built a foundation for today’s high-end cards.

- **1981 Donruss – The Good** via Wrigley Wax
- **1981 Fleer Baseball** by Patrick Mondout via Awesome80s.com

- **1981 Topps Baseball Card Checklist** via Baseball Almanac
- **1982 Donruss** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1982 Fleer Baseball** by Patrick Mondout via Awesome80s.com
- **Collecting the 1982 Topps Baseball Set** by Kevin Glew via PSA
- **1983 Donruss** via The Trading Card Database
- **1983 Fleer Baseball** by Patrick Mondout via Awesome80s.com
- **1983 Topps Review** via Topps Baseball
- **Best Set Countdown: #3 – 1984 Donruss** by Ben Henry via Baseball Card Blog
- **The 1984 Fleer Baseball Card Set** by Derek Bain via Seamheads.com
- **1984 Topps Baseball -Part 1- A Set Deserving Recognition** via Classic Wax Cards
- **1985 Donruss Baseball Cards** by Ryan Cracknell via Cardboard Connection
- **1985 Fleer** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **Collecting the 1985 Topps Baseball Card Set** by Kevin Glew via PSA
- **1986 Donruss Baseball -Part 1- Forever The Canseco Set** via Classic Wax Cards
- **1986 Fleer** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1986 Sportflics Highlights** by Patrick Mondout via Awesome80s.com
- **Topps 1986 Baseball Cards** by Topher via Topher's Castle



JUNK WAX (1987-1994)

Spurred by the increased interest in the hobby, card manufacturers ramped up production significantly in the late 1980s. It would take a decade or more before we realized just *how much* product was dumped on the market during these years, but even 30 years later, most of the cards from the “Junk Wax Era” can be had for a song.

Once the **players' strike** wiped out a promising 1994 pennant chase and post-season, investors pulled back from the hobby, and even diehard collectors questioned their commitment and ability to absorb the hundreds of yearly issues that were being pumped into the market.

Still, the Junk Wax generation supplies today's collectors with heaps of nostalgia on the cheap, and packs from this era can make us all feel young again.

- **1987 Donruss** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1987 Fleer Baseball Cards & Checklist** via Keyman Collectibles
- **Preview – 1987 Sportflics** via Cheap Wax Fix
- **1987 Topps Baseball Cards – The Ultimate Guide** by Adam Hughes via Wax Pack Gods
- **1988 Donruss Baseball Cards** by Ryan Cracknell via Cardboard Connection
- **1988 Fleer** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1988 Score Baseball Cards & Checklist** via Keyman Collectibles
- **1988 Sportflics Baseball Review** via Community Gum
- **1988 Topps Baseball Cards – The Ultimate Guide** by Adam Hughes via Wax Pack Gods
- **1989 Donruss Baseball Card Checklist** via Baseball Almanac
- **1989 Fleer** via PSA
- **1989 Score** via The Trading Card Database
- **Baseball Card Set: 1989 Sportflics** via VintageCardPrices.com
- **1989 Topps Baseball Cards – The Ultimate Guide** by Adam Hughes via Wax Pack Gods
- **SECRETS OF THE 1989 UPPER DECK BASEBALL CHECKLIST AND THE MOST FAMOUS KEN GRIFFEY JR. ROOKIE CARD** by Dave Sliepka via Beckett
- **1990 Donruss Baseball Cards – The Ultimate Guide** by Adam Hughes via Wax Pack Gods
- **1990 Fleer Baseball Cards – The Ultimate Guide** by Adam Hughes via Wax Pack Gods
- **1990 Fleer Baseball Cards & Checklist** via Keyman Collectibles
- **1990 Sportflics** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1990 Topps Baseball Cards – The Ultimate Guide** by Adam Hughes via Wax Pack Gods

- **1990 Upper Deck Baseball Cards – The Ultimate Guide** by Adam Hughes via Wax Pack Gods
- **1991 Donruss** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1991 Fleer Baseball Cards & Checklist** via Keyman Collectibles
- **1991 Score** via Beckett
- **Taking a closer look at 1991 Topps Baseball, the 40th Anniversary issue** via Junk Wax Gems
- **1991 Upper Deck** via PSA
- **1992 Donruss** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1992 Fleer** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1992 Score** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1992 Topps** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1992 Upper Deck** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1993 Donruss Baseball Cards & Checklist** via Keyman Collectibles
- **1993 Fleer** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1993 Score** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1993 Topps Baseball Cards & Checklist** via Keyman Collectibles
- **1993 Upper Deck** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1994 Donruss Baseball Cards & Checklist** via Keyman Collectibles
- **1994 Fleer** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1994 Score** via Beckett
- **1994 Topps** via BaseballCardPedia.com
- **1994 Upper Deck Baseball Cards & Checklist** via Keyman Collectibles

NOSTALGIA NEVER DIES

The hobby was never quite the same after the 1994 strike and concomitant hobby “bust.”

But as we’ve come to realize that baseball cards are *not* the ironclad investment vehicles we once thought they were, a funny thing has happened for many of us who grew up worshipping our Wax Pack Gods in the 1980s and before — the **magic is coming back**, thanks in large part to the Internet.

Once again, we’re pouring through our cards — and virtual cards — just because we love them.

We love the way they look and the way they feel in our palms and the way they smell, even years after the aroma of gum has faded to nothing.

And, most of all, we love them because they transport us instantly to our own Golden Era.

Enjoy these articles, and check back here often for updates and additions. Do I hear Traded/Updated/Test issues in the future?

Could be!