

GAMESPOT game guide

Mario Kart Wii Primer



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Mario Kart Wii Primer

Another of Nintendo's most beloved franchises joins the Wii. Mario Kart has long been one of the best party games. And with the addition of online multiplayer racing and motion-control with the Wii Wheel, the classic racing action has gotten even better.

In this Mario Kart Wii primer, we'll get you started on improving your driving techniques with tips on drifting, drafting, and showing off with the new air tricks. And with the addition of online multiplayer and motion-control with the Wii Wheel, the classic racing action has gotten even better.

This GameSpot primer for Mario Kart Wii features:

- **Driving Tips:** Look here for essential driving tips, such as drifting, mini-turbos, drafting, and the new air tricks.
- **Items:** This section provides strategies for all Mario Kart Wii power-ups, including the new mega mushroom, POW block, and lightning cloud.
- **Characters, Karts, and Bikes:** Here we provide the rundown on all characters, karts, and bikes and how to unlock those not available from the start.
- **Multiplayer:** Connect to Nintendo WFC and race players from all around the world. This section offers tips on beating the competition online.
- **Unlockables and Extras:** There's plenty to unlock in Mario Kart Wii. We'll tell you how to unlock characters, karts, bikes, fast ghosts, and mirror mode.

Chapter 1 - Driving Tips

Your first decision when starting Mario Kart Wii will be your control scheme. Nintendo has included a Wii Wheel with each game; just attach your Wiimote to the wheel and you'll be driving with motion control in no time. But you can opt for the Wiimote and nunchuk combination if holding the Wii Wheel isn't your thing. And if you'd rather go old-school, you can drive your chosen kart or bike with a classic controller or Gamecube controller.

Make your selection based on personal preference and how you perform with the particular controller. Sure, the Wii Wheel will be a hit with the family but it may not be the best choice for you when attempting online matches. Then again, if this is one of your first Mario Kart experiences, the Wii Wheel may be exactly the controller you've been waiting for. Note that racers that use the Wii Wheel a majority of the time receive a special golden wheel next to their character online-extra incentive to go with motion control!

This section provides some general driving strategies. We begin at the starting line with the rocket start and

continue through drifting turns, tricking off ramps, and using items on the push to the finish line.

The Rocket Start

Your racing success starts as early as the starting line! Watch the countdown. The "2" appears as if it comes from behind your screen. When that animation stops and the "2" is in the middle of the screen, press the accelerator. If timed correctly, your kart or bike will receive a big boost at the start and will accelerate to top speed quickly.

Tip: Getting knocked off the course is never a good time. It's an agonizing wait as you're lifted back into the race. As soon as you're dropped onto the course hit the accelerator. If timed correctly (jam it as soon as you land), your kart or bike receives a speed boost similar to the rocket start. It's one way of cutting down wait time and helps get you back in the race as fast as possible. Still...try not to drive off the course!

If you hit the accelerator before the countdown finishes and miss the rocket start, your kart or bike suffers a burnout and will start much slower than the other racers. With practice you should be able to perform the rocket start on every single race. You can also use the countdown "beep" as timing; press the accelerator after the "2" beeps and perform the rocket start.

Drifting, Mini-Turbo, and Super Mini-Turbo

Being a top racer means mastering the art of drifting and activating and using mini-turbos. Drifting is essentially powersliding around turns and corners. Not only does successful drifting activate mini-turbos, but drifting also helps maintain your speed around tough corners and turns.



If you've played a previous Mario Kart game, you should already know about drifting.

Although you can select automatic drifting, you won't receive the mini-turbo benefit so if you want to improve your skills, start with manual drafting and learn how to mini-turbo with the best of them. As you drift around a corner, your kart or bike will begin to emit blue sparks. When this happens, you can release the drift button and your ride receives a speed boost called a mini-turbo. Karts offer a slight benefit over bikes in that the drifting karts can actually reach orange sparks. Hold a drift until you receive the blue sparks then keep holding-the kart will emit orange sparks, which provides a larger mini-turbo speed boost.

Tip: If you're a Mario Kart veteran then you're likely familiar with the concept of "snaking". The concept is simple: you drift left and right repeatedly, slithering like a snake, while maximizing your ability to create and use mini-turbos. And this isn't done just around corners but even through straight sections! It was abused mightily in previous Kart games. As a result, the fine art of snaking has been toned down considerably in Mario Kart Wii.

Generally your goal when approaching a turn should be attacking the corner by taking a tight line on the inside edge. Perform a drift as you turn the kart or bike around the corner. When you activate the mini-turbo and have your kart or bike lined to the next section of track-the quickest line, don't continue to drift and oversteer-then release the drift button and activate the mini-turbo boost. On longer turns, hold a karts' drift until you activate the orange sparks and its super mini-turbo

Karts have the ability to emit orange sparks during drifts for the super mini-turbo but what about bikes? The new Mario Kart Wii bikes have their own unique speed boost: wheelies. Perform a wheelie during a track's straight section, and ideally where there are few racers near you, because holding a wheelie limits the bike's turning ability and makes the bike vulnerable to being knocked around by other racers. Practice popping wheelies because it'll pay off when you venture online and need all the speed you can get!

Remember that Tom Cruise movie Days of Thunder with that lesson on drafting? You don't? Well, anyhow the same can be done in Mario Kart Wii. Get close behind another racer and you'll note the visual effect surrounding your vehicle. A few seconds later and you gain a speed boost. Just be on the lookout for power-up items dropped in your lap by the racer you're drafting!

New Air Tricks

Mario Kart Wii introduces another means of scoring valuable boost: air tricks. Basically any time your kart or bike gets air, use the directional-pad or an analog controller (or waggle your Wii Wheel or Wiimote) to perform a trick. It doesn't matter which trick your character does, the result is the same: a welcome speed boost upon landing.

Not all ramps are on the course. There are tempting trick magnets off-road-for instance, there's one near the last turn on the Luigi Circuit. If you want to hit an off-road ramp, have a mushroom handy (or a mini-turbo boost coming off a drift) to boost through the slow off-road dirt or grass. Otherwise the speed boost gained from the air trick won't matter all that much.



Mario Kart Wii adds air tricks. Hit a ramp, perform a trick, and receive a speed boost.

Gaining boost of any sort is obviously important for shaving race times and defeating the competition. As with drifting, mini-turbos, and super mini-turbos, you should look to perform air tricks often. And useful ramps aren't always as plain as day. You can often air trick off small bumps and curbs; there are even half-pipe sections along turns where you can perform a trick while getting air through the turn.

Using Items

There's more in your arsenal than just rocket start, drifting, and air trick skills: a good ole red shell to the back may send you into first place faster than any of the other methods mentioned above. Using items effectively-both for offense and defense-can mean the difference between reaching the winner's circle and watching a friend celebrate your defeat.

Tip: Being in the back of the pack isn't an optimum place to be-unless you're looking to score a great item! Remember playing that old arcade classic NBA Jam and you're up by 20 and the computer opponent can't miss? In Mario Kart Wii, the racers bringing up the rear score more powerful items while the leaders acquire less powerful items. A lead can change quickly when a racer uses the spiny shell, lightning, or new POW block.

Check this game guide's items for in-depth tips on all Mario Kart Wii power-ups, including the new mega mushroom, POW block, and lightning cloud. Certain items (bananas, shells, bombs, and the fake item box) can be dragged behind your kart. You can drop these items as an offensive attack against trailing competitors or leave the item behind your kart to defend against green and red shell attacks (the fake item box doesn't block attacks, however). A good idea if you're in first place! Note that if you are dragging an item behind, you can pick up another item as well.

Items like bananas and fake item boxes can be dropped on the race course; when other racers hit these, their kart or bike spins out. Therefore it's a wise idea to drop bananas and fake item boxes where they are sure to be hit, such as in front of booster pads, ramps, or real item boxes. If there are racers on your tail, drag one of these items, use the rear view camera, and line up your attack.

Miscellaneous Driving Tips



Certain items, such as the banana and shells, can be dragged behind your kart and actually block incoming shells. Defense can be vital when battling for first.

Combining rocket starts, drifting, mini-turbos, air tricks, and effective item usage will have you going from worst to first in no time. This section features some additional driving tips to consider when racing around the track on your kart or bike.

- As mentioned in the items section, if you're in first place it's a good idea to drag an item behind you to block green and red shell attacks. In first place you're basically only picking up bananas, green shells, and fake item boxes. Since the fake boxes can't block, drop them at a strategic location and look to put a banana or green shell in its place for defense. Note that even dragging an item may not save you every time from a shell. Occasionally the shell might approach more from the side (perhaps you're on a turn or the shell is coming off a bounce). If you're struck from the side, the dragged item won't offer any defense.
- Even defensive dragging won't save you all the time. POW Blocks, lightning, bloopers, and the dreaded spiny shell are still going to spin you out, shrink you, blind you, or explode your kart. It's the price of being a race leader! Note that it's possible, though quite difficult, to dodge the dreaded spiny shell! Watch when the spiny shell gets above you. Just as it prepares to strike, boost with a mushroom and you can boost to safety.

- Being in last doesn't mean all hope is lost. That's where the most powerful items are! If you secure a bullet bill or mega mushroom, you could catch up in no time. When there are item boxes on the horizon, don't hesitate to drop something not-so-useful in hopes of securing one of the more powerful items that can quickly change your luck.
- If you grab a star and are catching up to the leaders, try and hold onto it as long as possible, especially if you're catching up to first place. The star provides temporary invulnerability; activate the star when you're under assault from some of the more devastating power-ups, such as the spiny shell and POW Block.
- The fastest way through a track is usually not the most obvious route. Be on the lookout for shortcuts, which not only shave off precious seconds but may also provide additional item boxes, booster pads, or ramps to trick off. Also, some shortcuts require a trip off-road or up a staircase. Use boost, either from a mushroom power-up, from drifting, or from air tricks, to avoid the slowdown penalties from driving your kart or bike on off-road terrain. Otherwise it's not worth the detour.

Chapter 2 - Items

Ah...what would Mario Kart be without a banana to drop in someone's lap or a spiny shell to punish the leader? This section provides tips on using the Mario Kart Wii power-up items. There are a few new toys in this version: the mega mushroom, POW block, and lightning cloud. We'll offer tips on using these items offensively and, if the item permits, defensively.

The basics are simple: drive your kart or bike into an item box and you'll get a random item. Well, not completely random. It's important to note that your chance of acquiring certain items depends on your current placement in the race.

For example, if you're in first place you won't get a bullet bill or a spiny shell. These more powerful items are relegated to those racers that are bringing up the rear (those guys need hope too, right?). A racer in first place's inventory will basically be restricted to bananas, shells, and fake item boxes. Bananas and shells offer defense against red shells but you'll be vulnerable to those last place racers who are likely to grab lightning, POW block, or the evil spiny shell.

Banana/Triple Bananas

It's like a classic comedy routine: drop a banana peel on the ground and someone is going to slip on it! In Mario Kart Wii, the concept is basically the same. When you use the banana, it remains stationary on the track until someone runs into it (or if someone shoots it with a shell or a nearby explosion takes it out). Unload a banana where other racers are sure to drive, such as in front of a boost pad, ramp, item box, or along the usual racing line (like the inside of a turn). You can fire a banana ahead of you into another racer if they're close enough.

Tip: Even if you already have a full inventory of items, drive through item boxes! Even though you can't pick up something, the item box disappears. If the item box isn't there, other racers can't get an item! Keeping items from your nearby competitors is often more important than what you're currently carrying.



Drop a banana either in front of you or behind you where another racer might run into it. It can also be dragged for defense.

The banana is one of the items that can be dragged behind your vehicle and provide defense against incoming green and red shells. If a shell strikes you from behind, the banana blocks the attack but disappears in the process. Use this technique when you're in first place or near the top spot. Too bad the spiny shells drops from above; a dragged banana won't block it!

The triple bananas item is essentially the same thing except you now have three to drop on the track. You can also drag triple bananas behind your kart-there will be three bananas there and each one will block a green or red shell for increased defense. When dragging bananas, if there's a racer close behind check the rear camera and try to drop a banana (or bananas) right into the racer's path. Expect to get frequent bananas when you're the leader or close to the leader and not so much when you're lagging behind.

Green Shell

A Mario staple: the turtle shell. Fire this green version and the projectile moves straight until it strikes a competitor (the green shell can also bounce off walls, making it a useful weapon inside tight areas). You can also fire off a green shell to destroy a banana on the course or even a small course enemy (where it's possible a useful item might be dropped). Like bananas, a green shell can be dragged behind your kart or bike to serve as a shield against incoming shells. You can also fire a green shell behind your kart-an effective surprise for an opponent attempting to draft.

[TIP BOX: Shells can be used on other objects, not just other racers. For instance, shoot a shell at a banana to knock it off the race course. You can also shoot certain native track creatures and sometimes they'll leave a power-up behind.]

If there's a green shell headed into your back, having a banana or shell dragging behind will block its attack. If not, realize that the green shell isn't going to track your movements. You can check your rear camera and note its direction and move out of the way accordingly. Green shells are one of the items a leader might acquire from an item box. Put it to defensive use.

Red Shell

True, it's also a lovely shade of red but the red shell has another important difference from the green shell: homing ability. When shot out the front of your vehicle, the red shell operates like a homing missile on the closest competitor ahead of you. The red shell can be shot backwards, however from this direction it operates like a green shell and has no homing ability. It's best to give the red shell's homing ability a little space to work; if the closest racer is too close, the red shell may miss and just move past like a green shell.

Tip: When you drive through an item box, the little slot machine like sequence begins and "randomly" determines your item. You can stop the sequence by pressing the item button. Sometimes you might need an item as quickly as possible. Save some time by stopping the slot machine!

Like the green shell and banana, the red shell can be dragged behind the kart or bike for defensive purposes (or shot backward like a green shell). When a red shell is homing in on your vehicle, having a defensive item behind you might not always save you.

Triple Green/Red Shells

Just like its banana cousin, it's possible to grab triple green or triple red shells out of an item box. Individually, these operate just like their solo brothers-green shells fire straight and red shells home (when fired in front) and both can fire backwards from your vehicle. The primary difference is that triple shells rotate around your vehicle providing welcome protection from incoming shells from the rear but also defense against bananas or fake item boxes that you might run into. If a one of the triple shells is used for defense, it disappears leaving behind two shells.



Shoot red shells forward or backward but it only homes in when shot forward.

Extra shells mean you can strike a competitor's vehicle in quick succession creating additional delay. For example, launch a red shell at the racer ahead of you. Once it strikes and you spot your competitor delayed, launch another to further slow down your competitor. The triple shell shield isn't entirely for defense, though-the shield itself can be used as a ramming weapon. Smash into another racer with a shell shield active and you can spin him or her out. You'll lose a shell in the process but that's a small price to pay for the damage inflicted!

Bob-omb

Toss Bob-omb either in front or behind (you can drag Bob-omb behind your kart or bike in preparation of detonating the group of competitors trailing you). Once thrown, Bob-omb will remain stationary and then explode after a few seconds. Bob-omb detonates immediately when struck by a kart or bike. You'll notice Bob-omb flashing red as it's about to explode. Keep this in mind if you spot one ahead. If it's still black, drive around quick! Plus, when you toss it ahead like a grenade, don't drive close or you may inflict friendly fire damage!

It can be an excellent way of clearing out the pack just ahead (careful, though, cause you're driving that way too!) or just behind you; the detonation is powerful enough to take out several nearby racers. Drop one on a tight section of the race and the racers behind will have little room for escape. Bob-omb is more of a mid-level power-up, which means don't expect to grab one if you're leading the race.

Spiny Shell

The dreaded spiny shell-a fellow racer of mine once called it spawn from a demon. If you're a Mario Kart

veteran you've likely come to loathe the very look of its spiny wingness. The concept is easy enough: launch the spiny shell and it flies all the way to the lead racer. It hovers over the poor soul for a brief moment then drops suddenly and explodes. The resulting detonation incapacitates the leader's vehicle (and anyone else in the blast radius) providing ample time for competing racers to make their move.

Tip: One defense against the spiny shell is to save a star for when you get in first place. The spiny shell is no match for temporarily invulnerability. But if you don't have a star, it's still possible, though quite difficult, to dodge a spiny spell-under the right circumstances. When the spiny shell is above you, just as it prepares to strike downward, use a mushroom and you boost out of harms way. Other methods of boosting-pads, tricks, mini-turbos-can do the trick too but it'll probably be a rare occurrence if you are able to pull off the maneuver.

Obviously the leader has little use for the spiny shell so you won't pick one up if you're in first place. Instead, this powerful power-up is awarded to the middle of the pack and trailing racers that need an extra edge to get into first place (or basically ruin your race right before the finish line).

Tip: The spiny shell can smack you even if you aren't in first place! The spiny shell is a smart weapon. Let's say five people have already finished the race and you're in sixth nearing the finish line. If someone trailing uses the spiny shell, it's going after you! You are considered the current leader-the leading player still racing. Also, perhaps you're in the lead when it's launched but lose the lead before it strikes-you still get hit!

If you've acquired a spiny shell and you're still significantly trailing the leader, don't use the item immediately. Wait until you've gained some ground on the leader-perhaps up to fourth, third, or second place-before unleashing the weapon. That way if the leader goes down you have a chance to assume his spot. Firing it from the back of the pack doesn't do much to help your standing. Wait until you can capitalize! The downside is you might lose it if some competitor unleashes a power-up like lightning. And remember-if you see a spiny shell coming towards you, you can slow down to take out anyone immediately following you.

Fake Item Box

The fake item box is basically a banana except it looks similar to the item boxes that normally contain power-ups. But smashing into a fake item box doesn't provide anything other than your kart or bike spinning out. Although they look similar, note that the fake item box different features, particularly the upside-down question mark.

Drop the fake item box where you believe other racers might run into it. For instance, place the fake item box along the racing line, in front of a boost pad or ramp, or behind a set of real item boxes (don't put it in front or other racers will detect the differences). You can drag a fake item box behind you but it won't block incoming shells. Check your rear view and if there's another racer following you too closely, drop the fake item box and watch your competitor run into the trap.

Mushroom/Triple Mushrooms

The mushroom has always been a good companion to Mario and it's no different in Mario Kart Wii. Activate the mushroom and you'll receive a short speed boost similar to a mini-turbo, boost pad, or air trick—except in this case you get to choose when to speed up! Obviously you won't be acquiring any mushrooms from item boxes as a leader; this power-up is reserved for those that have ground to make up.



Mushrooms supply a brief speed boost, a handy tool for getting across off-road shortcuts.

Save a mushroom for a track's straight sections or, ideally, in your final push toward the finish line. A mushroom is also useful for boosting through off-road sections, such as those that lead to a shortcut or ramp. Mushrooms can also save you from the race-changing spiny shell. Save one for when you're in the lead. When the spiny shell hovers above you, wait for it to flip over, and then activate the boost. If timed correctly, you will accelerate away from the shell's destructive powers.

Tip: Time trial mode lacks power-up boxes but it still features a power-up: the triple mushroom. You begin the race with a triple mushroom and must determine when best to utilize their boosting powers. Study the tracks and use the mushrooms carefully. Once they're gone, they're gone!

Triple mushroom is just a mushroom times three! You receive a separate speed boost with each mushroom used. The effects aren't cumulative, though; wait until one boost completes before activating another mushroom. You could choose to save a mushroom for each lap (for instance, that track's shortcut) or use them on the last lap's straight sections as a final charge to the finish line.

Golden Mushroom

Racers trailing the pack may be fortunate enough to procure the golden mushroom. The golden mushroom provides the same speed boost effects of the mushroom but can be used more than once during a limited

time period (which begins as soon as you use the golden mushroom). Because it's time limited, there's no reason to hold back. As soon as you've activated the golden mushroom, start boosting and keep it up until the power-up expires. The golden mushroom is most effective on a track's straight sections or off-road shortcuts that would otherwise slow down your kart or bike.

Bullet Bill

Another power-up for those racers falling behind, Bullet Bill offers a quick ride to the race leaders. When used, your kart or bike transforms into a gigantic bullet and flies down the track for several seconds. Bullet Bill basically does the flying for you-but don't worry, he's headed for the lead. Any competitors Bullet Bill flies into will be spun out and those racers will lose their current item stock. There's not much to think about here. Just use it and go along for the ride. Try and save it for the best moment to get back into the race. And make sure you nudge your fellow racers as you pass them by!

Tip: Getting struck by a power-up causes your kart or bike to spin out, flip, or otherwise slow down and creates a big racing delay. But that's not the only punishment. Most items also cause you to lose your item inventory. Keep this in mind if you're holding onto a particular power-up. If you wait too long to use it, you may lose it.

Bloopers



If you're near the leaders, expect to get blooped.

Activate the blooper power-up and this squid will squirt its black ink all over the racers ahead of you. Get used to the look because you'll see the blotchy screen often if you're usually hanging out at the front of the pack. Blooper doesn't cloud your vision entirely; you can still basically see sections of the road ahead.

Hitting a booster pad or using a mushroom will curb the blooper's effects. If you're the one blooping then save the power-up for when your leading competitors are entering a section of the track with quick turns, obstacles, or native creatures that your fellow racers might smack into.

Lightning

The lightning power-up is a triple whammy and acquired by racers that are in the back of the pack-so they can ruin the hopes of other competitors! Activate lightning and a bolt instantly strikes other racers, which shrinks the affected racers to mini-size and slows down those racers considerably. And just to add another layer to the destruction, the affected racers also lose their item inventory. Don't forget that the higher your rank in the race, the longer you'll be affected by the lightning bolt.

The effects won't last forever so try and utilize lightning when you're as close to the main pack as possible. You're now faster (and bigger) than everyone else. The shorter the distance you have to make up on your competitors the better. Don't bother driving around those karts and bikes in front of you; they're small and harmless so just run over them!

Star

That familiar tune can only mean one thing: invincibility! Well, temporary invincibility at least. Activate the star power-up and you are invincible for a short period of time. You also drive faster and can speed over off-road sections like they were paved road. Hit those shortcuts! And since you're invincible, knocking into other racers has no effect on your vehicle-but packs on punch on theirs! Smash into other racers as you speed by and cause those competitors to spin out.



Stars provide temporary invincibility and speed boost. You can use it to protect yourself against an item

attack or just make up ground on the leaders.

Invincibility also means protection against some of the more damaging power-ups, such as the spiny shell or POW block. When you spot a spiny shell headed your way or a POW block hovering over your head, activate the star and avoid the ill effects of these power-ups.

Mega Mushroom

The mega mushroom is one of Mario Kart Wii's new power-ups. It has similarities to Bullet Bill and will be acquired by those racers trailing the leaders. Activate the mega mushroom and you grow in size, speed up slightly, and flatten other racers that have the misfortune of driving in your path. Although you aren't moving as fast as other boost methods, the increased speed means you should take advantage of off-road shortcuts while giant-sized. Primarily, though, you're running over other racers and leaving them flat in your dust. With this item, you're effectively invulnerable, but if you're hit by a lightning bolt, you'll return to normal size, rather than being shrunk. Also, you can still be damaged by another racer using a star item.

POW Block

The POW block from the original Mario Bros. arcade game makes a return as a new power-up for Mario Kart Wii. Use the POW block and the item appears over every other racer on the track. The POW block acts like a timer; it flattens and counts down and when it reaches zero, the resulting "pow" causes the affected racers to spin out and lose their item inventories. The racer that distributed the POW block among the competition can make up precious ground.

Tip: Don't expect to acquire a POW block when you're among the leaders; this power-up is given to those racers that need help getting back in the game.

When the POW block appears above your racer, you have a few seconds to avoid its effects—that is if the situation is just right. You can avoid the POW block if you have a star in your inventory; just use the star and its temporary invincibility will protect you from the POW block. Also, if there's a ramp ahead, drive right to it. If you're in the air from a ramp jump, the POW block won't affect you. There's also another method if you're on a bike! Perform a wheelie just as the final POW block hit is made and your bike spins out but you maintain speed.

Lightning Cloud

The new lightning cloud power-up is like the Mario Kart Wii hot potato. Once acquired, the lightning cloud hovers over your kart or bike and provides a speed boost. But the fun doesn't last forever. Several seconds after the lightning cloud appears, lightning strikes causing the affected racer to shrink and slow down. So the goal is to get the benefits of the lightning cloud but get rid of it before lightning strikes and you're slowed and shrunk.

That's where hot potato comes in. If you smack into a fellow racer, the lightning cloud transfers to that competitor. The time is still ticking so the recipient will likely have just mere moments before the cloud's

lightning bolt strikes. This countdown doesn't take long; as you've grabbed the cloud, it's to look for a racer to share with. The speed boost is nice but getting shrunk and slowing down isn't. If there's no one ahead of you, try slowing down just a bit and perhaps that racer on your tail wouldn't mind taking the lightning cloud off of your hands.

Chapter 3 - Characters, Karts, and Bikes

The Mario Kart Wii characters, karts, and bikes are separated into light, medium, and heavy-light characters use light karts and bikes, medium characters use medium karts and bikes, and heavy characters use heavy karts and bikes. In general, lighter vehicles accelerate faster but have a lower top speed (and are easier to knock around) while heavy vehicles accelerate slower but have a higher top speed (and can do the knocking around!).

This section compiles a list of all Mario Kart Wii selectable characters, karts, and bikes. Many of these aren't available from the game's start. You'll have to unlock these by completing specific requirements, such as completing particular racing cups, unlocking fast ghost replays in time trial mode, or even by just playing a bunch of games. We'll tell you how to unlock each in this section.

Characters

The Mario Kart Wii characters are divided into light, medium, and heavy; this determines which type of kart or bike the character can use. The characters also have slight differences among them (you may note slight statistic changes while trying different characters in the same vehicle). For instance, Baby Mario has a stat bonus to weight and handling over the similar light character Toad. The differences are very slight and shouldn't deter you from choosing your favorites. You can check these by testing different characters inside the same vehicles.



Choose your character wisely! Although they have slight differences, the characters primarily determine which type of kart or bike you can choose.

In this area we'll list which characters are available from the start and which characters need to be unlocked and how to do it. Note that Wii cups are cups featuring new Wii tracks; retro cups are cups featuring retro tracks (with DS, GCN, N64, etc in front of the name).

Light

- **Baby Mario:** Available from start.
- **Baby Peach:** Available from start.
- **Koopa Troopa:** Available from start.
- **Toad:** Available from start.
- **Baby Daisy:** Achieve 1 star or higher in all 50cc Wii cups.
- **Baby Luigi:** Unlock 8 fast ghost replays in time trial mode.
- **Dry Bones:** Complete the 100cc Leaf Cup in first place.
- **Toadette:** Run time trials on all 32 courses. Can also beat 1,000 players in online matches.

Medium

- **Mario:** Available from start.
- **Luigi:** Available from start.
- **Peach:** Available from start.
- **Yoshi:** Available from start.
- **Birdo:** Run time trials on 16 different courses. Can also beat 250 players in online matches.
- **Bowser Jr.:** Achieve 1 star or higher in all 100cc retro cups.

- **Daisy:** Complete the 150cc special cup in first place.
- **Diddy Kong:** Finish the 50cc retro cups in first place.

Heavy

- **Bowser:** Available from start.
- **Donkey Kong:** Available from start.
- **Waluigi:** Available from start.
- **Wario:** Available from start.
- **Dry Bowser:** Achieve 1 star or higher in all 150cc Wii cups.
- **Funky Kong:** Unlock 4 fast ghost replays in time trial mode.
- **King Boo:** Complete the 50cc Star Cup in first place.
- **Rosalina:** Achieve 1 star or higher in all mirror mode cups. Alternatively, Rosalina will unlock after 50 games if you have a Super Mario Galaxy save file.

Karts

Like characters, some karts are available at the game's start while others must be unlocked by completing specific requirements like finishing cups, unlocking fast ghosts, or just by playing games. While characters in each category are the same, each kart has its own unique ratings in seven different categories.

- **Speed:** Higher the rating, the higher the kart or bike's top speed. This rating doesn't affect how fast the kart or bike can get to top speed—that's acceleration.
- **Weight:** The kart or bike's heaviness or lack thereof. This is basically tied into the kart or bike being light, medium, or heavy. Heavier vehicles can knock around lighter vehicles.
- **Acceleration:** How quickly a kart or bike gets from a stopped position to its upper speeds. A kart or bike may have a lower top speed but be able to get there quickly because of high acceleration.
- **Handling:** The kart or bike's ability to handle corners. Generally, karts or bikes with high top speed have lower handling and vice versa.
- **Drift:** A kart or bike's ability to drift, or powerslide, through turns. The better the ability, the quicker the drift's ability to produce a mini-turbo.
- **Off-Road:** This statistic determines how dirt, grass, and other off-road features affect your kart. A high off-road stat means you won't slow down as much on these surfaces as you would with a low off-road stat.
- **Mini-Turbo:** For manual drivers, this statistic determines the effectiveness of a mini-turbo attained after drifting.

Light

- **Booster Seat:** Available from start.
- **Standard Kart S:** Available from start.
- **Mini Beast:** Available from start.
- **Blue Falcon:** Finish the Lightning Cup mirror mode in first place.
- **Cheep Charger:** Achieve 1 star or higher in 50cc retro cups.
- **Tiny Titan:** Unlock 1 fast ghost replay or beat 50 players in online matches.

Medium

- **Classic Dragster:** Available from start.
- **Standard Kart M:** Available from start.
- **Wild Wing:** Available from start.
- **Daytripper:** Finish the 150cc Leaf Cup in first place.
- **Sprinter:** Unlock 24 fast ghost replays in time trial mode.
- **Super Blooper:** Complete the 50cc Leaf Cup in first place.

Heavy

- **Flame Flyer:** Available from start.
- **Offroader:** Available from start.
- **Standard Kart L:** Available from start.
- **Honeycoupe:** Complete the 150cc Lightning Cup in first place.
- **Jetsetter:** Achieve 1 star or higher in 150cc retro cups.
- **Piranha Prowler:** Finish the 50cc Special Cup in first place.

Bikes

Mario Kart Wii adds bikes as a new means of transportation. Generally these handle similar to karts with one major difference: the ability to perform a wheelie. The bike receives a speed boost while performing a wheelie, so it's wise to perform one whenever possible. Just note that wheelies limit turning and are vulnerable to jostling. If you're knocked around while performing one, expect to pay the price.

Light

- **Bit Bike:** Available from start.
- **Bullet Bike:** Available from start.
- **Standard Bike S:** Available from start.
- **Jet Bubble:** Finish the Leaf Cup mirror mode in first place.
- **Magikruiser:** Run time trials on 8 different courses.
- **Quacker:** Finish the 150cc Star Cup in first place.

Medium

- **Mach Bike:** Available from start.
- **Standard Bike M:** Available from start.
- **Sugarscoot:** Available from start.
- **Dolphin Dasher:** Finish the Star Cup mirror mode in first place.
- **Sneakster:** Achieve 1 star or higher in all 100cc cups.
- **Zip Zip:** Complete the 100cc Lightning Cup in first place.

Heavy

- **Flame Runner:** Available from start.
- **Standard Bike L:** Available from start.
- **Wario Bike:** Available from start.
- **Phantom:** Complete the Special Cup mirror mode in first place.
- **Shooting Star:** Finish the 100cc Star Cup in first place.
- **Spear:** Unlock 12 fast ghost replays in time trial mode.

Chapter 4 - Multiplayer



Expect more clever item placement online, such as behind item boxes and before boosters. Not usually in the middle of the track.

Everyone knows Mario Kart is an excellent multiplayer game. Most gamers likely have fond memories of racing multiplayer splitscreen with their family and friends. With Mario Kart Wii, not only can you enjoy the traditional splitscreen gameplay, but you can log onto the Nintendo WFC and race fellow Mario Kart players from all over the world. Concepts between solo play and multiplayer are generally the same; though expect a much higher degree of challenge when venturing online. This section provides some tips on competing online in Mario Kart Wii.

- Setting up a Mario Kart game on Nintendo WFC is simple. Choose to play against friends, players within your region, or players all over the world. Then you're automatically matched into a game. You may have to wait for the race to end but you'll be on the starting line for the next race! The rating system gives everyone 5,000 points to start and you gain points for finishing among the race leaders and lose points by finishing near the end of the pack. You can gauge your competition by

their point total. You'll also spot symbols around particular players. Stars mean the player has completed all cups with star ratings (one, two, or three stars) and a golden Wii wheel means they've played a majority of games with the wheel controller!

- It's certainly cliché by now but one of the most important multiplayer tips is to know every track. Knowledge of all the tracks and all the shortcuts is extremely important for online success. Skill level rises dramatically online! These are human opponents, many of whom already know every inch of a track. An effective way to learn the tracks is to play time trial mode and work on unlocking all of the fast ghosts. Then you can watch the fast ghost replay to help learn the track secrets and the tightest racing lines.
- You have several different control methods to choose from-Wii Wheel, Wiimote and nunchuk, classic controller, or Gamecube controller. This is purely personal preference and only you can determine where your skills will be utilized the best. Practice each in Grand Prix or time trial mode before venturing online so you're best prepared against the increased skill level of human competition. Remember though that you get a special icon online if you play a majority of your games with the Wii Wheel!
- Clever item usage is even more important online. Human players are much more crafty than their computer-controlled counterparts. Expect to find fake item boxes where you typically drive, such as behind real item boxes, near booster pads, and along the racing lines. You likely won't find objects in just random locations (unless your opponents watched to ditch an item for another).
- If you're in the middle of the pack, how you take advantage of power-ups will play a big role in how often you're able to catch up to the leaders. Expect to acquire mushrooms from item boxes in this spot and you need to know the best time to use them. Take advantage of off-road shortcuts and long straight sections, especially if you have a golden mushroom. Saving your power-up can be risky (some opponent triggers lightning and now you've lost it) but it can pay off if used at the right moment.
- Knock someone when they're down! This is competition after all. Perhaps someone just ahead of you hit something and spun out; delay that racer further with a shell to the back. If you're a heavier kart, bump the unfortunate racer around or off the race course.
- A decision may have to be made between a kart or bike with great speed or great acceleration. Higher acceleration because you can get a fast start as well as recover quicker after getting hit by items or after you've made a racing mistake and rammed an object or went off-road. However, higher top speed because if you can build a strong lead, it's top speed that will keep you there and you probably won't have to worry as much about recovering from items. Acceleration is a smart way to start online but it's top speed that will keep you winning in the future.
- Consistent success means combining all driving techniques. First, select manual drift. You're not going to fare well against online competition without mini-turbos! Drift around corners for the mini-turbo and wheelie along open road straight sections. Take advantage of drafting but don't let others draft you! Perform air tricks off of ramps so you land with a speed boost.
- A good defense is as important as a good offense. When you're in first place, drag an item (banana, shell) behind. Run over another item box so you have a second item in reserve. No need to waste items here. It's better to keep an item dragged behind for protection. If you have a mushroom and reached first place, save it for the chance to avoid a spiny shell-that's another form of defense!

Tip: Gain access to a more diverse selection of karts and bikes-which means playing a lot of Grand Prix and time trial modes. Practice makes perfect, right? Check the unlockable section of this guide for instructions

on unlocking all karts and bikes. Consider the weight differences between light and heavy-heavier vehicles will help sustain hits-and let you hit back.

Chapter 5 - Unlockables and Extras

Mario Kart Wii features an array of unlockables, from simply unlocking the next cup in a Grand Prix game to unlocking new characters, karts, and bikes. There are also fast ghost replays in time trial mode and a couple multiplayer additions depending on your predominant control method or success as a solo racer. This section compiles Mario Kart Wii's unlockables and how to get them! If you have trouble getting something unlocked even after completing the requirements, back out to the main menu and start the game again-your item should be unlocked.

Cups and Races

When you first begin a 50cc, 100cc, or 150cc set, four of the cups are locked. You must complete other cups to unlock these races and continue with the Grand Prix.

- **Star Cup:** Achieve third place or better in the Mushroom and Flower Cups.
- **Leaf Cup:** Come in third place or better in the Shell and Banana Cups.
- **Special Cup:** Complete Star Cup in third place or better.
- **Lightning Cup:** Finish Leaf Cup in third place or better.

Characters

Although Mario Kart Wii characters can be unlocked from simply playing games-a lot, a lot, a lot of games-most have specific completion requirements, such as completing a specific cup, retro cups (cups that contain tracks from previous games), unlocking fast ghost replays, or achieving star ranks.

Light

- **Baby Daisy:** Achieve 1 star or higher in all 50cc Wii cups.
- **Baby Luigi:** Unlock 8 fast ghost replays in time trial mode.
- **Dry Bones:** Complete the 100cc Leaf Cup in first place.
- **Toadette:** Run time trials on all 32 courses. Can also beat 1,000 players in online matches.

Medium

- **Birdo:** Run time trials on 16 different courses. Can also beat 250 players in online matches.
- **Bowser Jr.:** Achieve 1 star or higher in all 100cc retro cups.
- **Daisy:** Complete the 150cc special cup in first place.
- **Diddy Kong:** Finish the 50cc retro cups in first place.

Heavy

- **Dry Bowser:** Achieve 1 star or higher in all 150cc Wii cups.
- **Funky Kong:** Unlock 4 fast ghost replays in time trial mode.
- **King Boo:** Complete the 50cc Star Cup in first place.
- **Rosalina:** Achieve 1 star or higher in all mirror mode cups. Alternatively, Rosalina will unlock after 50 games if you have a Super Mario Galaxy save file.

Mii Characters

- **Outfit A:** Finish the 100cc Special Cup in first place.
- **Outfit B:** Unlock all 32 fast ghost replays in time trial mode.

Karts and Bikes

There are a bunch of karts and bikes to unlock in Mario Kart Wii. Like with characters, you'll unlock using various methods, including star ranks, cup completion, fast ghost replays, or just playing a bunch of games.

Light - Karts

- **Blue Falcon:** Finish the Lightning Cup mirror mode in first place.
- **Cheep Charger:** Achieve 1 star or higher in 50cc retro cups.
- **Tiny Titan:** Unlock 1 fast ghost replay or beat 50 players in online matches.

Light - Bikes

- **Jet Bubble:** Finish the Leaf Cup mirror mode in first place.
- **Magikruiser:** Run time trials on 8 different courses.
- **Quacker:** Finish the 150cc Star Cup in first place.

Medium - Karts

- **Daytripper:** Finish the 150cc Leaf Cup in first place.
- **Sprinter:** Unlock 24 fast ghost replays in time trial mode.
- **Super Blooper:** Complete the 50cc Leaf Cup in first place.

Medium - Bikes

- **Dolphin Dasher:** Finish the Star Cup mirror mode in first place.
- **Sneakster:** Achieve 1 star or higher in all 100cc cups.
- **Zip Zip:** Complete the 100cc Lightning Cup in first place.

Heavy - Karts

- **Honeycoupe:** Complete the 150cc Lightning Cup in first place.
- **Jetsetter:** Achieve 1 star or higher in 150cc retro cups.

- **Piranha Prowler:** Finish the 50cc Special Cup in first place.

Heavy - Bikes

- **Phantom:** Complete the Special Cup mirror mode in first place.
- **Shooting Star:** Finish the 100cc Star Cup in first place.
- **Spear:** Unlock 12 fast ghost replays in time trial mode.

Fast Ghost Replays

Select time trial mode and race against the ghost. You must beat the ghost's time by a certain number of seconds in order to unlock an even harder ghost-the fast ghost (essentially an expert Nintendo staff replay). Unlocking these fast ghost replays not only provide progress toward unlocking certain characters, karts, and bikes, but also provide an invaluable track replay revealing shortcuts and optimum ways to tackle certain turns and sections.



Beat the ghost in time travel mode by several seconds and you unlock the fast ghost! It's a great way to learn the tracks.

As stated, beating the original ghost time isn't enough to unlock the fast ghost replay. For example, the ghost time on the Luigi Circuit is approximately 1:29. If you beat this ghost with a time of 1:27 or 1:28, the fast ghost replay won't unlock. However, if you beat the ghost with a time of around 1:24, the fast ghost replay should unlock. Basically you must beat the original ghost time by around five to ten seconds to be sure.

Mirror Mode

Unlock the mirror Grand Prix mode by completing all 150cc cups in first place. These are simply mirrored versions of all the tracks. Note that unlocking certain characters, karts, and bikes require completing mirror mode cups.

Karts and Bikes, Bikes and Karts

Originally the 50cc can only be karts and the 100cc can only be bikes, but if you finish all 50cc and 100cc races and score a trophy, you can now race both karts and bikes in these cups.

Stars and Wheels

Your solo skills pay off when you go online...well, at least next to your racer. If you have achieved at least a 1 star rank in all cups, there will be a single star next to your racer online. If you have achieved at least a 2 star rank in all cups, there will be two stars next to your racer online. And finally, achieve the masterful 3 star rank in all cups and there will be three stars next to your racer online.

Your proficiency with, or at least dedication to, the Wii Wheel also reveals itself in online play. If you have played most of your games using the Wii Wheel controller, then a gold Wii Wheel appears next to your online name.