A HOUSE RULEBOOK · SETTLED

Crazy Eights

The rules, written in our own words.

Crazy Eights belongs to nobody, so these rules are ours to write. They are the standard rules, with common house rules set apart at the end as variations. Written by Nine Fathoms for Settled, 2026. Free to print for your own table.

The cards and the deal

Crazy Eights is played by two to five players with one standard deck of fifty-two cards, without jokers. Six or more players shuffle two decks together and play by the same rules. Each player tries to be the first to play every card from their hand.

The deal

The first dealer is chosen by any fair means, such as cutting the deck for the lowest card. After each hand, the deal passes to the left.

The dealer shuffles and deals the cards face down, one at a time, starting with the player on their left. With two players, each player receives seven cards, and with three or more, each receives five. The rest of the deck is placed face down in the middle of the table as the stock.

The starter

The dealer turns the top card of the stock face up beside it, and this card, the starter, begins the discard pile. If the starter is an eight, the dealer puts it back into the middle of the stock and turns up the next card instead. This is repeated until the starter is not an eight.

Who goes first

The player to the dealer's left plays first, and play passes to the left, clockwise around the table.

Playing a card

On their turn, a player either plays one card from their hand face up onto the discard pile or draws from the stock. A player never plays more than one card in a turn.

Matching the top card

A card may be played if it matches the top card of the discard pile in suit or in rank. On the seven of clubs, a player may play any club or any seven. No card outranks another, so a low card may follow a high one and a high card a low one.

Eights are wild

An eight may be played on any card, whatever the suit or rank of the top card. A player who plays an eight names a suit, and the next player must play a card of that suit or another eight. Any of the four suits may be named, including the eight's own.

An eight may be played on another eight, and the player who plays it names a suit of their own, which replaces the one named before.

Once a suit is named, the eight's own suit no longer counts unless it was the suit named. If the eight of hearts is played and spades are named, the next player may play a spade or an eight, but not a heart.

Drawing from the stock

A player who cannot play must draw from the stock. A player who can play is not obliged to, and may draw instead, keeping that card in hand; but a player who draws must still play a card before the turn ends.

How many cards to draw

The player draws one card at a time from the top of the stock, adding each to their hand, and keeps drawing until they play a card. They may stop and play as soon as they hold a card that fits, whether it is the card just drawn or one they already held. A card that has just been drawn may be played at once, in the same turn. Once a card is played, the turn is over.

When the stock runs out

When a player is drawing and the stock is empty, the top card of the discard pile is set aside, and the rest are shuffled and turned face down as the new stock. The card set aside stays face up and begins a new discard pile. If it is an eight, the suit named for it still stands.

If the stock is empty and the discard pile holds only its top card, there is nothing left to draw. A player who cannot play then passes, and the turn moves to the next player. If every player passes in turn, the hand is blocked and ends. The player holding the fewest points in hand wins it, and scores the difference between their own cards and each other player's.

Going out

The first player to play the last card from their hand goes out and wins the hand. The hand ends at once, and nobody else takes a turn.

A player may go out on any card they are allowed to play, an eight included. When the last card is an eight, the hand is over, so there is no suit to follow and the player need not name one.

Scoring

The winner of the hand scores points for every card still held by the other players. Each eight left in a hand is worth fifty points. Each king, queen and jack is worth ten, each ace is worth one, and every other card is worth the number printed on it. The other players score nothing for the hand.

Winning the game

The players agree before the first deal on the score that wins the game. A common target is one hundred points for two players, with fifty more for each player beyond two. Hands are dealt until one player's total reaches or passes the target, and that player wins the game. Only one player scores in a hand, so only one can reach the target at the end of any hand.

Common variations

Many tables add house rules of their own. None of the rules on this page is part of the standard game; each is a variation, and the table agrees before the first deal which of them, if any, it plays.

Cards with powers

Some tables play that a two makes the next player draw two cards from the stock and miss their turn. Some tables play that a queen makes the next player miss their turn. Some tables play that an ace reverses the direction of play, and others give this power to the jacks instead.

Stacking

Some tables let a player who must draw two play a two of their own instead, so that the next player must draw four. The stack keeps growing in this way, and the first player who cannot or will not add a two draws the whole total and misses their turn.

One card left

Some tables require a player who is down to one card to announce it aloud. If another player points it out before the announcement is made, the player draws two cards as a penalty.

More variations

These too are house rules, not part of the standard game, and are agreed before the first deal.

Playing and drawing

Some tables require a player who can play to do so, and allow drawing only when no card in the hand fits. Some tables let a player draw only one card a turn: if it fits, it may be played at once, and if it does not, the turn ends. Some tables do not reshuffle the discard pile when the stock runs out, and a player who cannot play simply passes.

Eights

Some tables do not allow a player to go out on an eight. Some tables leave an eight turned up as the starter where it is, and the first player may then play any card on it; others treat it as played by the dealer, who names a suit.

Penalty scoring

Some tables score the other way round. When a hand ends, each player counts the cards left in their own hand, at the same values, as points against them. When any player's total reaches one hundred, the game ends, and the player with the lowest total wins.