

# MARIO KART 8 DELUXE

**GENRE(S):** Racing

**AVAILABLE ON:** Nintendo Switch

**DEVELOPED BY:** Nintendo, Bandai Namco Studios

**PUBLISHED BY:** Nintendo

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A month into the release of the Nintendo Switch, Mario made his debut on the new system with a version of *Mario Kart 8*, which was originally released three years prior on the Wii U. Unlike so many direct ports and unnecessary re-releases of Wii U games that were made to simply save these great games from the Wii U purgatory, *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* is the true, complete and definitive *Mario Kart* experience we should've had in the first place, packed with exclusive content. We have reached the end of the 2025 *Mario Kart* marathon with the greatest game in the series. The base game content is explained in the review of the original Wii U version [here](#). The following covers at least most of the several improvements.

First, we'll have to address the one and only flaw specifically present in *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe*: you could might as well call it *Mario Kart 8 – The "Shut Up and Drive" Edition*. It repeats the mistake so many GotY and Complete editions have made especially in genre games focused on competition; everything crucial is unlocked in the beginning. There are no unlockables apart from vehicle customization items; every character and every track is right there. I would imagine most players of the original *Mario Kart 8* came fully prepared and even excited to unlock everything once more, and especially newcomers would've liked to have a more rewarding racing experience. Having so many options available from the very beginning of the game makes the game look infinitely complete, but I can't help but feel I'm missing something; I'm the kind of gamer who's specifically inspired by unlockables...

...But in the end, *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* doesn't really need that extra excitement to be perhaps the greatest racing game ever made. Non-surprisingly, *Deluxe* comes with all the gameplay updates and downloadable

content released for the original *Mario Kart 8*, but it doesn't stop there. It also comes with new, exclusive characters, and its very own set of downloadable content, a quite pricey "season pass", which you can download for free as long as you have an active Nintendo Switch Online subscription. What this season pass includes, is an expansion that DOUBLES the size of the game, by adding no less than 12 more Grand Prix cups for the grabs. With the whole package, the total amount of playable characters increases to no less than 44, and the number of available courses to 96 (the Mario franchise's lucky number since *Super Mario World*). Whether you're going at it alone or with a friend or two, this game will keep you entertained for a long time, and you don't even have to be a fan of racing games.

When it comes to the characters, I'd like to make a small confession; after over 30 years of *Mario Kart*, *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* is the first game that actually inspired me to play as someone else than Bowser every once in a while. I also like to play as Link (with a vehicle fully customized with Triforce or Ancient items, of course), and my main Mii. Bless me Father, for I have sinned. And I've liked it.

The game fully utilizes the Switch's versatility by having about a gazillion control options. Like before, you can switch between analog and motion controls, or ease up the gameplay with smart steering and auto-throttle, but it doesn't stop there. You can use a single Joy-Con or a docked double, Pro Controller, a new Racing Wheel, the Switch itself, whichever you prefer, and there's no unfair advantage here unlike in the original where the Wii U GamePad was made to offer the most precise control by a long shot over any alternative. At least that's how I saw it.

Finally, the multiplayer modes: simply setting multiplayer up is effortless, regardless whether you're playing in a small group at home, online with a friend, or online with a bunch of strangers. The game generously guides you through every process. The Battle Mode has had the most notable overhaul here, and it's an overhaul Nintendo wanted their customers to notice right away, that's why the Battle Mode is promoted on the back cover of the game. The original *Mario Kart 8* included the very basic Battle Mode as it was perfected in *Mario Kart 64*, and none of the new variations that were introduced in later games.

Well, guess what? *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* includes almost EVERY variation of Battle Mode ever created, with the only exception being Shine Runners from *Mario Kart DS*, AND a whole new one: Renegade Roundup, which in itself is a variation of cops and robbers.

The bottom line is this: *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* simply belongs in your Nintendo Switch collection. As a single-player game, it is the most exciting racing game ever conceived – but as before, 150 cc is the difficulty level you'll want to start at if you're a true veteran, 50 cc is useless and 100 cc turns just as dull after a while. As a multiplayer game, specifically on the Switch, it's tied with the best of *Mario Party* as the greatest one available. The traditional *Mario Kart* experience simply can't get any better than this, and I'm glad the developers realized that and carried on with something completely new and experimental. Maybe some day I'll get into the most recent games, but this is a great place to take a break.

## 9.3