**Crazy Eights**

*This page is partly based on a contribution from Szu Kay Wong*

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**Introduction and Alternative Names**

Crazy Eights is a game for two or more players, in which the object is to get rid of the cards in your hand onto a discard pile by matching the number or suit of the previous discard.

There is a huge number of variations of this game, and many alternative names. It is sometimes called **Crates**, **Switch**, **Swedish Rummy**, **Last One** or **Rockaway**. In Germany it is **Mau-Mau**; in Switzerland it is **Tschausepp**; in the Netherlands it is **Pesten**. Some British players call it **Black Jack**, which is unfortunate as it can lead to confusion with the well-known American banking card game [Blackjack](http://www.pagat.com/banking/blackjack.html).

**Basic Game**

The basic game of Crazy Eights uses a standard 52 card pack, or two such packs shuffled together if there are a lot of players. The dealer deals (singly) five cards to each player (seven each if there are only two players). The undealt stock is placed face down on the table, and the top card of the stock is turned face up and placed beside the stock to start the discard pile.

Starting with the player to dealer's left, and continuing clockwise, each player in turn must either play a legal card face up on top of the discard pile, or draw a card from the undealt stock. The following plays are legal.

1. If the top card of the discard pile is not an eight, you may play any card which matches the rank or suit of the previous card (for example if the top card was the king of hearts you could play any king or any heart).
2. An eight may be played on any card, and the player of the eight must nominate a suit.
3. If an eight is on top of the pile, you must play either another eight or any card of the suit nominated by the person who played the eight.

The first player who gets rid of all their cards wins, and the other players score penalty points according to the cards they have left in their hands - 50 for an eight, 10 for a picture, and spot cards at face value (one point for an ace, two for a two and so on).

If the stock pile is exhausted, the standard rule according to most books is that play continues without drawing. A player who cannot or does not wish to play just passes. If all pass, the game is blocked. Play stops and everyone scores for the cards remaining in their hands. However, a variation played by many groups is that when the stock pile is exhausted, the played cards, except for the last card, are shuffled and stacked face down to make a new stock.

**Variations**

Crazy Eights is one of the easiest games to elaborate by adding variations, and is rarely played in its basic form. There are variations in the number of cards dealt, the rules about drawing cards and the scoring system. Usually, special meanings are given to particular cards; when played these cards affect the sequence of play, or have other effects.

**Drawing Cards**

In the normal game, you may always use your turn to draw a card. However, some people play that you may only draw if you are unable to play - if you can play you must.

Some allow the drawn card to be played immediately if it is a legal play.

Some allow more than one card to be drawn - either up to a fixed number of cards, after which if you still cannot (or will not) play the turn passes to the next player. Others require you to continue drawing until you can play.

**Last Card**

There may be a rule that you must alert the other players when you have just one card left. If you fail to do so you must draw cards (usually two) from the stock as a penalty.

**Cards requiring special actions**

**Change suit**

Traditionally an eight can be played at any time and the player can nominate any suit. Some play that you can only play an eight that matches (either the same suit or another eight). Some play that you can play an eight at any time but cannot nominate another suit - the next player must match the suit of the eight you played or play another eight. Szu Kay Wong suggests that you can play an eight at any time, but can only nominate a different suit if the eight matches the rank or suit of the previous card. Some players use jacks or aces rather than eights as the cards which have the power to change suit.

**Skip**

Some play that when a queen (or some other designated rank) is played, the next player in rotation misses a turn, and the turn passes to the following player.

**Reverse direction**

Some play that when an ace (or some other designated rank) is played, the direction of play reverses, becoming anticlockwise if it had been clockwise, or vice versa.

**Draw cards**

Some play that when a two is played the next player must either draw two cards or play another two (an eight cannot be played in this case). If several consecutive twos have been played the next player must either play another two or draw two cards for each two in the sequence. The penalty cards cannot be played in the same turn - after the penalty cards have been drawn, the turn passes to the following player, who can continue with any card of the same suit as the last two, or another two or an eight.

**Other variations**

See the following pages on this site:

* [Crates](http://www.pagat.com/eights/crates.html), described by Richard Hussong.
* [Spoons](http://www.pagat.com/eights/spoons.html), described by Bruce McCosar.
* [Last One](http://www.pagat.com/eights/last_one.html), contributed by Mark Alexander.
* [Bartok](http://www.pagat.com/eights/bartog.html), in which the rules are modified during the game.
* [Mao](http://www.pagat.com/eights/mao.html), in which the rules may not be discussed.

More pages with rules of Crazy Eights variants:

* Jose M. Carrillo-Muniz describes [Ocho Locos](http://members.tripod.com/j_carrillo_vii/ocholoco.htm), a version of Crazy Eights played in Puerto Rico.
* Justin Tuijl's description of [Jack Change](http://justintuijl.blogspot.com/p/blog-page_16.html), another variation.
* Jean-François Bustarret's site has rules of [Huit Américain](http://www.jeuxdecartes.net/jeux-cartes/8-americain/) in French.
* The site Cribbage.ca has a description of a French Canadian variation known simply as [Huit](http://www.cribbage.ca/jeux_de_cartes/jeu_huit.htm) (eight).
* [Crazy Eights rules](http://cardgameheaven.com/multiplayer-games/eights.html) are available on the Card Game Heaven site.

Several [Crazy Eights variants](http://www.pagat.com/invented/eights_vars.html) contributed by readers are listed in the Invented Games section of this site.

There have been many [commercial](http://www.pagat.com/com/) versions of eights, designed to be played with specially produced packs of cards. Probably the best known of these is [Uno](http://www.pagat.com/com/index.html#uno), for which there are also many [invented variations](http://www.pagat.com/invented/uno_vars.html).