

GAMER GUIDE

MARIO KART
8 DELUXE
EDITION

the need to know you didn't know you need

WHAT IS IT?



Mario Kart 8 Deluxe is a 2017 Kart racing game developed and published by Nintendo for the Nintendo Switch. The title is a re-release of the 2014 game *Mario Kart 8*.



Mario Kart 8 Deluxe follows the same gameplay as its predecessor and the rest of the *Mario Kart* series, where players race in go-karts while trying to sabotage each other with various items. Players can control one of several characters from the Mario franchise as well as other Nintendo franchises, with several additional characters being added in Deluxe.

BREAKDOWN THE BASICS

Mechanics

Mario Kart 8 Deluxe is one of the most popular titles on the Nintendo Switch, in part due to the fact that it caters to players of all skill levels. Highly skilled players with fast reflexes can compete in 200cc, while there are other speed classes and assists to help less-skilled racers have fun.

This allows players of various skill levels to find an appropriate setup; some may find that Motion Controls enable better success, or prefer analogue sticks to some tilting action. No matter your preference, this guide will have you covered.



Controls

You determine which assist options you want (or none) in the vehicle select screen, which comes after you pick a character. You can play in the following ways, all applicable in docked or portable play:

- **Sideways Joy-Con:** This can be done with or without a wheel, the peripheral makes no difference aside from housing the controller and using bumpers for pressing the shoulder buttons. You can either use Motion Controls and ignore the analogue stick on the left or use button inputs.
- **Two Joy-Con and the Grip:** The Grip bundled with every Switch turns the Joy-Con into a conventional-like controller, and so this is a great option for those of you wanting to play with a standard feel of joystick on the left, face buttons on the right and easily accessible shoulder buttons.
- **Pro Controller:** The Switch iteration of this pad has the full set of features - you can even use it for Motion Controls.



Motion Controls

This isn't the first *Mario Kart* game to support Motion Controls - it was a major part of *Mario Kart Wii*, and perhaps a lesser-used option in *Mario Kart 7*. There are multiple setups if you want to use Motion Controls, thanks to Nintendo's first-party controllers all supporting the technology. Here are the basics on how it works:

- **Joy-Cons in Portable Mode:** Simply tilt the whole system with the Joy-Cons attached.
- **Joy-Cons and Grip in Portable/Docked:** Utilise your Joy-Con grip and tilt the controller like a wheel.
- **Pro Controller in Portable/Docked:** Simply tilt the controller like a wheel.
- **Single Joy-Con in Wheel Accessory (Portable/Docked):** Slot a Joy-Con into a wheel.

Enabling Motion Controls is similar to activating Auto-Steer, as you do this after you've selected your character; it's the screen where you choose your Kart, wheels and glider.

Smart Steering

The emphasis on racing well, turning into corners and so on is still with you as the player-driver. You'll still want to turn into corners as tightly as possible, swerve around opponents and race as best you can.

What this feature does is keep you on the track if you're in danger of going off course, gently redirecting your Kart to keep it on the tarmac. It's designed in a way to help struggling players while not making it a 'cheat' mode. It's entirely possible that if you have a great race you won't even trigger it.

Characters

Mario Kart 8 Deluxe is exactly what it sounds like — all of the goodies from the Wii U original, plus the DLC and a dollop of extras in one rather nice package. That means a packed character roster of over 40 racers, among other things, each with distinct looks, stunt animations and traits that could help you on the racetrack.

The differences mainly come down to size, with Heavy characters being big on top speed and weight, Medium characters that serve as all-rounders, and Light characters that have terrific handling and acceleration but are vulnerable to being pushed around. The only character without a fixed weight is Mii; the game takes the dimensions you've applied to the character in order to assign a weight class.



Here is the full roster of characters:

- Mario (Medium/Heavy)
- Luigi (Medium/Heavy)
- Peach (Medium)
- Daisy (Medium)
- Rosalina (Heavy)
- Tanooki Mario (Medium)
- Cat Peach (Medium)
- Yoshi (Medium)
- Toad (Light)
- Koopa Troopa (Light)
- Shy Guy (Light)
- Lakitu (Light)
- Toadette (Light)
- King Boo (Heavy)
- King Boo (Heavy)
- Baby Mario (Very Light)
- Baby Luigi (Very Light)
- Baby Peach (Very Light)
- Baby Daisy (Very Light)
- Baby Rosalina (Very Light)
- Gold Mario (Heavy)
- Pink Gold Peach (Heavy)
- Wario (Very Heavy)
- Waluigi (Heavy)
- Donkey Kong (Heavy)
- Bowser (Very Heavy)
- Dry Bones (Very Light)
- Bowser Jr. (Light)
- Dry Bowser (Very Heavy)
- Lemmy (Very Light)
- Larry (Light)
- Wendy (Light)
- Ludwig (Medium Heavy)
- Iggy (Medium Heavy)
- Roy (Heavy)
- Morton (Very Heavy)
- Inkling Girl (Medium)
- Inkling Boy (Medium)
- Link (Heavy)
- Villager Male (Medium)
- Villager Female (Medium)
- Isabelle (Light)
- Mii (Any Weight Category)

Character Stats

Mario Kart 8 Deluxe is easy to pick up, but difficult to master. Each character shares Stats with at least one another, so we've grouped them together in a handy table for you. Here's what each Stat does:

- **Speed:** The higher your speed, the faster you'll go.
- **Acceleration:** The higher your acceleration, the faster you'll reach your top speed.
- **Weight:** The weight of your vehicle and racer dictates whether you'll knock someone out of the way, or get knocked out of the way when you hit another racer.
- **Handling:** This Stat dictates how sharply you can turn. You'll drift and corner better with this Stat being higher.
- **Traction/Grip:** This causes your Kart to move faster on sand and snow, and slip less on ice.

Each Stat has a minimum value of 0.75 and a maximum of 5.75. To calculate what your final Stats will be, you'll take your character's base Stats, then add the values of each part you've selected to come up with your total.

The surface you're racing on will also have an effect on your character's Stats. Racing underwater increases your speed by .25 points and lowers your handling by .5 points, while airborne racing increases your speed by .5 points. When you're in anti-gravity portions of the track, you'll lose .25 points to your speed Stat. Ultimately, everyone's best loadout will be different.



Techniques

While you can get through 50cc and easier races with basic steering, if you want to tackle the higher speed classes and win online it's important to master some key techniques.

Drifting

Drifting has been a key part of the *Mario Kart* franchise across multiple generations, and there have even been entries with slightly different techniques. The initial benefit is that it does help you take tougher corners at higher speeds.

The second benefit, and its key benefit, is that it can reward you with three tiers of Turbo, short boosts that activate once you complete a drift. In higher classes and against tough opposition, these boosts can make the difference to your finishing position.



As you drift you'll notice coloured sparks underneath your vehicle; these start gradually, or you can speed up progress by alternating the left stick in a drift to 'waggle' the steering a little. The longer and more effective the drift, the different coloured sparks and the better boost you get.

- **Mini-Turbo:** Early in the drift blue sparks will form, exit the drift for a small boost
- **Super Mini-Turbo:** The next stage brings orange sparks, exit the drift for a moderate boost
- **Ultra Mini-Turbo:** The final stage of a drift will show purple sparks, exit the drift for the best boost!



As you move into the most difficult 200cc speed class in *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe*, significant changes to approach are necessary. You may even discover the brake button - 'B'!

There's an advanced technique called Drift Brake that is vital for staying on track in 200cc. When in a drift, press 'B' to slow your speed while still drifting; if you time the release of the brake correctly you'll be able to stop your slide but still boost at the end of the drift.

There are a variety of advanced techniques for drifting that are deployed by top-level players. These will require a lot more practice, making Time Trial the ideal mode. We've including a world record video at the end to showcase some of these in action.

- **Neutral Hopping:** This is simply hopping without any other button input. It is best used on uphill sections such as the start of GBA Mario Circuit's anti-gravity section, preserves mini-turbo speed and can also adjust your vehicle's angle coming out of a boost section.
- **Bunny/Fire Hopping:** Please note it only works on flat or uphill ground. This technique involves hopping left or right multiple times after a speed boost, effectively increasing the length of time at a greater speed. After hitting a boost pad, using a mushroom or using an orange mini turbo, hop 5/6 times either left or right. It can also help you to realign if you are too tight or wide leaving the corner.
- **Soft Drifting:** This is where you manage to drift at the same angle as normal, but charge your mini-turbo faster. The sweet spot is found in the upper left corner for a left drift, and the upper right corner for a right drift. It is important to note that it is slightly different for each controller type, so it takes practice to find and master.
- **Demon Slides:** These are basically neutral hops, adding in the start of a drift. You hop, then as you land, turn left or right for about half a second, then let go of the drift button. It is most commonly used on downhill or flat ground, good examples being *Mario Kart Stadium's* anti-gravity section and *Sherbet Land's* final straight. On anti-gravity, you will see blue sparks come out of the side of your Kart if you're doing it right.



Slipstreaming

In addition to drifting, slipstreaming also returns from past *Mario Kart* titles.

To slipstream, simply manoeuvre behind another Karter and remain in their 'wake' for a few seconds. You'll know it's working as you'll hear a 'wooshing' sound and start to see air currents around your character. Hold that position for long enough — which can be difficult if the racer in front is drifting all over the place — and you'll get a small but noticeable boost.

This technique is perfect for getting a speed advantage when you're in a pack of racers with no boost pads or other environmental boosts to use.

Rocket Start

Rocket Start, in different forms, has been a mainstay of *Mario Kart* games. In the pre-race countdown you hit accelerate at the right moment to boost off the line; when racing online there are good odds a lot of your opponents will also be doing this.

So when should you hit A to go? It's all about the '2' in the three second countdown at the start of the race. The animation of the numbers (when slowed down) has them fade in, slide down to a final point, then fade out. The key point to hit is when the '2' has finished its descent, but before it fades. It's a tight window to get the maximum Rocket Start, so we suggest going into single player Time Trial and practising starts consistently.

Remember, the key point is when the '2' stops its downward animation.

The timing window for the optimum boost is tricky, but if you're slightly late but still on the '2' you can get a smaller boost off the line. In that respect we think it's a good idea to target the latter 'edge' of the optimum boost, so even if you miss it you'll still get a modest boost to help you off the line.

* Items +

Mario Kart 8 Deluxe is guaranteed fun on Nintendo Switch, whether playing solo against the CPU, playing with friends locally or testing your skills online against players around the world. However you play, items are hugely important — using them well can make the difference between winning or tumbling way down the field. It's a cruel game, at times!

Understanding each item is key, but using them in the best strategic way is also absolutely vital. For example you can hold two items, one that is active and one in reserve.



- **Feather (Agility):** This item is only found in Battle Mode, and allows you to leap into the air; tricky to use, but in Balloon rounds, for example, a well timed jump over an opponent can pop one of their balloons.
- **Coin (Speed):** The item no-one really wants, so just use it up right away when it arrives and it'll add two coins to your total. In a race you can have up to 10 coins at once, which gives you a little more speed, so it is worth collecting them on the track when possible.
- **Blooper (Offence):** Another item that you should just use as soon as it appears; it'll cover other racer's screens in ink, making it hard for them to see where they're going. Elementary and lacks the elegance of a perfectly aimed Green Shell, but it can be quite infuriating if you're on the receiving end.
- **Bob-omb (Offence):** One of the trickiest items to use in the game because it can hurt you as well! When released the Bob-omb flashes for a couple of seconds before triggering a large explosion, perfect for hitting multiple rivals at once.
- **Piranha Plant (Offence/Speed):** This ravenous item is forward facing only, but can be very useful. When activated the Piranha Plant will start chomping the air ahead of your Kart for a set amount of time; each chomp brings a small boost in speed. When near other racers, it'll bite them and flip them over. It can also eat banana peels and other loose items that are in front of you, helping you avoid a collision.

- **Banana (Defence):** Another classic item. Deployed behind your character as standard, though if you press up on the left stick while using it, you can throw it forward. The standard deployment is normally the best if you want to avoid an embarrassing slip-up, though.
- **Triple Bananas (Defence):** As with other triple items, these will rotate around you and offer some protection with their full complement. Just like with the single banana, try to deploy strategically to catch players out.
- **Boo (Defence + Extra Item):** This item has two very useful effects over a short time; first of all it'll make you invisible and seemingly ghost-like, meaning items like Shells can't hit you. The second effect is that it'll steal an Item from the racer in front and add it to your inventory.
- **Green Shell (Offence/Defence):** The classic, this shell can be fired forward or backwards in a straight line — it can bounce off walls to chaotic effect, or of course take out other racers.
- **Triple Green Shells (Offence/Defence):** If defending from near the front, having a full complement of three shells will offer some (but not perfect) shielding, but you can't hold one behind you defensively like with the single shell. If you lose a shell, the best tactic is to use those that remain. On offence, similar to a single shell, try to line up shots or rely on ricochets.



- **Fire Flower (Offence):** This item can fill the track with fireballs, which looks fun and can cause mayhem for other racers. There's no restriction on ammo outside of the time limit, so shoot as many as possible while it's active.
- **Dash Mushroom (Speed):** The Super Mushroom item is one of the most familiar in the franchise — it provides a short turbo boost. Depending on the track and circumstances it can sometimes be best to hold the item for an optimal route: look out for ramps located in the middle of grass patches, for example.
- **Red Shell (Offence/Defence):** The big difference between a Green Shell and a Red Shell is the latter's ability to home in on the racer in front of you. It isn't perfect — obstacles can still block it — so be sure to still take care with when you take your shot.



- **Boomerang Flower (Offence):** One of the newer items in the series, and both unique and effective when used well. You get to throw a boomerang forward three times, and it can hit multiple racers in a line if within range. The first two times it'll come back, while the third throw will travel further and then disappear.
- **Triple Dash Mushroom (Speed):** Provides a short turbo boost, like the single mushroom but now you have triple boost power. Perfect for moving through the field rapidly.
- **Super Golden Mushroom (Speed):** A rather chaotic and fun item. Like the other Mushrooms it gives you a turbo boost, but after the initial burst it'll start a countdown before it disappears.
- **Triple Red Shells (Offence/Defence):** This can be an incredibly effective item when on the offence, especially if you time these homing attacks well.
- **Spiny Shell (Offence):** Known more commonly as the Blue Shell, it's an item that is classic in the game but not always popular! It homes in on the first-placed racer, but on its way skims along the road; if you get a warning radar of a blue shell and you're not in first place, swerve away from the middle of the road to boost your chances of avoiding it. When it strikes it causes a big explosion so keep that in mind, too if you're close to the race leader.
- **Lightning Bolt (Offence):** This is an item to use right away when you get it; the effect is that it shrinks every racer in front of you, greatly reducing their speed and making them squashable. The only way to avoid Lightning defensively is to be lucky enough to have the invincibility Star active when it's triggered or use the Bullet Bill.
- **Bullet Bill (Speed/Offence/Defence):** If you get Bullet Bill it means you're likely near the back of the field, but this will help you catch up! Use this right away when you get it, as it'll transform you into Bill and rapidly accelerate and move you up the field. You're invincible when it's active and any racers you hit will be flipped over. You have no control during this, but keep the acceleration button held down so you can take over when the item ends.



- **Super Horn (Offence/Defence):** This item is primarily designed to defend you from a Spiny Shell, so you may get it when leading a race (in particular). Held by your character, when a Spiny Shell settles above you ready to strike, use the Horn and both will be destroyed, keeping you safe.
- **Crazy 8 (Speed/Offence/Defence):** A rare item typically reserved for racers struggling at the back of the field. Rotating around you will be a Mushroom, Blooper, Coin, Banana Peel, Green Shell, Red Shell, Bob-omb and a Super Star. These will rotate around you, and when you press the item button you'll use the one in front of your character at that point.
- **Item Box:** The most important part of this whole thing, the Item Box where you get all of the preceding weapons and goodies. If you don't get these, you don't get any of the above. Keep an eye on which boxes other racers are picking up, as they take a few seconds to respawn once used.



✖ Environment +



Below is a full list of every course available in the base *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* game on Switch, listed by Cup:

- **Mushroom Cup:** Mario Kart Stadium, Water Park, Sweet Sweet Canyon, Thwomp Ruins
- **Shell Cup:** Moo Moo Meadows, Mario Circuit, Cheep Cheep Beach, Toad's Turnpike
- **Flower Cup:** Mario Kart Stadium, Water Park, Sweet Sweet Canyon, Thwomp Ruins
- **Banana Cup:** Dry Dry Desert, Donut Plains 3, Royal Raceway, DK Jungle
- **Star Cup:** Sunshine Airport, Dolphin Shoals, Electrodrome, Mount Wario
- **Leaf Cup:** Wario Stadium, Sherbet Land, Music Park, Yoshi Valley
- **Special Cup:** Cloudtop Cruise, Bone-Dry Dunes, Bowser's Castle, Rainbow Road
- **Lightning Cup:** Tick-Tock Clock, Piranha Plant Slide, Grumble Volcano, Rainbow Road
- **Egg Cup:** Yoshi Circuit, Excitebike Arena, Dragon Driftway, Mute City
- **Triforce Cup:** Wario's Goldmine, Rainbow Road, Ice Ice Outpost, Hyrule Circuit
- **Crossing Cup:** Baby Park, Cheese Land, Wild Woods, Animal Crossing
- **Bell Cup:** Neo Bowser City, Ribbon Road, Super Bell Subway, Big Blue



TIPS & TRICKS

What's not that old is new again: *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* is hitting the pavement on the Nintendo Switch, and just about everything you knew and loved from the original Wii U edition is back. Naturally there's a few other surprises, so here's a rundown of some of the most useful advice.

Hold Items, Especially If You're Ahead

In the original *Mario Kart 8*, holding an item behind your Kart wouldn't remove it from your currently held arsenal. That has not changed in *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe*, but there are now two active item slots, so you have more wiggle room and can make more liberal use of your items regardless of your current standing.

One of the oldest *Mario Kart* tricks is to hold an item like a shell or banana behind you to block shots or automatically hit someone who's tailgating you. Upon impact, the item will be consumed — its job is done, and you can grab a new item. Get in the habit of cycling through objects or putting them in situations where you can use them instead of hoarding them. There is one exception: the super horn, which you can use to blow up a blue shell when you're in first place.



Check Your Rearview Mirror

One thing a lot of players overlook is the dedicated rearview mirror button. On the Switch, all you need to do is press X and you look behind you as long as you hold the button down. Get in the habit of doing this often when you're ahead. Even if you're just looking back when you have an item in your possession that you can hold or throw backward (bananas, shells, bombs), swapping constantly will help you better aim your power-ups and stay in the front of the pack.

Also keep in mind that boxing out enemies that are behind you isn't always a good thing, especially when you consider slipstreams (which we'll talk about momentarily). Try to stay away from enemy Karts that are behind you at all times.

If You're Behind, Get A Slipstream Boost

Introduced very early in the series, a slipstream (or draft) is a slight speed boost when tailgating directly behind an opposing racer. After roughly one second, a wind effect will appear (it's really faint, especially if you're playing split-screen) and provide a small increase in speed.

If you're not in first place, always look for opportunities to slipstream. You can identify players who don't make use of their rearview, and thus aren't aware of your presence. Combining a slipstream boost followed by the use of an item (right as you're about to pass them and lose the boost) is one of the best ways to get a major lead on someone. And it prevents them from reacting with their own item.



Perfect Your Start Of Race Boost Timing

Getting that massive jump start at the beginning of a race is a *Mario Kart* staple. For some, it's muscle memory. But if you aren't consistently getting that initial boost, keep in mind that there is a science to it.

Everyone has their own formula, but the easiest way we found is to focus in on Lakitu on the right side of the screen. Right as he turns on the second light (or directly after the second chime sounds), press the A button and hold it. Even if you're a little late, you'll obtain a small boost, though there is a maximum boost if you can nail it perfectly.

If you aren't confident in your abilities yet and don't have time to practice, just don't use the boost at all. Time it incorrectly, and you'll just spin out in place and be worse off than if you had just never tried to boost.

Aim For The Shortcuts If You Can Hit Them Consistently

Unlike many other entries in the series, *Mario Kart 8*'s shortcuts are generally more nuanced. Most of them won't outright win you the race, but will shave several seconds off your run in each instance, saving you precious time in a heated competition or in a time trial.

A perfect example is the last corner in Cloudtop Cruise, right before the finish line. You could take the bend all the way around, or hop right onto the two giant leaves (with a stunt boost, of course). Another common shortcut is to use a boost item to shoot past a gravel off-track area that would normally slow you down. Typically this design is found in more traditional racetrack courses like *Mario Kart Stadium*, so save your mushrooms or stars (or burn off items if you're in first place to get them) for these bends.

Just like anything in *Mario Kart*, ramming your Kart against the wall to try and nail a shortcut in a versus environment isn't the best way to spend your time. Practice each individual track on your own, and build it into your memory.



Find Out Where The Shortcuts Are

Every track in *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* has a shortcut or two for those willing to experiment and seek out special ways of shaving a few seconds off their lap times.

Take some time to enjoy a leisurely tour of each course in the single-player mode so you get to know where each of the secrets are. Many of them pass through rough terrain, and so require a speed-boost of some kind if you're to gain a net benefit. If you can't find some of them, or want some inspiration, our shortcuts page can help.

Easy when you've got a stack of mushrooms to play with in Time Trial mode, but you never know when you'll pick one up in competitive races either.



CONCLUSION

The *Mario Kart* franchise has an extensive history in the Nintendo universe and with that, so much to learn. Mastering the various techniques and strategies will keep you at the front of the pack no matter what your opponents throw at you.