# Matatu Card Game (Casino Version) - Implementation Guide

## 1. Introduction

Matatu is an African card game widely played in Uganda and East Africa. It resembles Crazy Eights, where players aim to shed all their cards first. The name 'Matatu' means 'a mix of everything' and is also a phonetic representation of the sound of shuffling cards. This document provides a detailed implementation guide for developing a Matatu casino-style game in Python.

## 2. Game Overview

The Matatu game uses a standard 52-card deck. Each player starts with seven cards. The goal is to discard all cards before the opponent. Players can only play a card that matches the suit or rank of the top card in the discard pile, with some exceptions and special rules for certain cards.

## 3. Special Cards and Rules

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Card | Effect | Notes |
| 2 | Next player draws two cards (stackable). | If the opponent also plays a 2, penalty increases by 2. |
| 8 | Player gets an extra turn. | Cannot be the final card played. |
| J (Jack) | Player gets an extra turn. | Cannot be the final card played. |
| A (Ace) | Acts as a wild card. Player can choose any suit to continue. | Cannot be played on a 2. |

## 4. The Cut Rule

The first card drawn from the deck defines the 'cut suit.' If a player holds the 7 of that suit and has 25 or fewer total points in their hand, they can declare a 'cut' to end the game. The winner is determined by comparing total card values; the player with fewer points wins.

## 5. Card Point Values

Card points are used to calculate the total value of a player's hand for cutting and scoring:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Card | Value |
| 3–10 | Face value (3–10) |
| Jack | 11 |
| Queen | 12 |
| King | 13 |
| Ace | 15 |
| 2 | 20 |

## 6. Game Mechanics

Each player is dealt seven cards. The first card determines the cut suit and is placed sideways under the deck. The next card becomes the top card on the discard pile. Players take turns playing a matching card by suit or rank. If unable to play, a player must draw one card (or multiple if penalized by a 2). The player can then play if the drawn card is playable. When the draw pile is exhausted, the discard pile (except the top card) is reshuffled.

## 7. Casino Adaptation (Betting System)

To make Matatu a casino-style game, add a staking and balance system. Each round begins with the player placing a bet. If the player wins, their balance increases based on the payout ratio. If they lose, the stake is deducted. The game continues until the player decides to stop or runs out of balance.

## 8. Implementation Steps

1. 1. Initialize the game with a 52-card deck and shuffle it.
2. 2. Deal 7 cards to each player (player and CPU).
3. 3. Set the first card aside as the cut suit card.
4. 4. Place the next card face-up to start the discard pile.
5. 5. Alternate turns between player and CPU, following Matatu rules.
6. 6. Handle special cards and draw penalties.
7. 7. Allow the player to declare a cut when conditions are met.
8. 8. Determine the winner when a player discards all cards or cuts.
9. 9. Update player balance based on bet results.

## 9. CPU (Computer Player) Logic

The CPU follows simple heuristics:  
- Always respond to draw penalties with a 2 if available.  
- Prefer playing special cards (8, J, 2, A) before others.  
- Choose the suit it has the most of when playing an Ace.  
- Declare a cut if eligible and its total hand value ≤ 25.