

MARIO KART WII

GENRE(S): Racing

AVAILABLE ON: Wii

DEVELOPED BY: Nintendo

PUBLISHED BY: Nintendo

RELEASED: April 10, 2008

It never ceases to amaze how long it took for Nintendo to deliver an iteration of *Mario Kart* to the Wii. A system that was built on motion tech basically screamed for a dynamic, realistic racing experience. You know how some people – including myself – tend to twist themselves and the controller left and right whenever they're playing just about any driving game? No? Really? Well, just so you know, there are those kinds of people. And, those kinds of people might be extremely glad to know that this version of *Mario Kart* here is made especially for them. You can play the game without the Wii steering wheel, but once you've tried it, there's no going back. Unfortunately, just one comes with the game, but you can always get another one. If you don't have any friends to play with, you can rest assured *Mario Kart Wii* will keep you entertained for quite a while, with one very notable new feature, good audiovisuals, a formidable single-player challenge and tons of unlockable stuff. *Mario Kart Wii* still looks as bland and formal as *Mario Kart DS* on the outside, but on the inside we have a game that was pretty much *Mario Kart* at its finest at the time of its release, one of the Wii's best overall games.

The basic gameplay features of *Mario Kart* have changed very little through the years, and with each review, going over that stuff seems more gratuitous and dumb, so if you're looking for the basic information, just turn to the review of the original *Super Mario Kart* via [this link here](#).

The biggest game changer in *Mario Kart Wii* is the steering wheel, which contains absolutely no mechanical parts; it's a small plastic tray for your Nunchuk, fit for all sizes of hands. As simple and dumb as it sounds, it's a surprisingly great tool to immerse yourself in this game and get used to its motion

controls quick. Weapons and power-ups are triggered with the digital pad, and you have better control over every single one of them than ever before.

There's a total of 32 race tracks in the game; an exact half of them are completely new ones, and the other half comprises of the developers' favourites from every single game that came before. While the total number of different tracks sounds disappointing, they are all carefully crafted and designed levels, most of which get harder with each lap, and they look amazing. There's so much going on in the background, so many beautiful details. There are initially ten drivers to choose from, but the amount of unlockable drivers increases the roster to a whopping total of 24. (I'd like to say that I don't personally care, since I'm always using the same one, but I respect that.) Each driver has their selection of personalized vehicles, and you'll also unlock more of these as you progress through the game. You have to do absolutely everything in this game to have access to the whole spread, so you can forget about being the grand master after beating 50 cc. This time, the harder difficulty levels come complete with a whole new type of vehicle: bikes.

Bikes are usually my top choice in any game they're available in, let's say *Grand Theft Auto*; I absolutely love bikes, I'll take one over a car any day. Ironically, while I'm theoretically glad they finally made something completely new by bringing bikes into *Mario Kart*, bikes don't really belong in *Mario Kart*. They're hard to handle in general, there's not nearly as much immersion when you're using the steering wheel, and doing wheelies for speed boosts is not nearly as satisfying as drifting around sharp corners with the kart. As I said, I'm still glad they made something new and fundamental for a change. The 100 cc difficulty is exclusively centered on bikes. 150 cc mixes up racing with both types of vehicles to create the ultimate challenge.

Once again, online multiplayer for the game's been dead for over a decade, but luckily Wii is the type of system that supports, or even better, encourages, players to engage in a local four-player mode – *Mario Kart* at its best, as the second game in the series proved almost 30 years ago. I wasn't around to

experience *Mario Kart Wii* when it came out, since I had such a strong and strange resentment towards Nintendo back in those times, and I tried to avoid all of their products to the best of my abilities. That remains one of my deepest regrets in all of my history as a gamer. If I had been more in touch with Nintendo and chosen to hold *Mario Kart* in a higher value than just silly pre-teen nostalgia, I believe I would've loved *Mario Kart Wii* just as much as I loved *Mario Kart 64*, and also had more respect for its experiment with bikes. Even though I know it's well past its prime, I still recognize *Mario Kart Wii* as a great game, and indeed, one of the best and most immersive titles designed exclusively for the Wii.

8.8