

# Balatro: En Carde - A Competitive Poker Deck Builder for 2-4 Players

Balatro: En Carde is a player-versus-player card game based on the game Balatro, with liberties taken in order to convert it from a digital to real space. En Carde shares some similarities with the original, in terms of deck building and playing around certain hands, however, it's altered to fit a competitive form, as well as take less time per round & game.

## Components

- Two standard 52-card decks per player; no jokers.
- 25 Unique Joker cards (included)
- 22 Tarot cards (included)
- A supply of various colored paper clips or colored indicators; (sticky notes, marked tabs, etc.)
- A number of poker chips equal to two times the number of players, plus one.

# Terminology

Ante - A round of play.

Active Deck - The deck from which one draws cards during an Ante.

Reserve Deck - A passive deck from which players may augment their Active Deck.

Hand - The cards a player is holding, but not discarded or played.

Played Hand - Up to five cards that a player has “Locked In” and subsequently revealed.

Scoring Cards - The cards in a player’s played hand that constitute the highest ranked poker hand possible out of the cards played.

Hand Limit - By default, 8. How many cards a player can hold in their hand at once.

Discard/Discard Round - During an Ante, a player may place cards face-up in front of them, replacing those discards with cards from their Active Deck, up to their Hand Limit. By default, players may place up to five at a time.

Jokers - Special cards that players use to passively augment their scores and playing possibilities. Jokers remain in a player’s possession until they are swapped out for another Joker.

Joker Slots - How many Jokers a player may hold at once. By default, five.

Tarot Cards - Special cards that players use to augment their cards and playing possibilities.

Tarot cards are single-use, and may only be used at certain times.

Tarot Slots - How many Tarot cards a player may hold at once. By default, two.

Base Points - The base points that a hand scores. Altered by the type of poker hand, as well as cards, Jokers, and Tokens.

Mult - The number by which the base points are multiplied to calculate a player’s final score at the end of the Ante. Altered by Jokers and Tokens.

Chips/Poker Chips - Markers that signify how many rounds a player has won.

Tokens - Markers that signify an active effect being used to alter a card’s properties.

# Rules

The goal of the game is to be the first to win three “Antes”, or rounds, by earning the highest score among all other players during that Ante. The allowed poker hands consist of all the standard poker hands, however, three additional hands that aren’t normally seen in poker can be possibly played. A full list of allowed hands, their rankings, and Base Points and Mult can be found in Appendix A.

## Before the Game

Before the game begins, all players separate their two decks and ensure they contain the full and correct 52 cards. These two decks are called the Active and Reserve decks. Each player shuffles the Active deck and places it face down in front of them. Keep the Reserve deck off to the side; it comes into play between rounds. It may be useful to keep the Reserve deck sorted for ease of access.

## Ante Play

During an Ante, each player shuffles their full Active deck, draws eight cards(or however many cards their hand limit is) from the top of their Active deck, face down, and keeps them hidden from other players. After each player has their cards, repeat the Discarding process four times. When everyone has finished discarding, or is satisfied with their hand, everyone will Lock In, and then Play their Hand.

### Discarding

Each player MAY choose to discard up to five cards, then draw replacement cards up to their hand limit. Each player’s hand limit starts at eight, and may be modified by other means. When cards are discarded, they are placed face up in front of the player who discarded them, visible to the other players. Each player should distinguish their discard piles by round, so other players are able to see which cards were discarded on each round of discarding.

Players may play Tarot cards they control during this phase as long as the Tarot card does not require a Played Hand; they must announce the name, effect, and anything else associated with the card to the other players if doing so.

### Lock In

After all discarding is finished, all players lay up to five cards they intend to play face down; these cards are “locked in.” Players may rearrange their Jokers, as well as play or lay down Tarot Cards & Tokens they intend to use during this phase. **After the Lock In phase ends, Jokers may not be rearranged, and additional Tarot cards may not be played. Tarot Cards & Tokens that are pre-played MUST be played and cannot be taken back.**

### Playing your Hand

Beginning with the player who told the last funny joke, each player flips their cards face up in front of themselves, separately from their discards, Jokers, and Tarots. Players score their hand in the following way, keeping track of their score for that round. A calculator may be necessary or helpful.

- 1) Determine which “hand type” is being played from the list of poker hands, and gain Base Points and Mult equal to that hand’s Base Points and Mult. The hand is **ALWAYS** the highest possible ranked hand, and only one hand type may be played at once. The cards that constitute that hand are *Scoring Cards*. **Jokers that affect a hand type come into effect now.**
- 2) Resolve all Tarot Cards & Tokens that were pre-played by the current player. Cards may only have **ONE** token at a time placed on them.
- 3) Add base points to a player’s score equal to the ranks of the hand’s Scoring Cards. All numbered Scoring Cards gain base points equal to their rank, J/Q/K cards gain ten, Aces gain eleven. Cards that are not part of the highest hand can still be played, but do not score or trigger Joker effects unless specifically stated by the Joker. **Scoring occurs from left to right, triggering any Jokers with the “when scored” keywords. Resolve any token effects during this time, in left-to-right order, after and Jokers trigger.**

- 4) From left to right, resolve the effects of each remaining Joker the current player owns.
- 5) Calculate the player's final score by Multiplying their Base Points by their Mult. This is their score for the round.

Repeat this process for each player; whoever has the highest final score wins that Ante. The winner gets one poker chip. Discard any Tokens that were used during this Ante. All players' scores are now reset for the next Ante.

## Between Antes

At the end of the Ante, each players' Hand, Played Hand, and Discarded cards are re-shuffled into their Active Decks. Players now have the opportunity to gain Jokers, get new Tarot cards, and modify their Active Decks. Play the following phases in order.

### Draw Tarots

Deal a number of Tarot cards equal to (the number of players plus one) into the center of the table. Beginning with the player who **scored the highest during the last Ante** (and continuing clockwise), each player may do one of four things:

- 1) Add one of the Tarot cards to their Tarot Slots, provided they have open space. Each player begins with two Tarot Slots, but this may be modified.
- 2) Play the tarot card and resolve its effects immediately. This can **ONLY** be done if the Tarot card does not require a current Hand or Played Hand. Place the card into the Tarot discard pile.
- 3) Replace one of their current Tarot cards with one of the dealt cards. The Tarot they replace **DOES** get added to the dealt Tarot cards.
- 4) Forgo choosing, playing, or swapping a Tarot.

After each player has taken their action, re-shuffle all Tarot cards that are not being held by players into the Tarot deck.

Whenever a player uses a Tarot card, place it into a Tarot Discard pile. **Only re-shuffle the Tarot pile after the Draw Tarot phase between Antes.**

### Draw Jokers

Deal a number of jokers equal to (the number of players plus one) into the center of the table. Beginning with the player who **scored the lowest during the last Ante** (and continuing counter-clockwise), each player may do one of three things:

- 1) Add one of the Jokers to their Joker Slots, provided they have open space.
- 2) Replace one of their current Jokers with one of the dealt Jokers. The Joker they replace does **NOT** get added to the dealt Jokers; place it in a Joker discard pile.

- 3) Forgo choosing or swapping a Joker.

After each player has taken their action, place any remaining Jokers into a Joker discard pile. The Joker Discard pile does not get shuffled back into the Joker deck. When the Joker deck runs out of cards, do not re-shuffle the discard pile. Players no longer have the opportunity to gain or change out their Jokers.

### Modify Decks

Lastly, each player may do one of four things:

- 1) Exchange exactly **two random** cards from their Active Deck with **one** card of their choice from their Reserve Deck.
- 2) Remove **one** card of their choice from their Active deck and add it to their Reserve Deck
- 3) Take **four random** cards from their Reserve Deck; from those cards, choose **one** and add it to their Active Deck.
- 4) Forgo Exchanging, Removing, or Adding any cards.

Players must share which cards are removed, added, or exchanged.

### Continuing the Game

Continue repeating the Ante -> Between Ante cycle until one player has three Poker chips; they are the winner!

## Appendix A: Hands (sorted from Lowest to Highest rank)

High Card: The Highest card in your hand, when no other hand is possible.

5 Base Points x 1 Mult

Pair: Two cards with a matching rank. Suits may differ.

10 Base Points x 2 Mult

Two Pair: Two cards with a matching rank, and two cards with any other matching rank. Suits may differ.

20 Base Points x 2 Mult

Three of a Kind: Three cards with a matching rank. Suits may differ.

30 Base Points x 3 Mult

Straight: Five cards in consecutive order which are not all from the same suit. Aces can be counted high or low, but not both at once.

30 Base Points x 4 Mult

Flush: Five cards of any rank, all from a single suit.

35 Base Points x 4 Mult

Full House: Three cards with a matching rank, and two cards with any other matching rank, with cards from two or more suits.

40 Base Points x 4 Mult

Four of a Kind: Four cards with a matching rank. Suits may differ.

60 Base Points x 7 Mult

Straight Flush: Five cards in consecutive order, all from a single suit.

100 Base Points x 8 Mult

Royal Flush: An ace-high Straight Flush formed by playing A K Q J 10 of the same suit.

100 Base Points x 8 Mult

Five of a Kind: Five cards with the same rank which are not all the same suit.

120 Base Points x 12 Mult

Flush House: Three cards with the same rank, and two cards with the same rank, all from a single suit.

140 Base Points x 14 Mult

Flush Five: Five cards with the same rank and same suit.

160 Base Points x 16 Mult

## Appendix B: Tarot Cards

- **The Fool:** When this card is played, duplicate the effects of any other Tarot card currently in your or any other players' possession.
- **The Magician:** Add any **one card of your choice** from your Reserve deck into your Active Deck.
- **The High Priestess:** Draw **five random** cards from your Reserve Deck. From those, add **two of your choice** into your Active Deck.
- **The Empress:** Gain two "**mult tokens**" and place at least one onto a card in your Played Hand. That card gains +4 mult. Keep only the tokens that were NOT played after the Ante is over; they may be used once during a later Ante.
- **The Emperor:** Draw **up to two (must have room) Tarot cards** from the top of the Tarot Deck.
- **The Hierophant:** Gain two "**bonus tokens**" and place at least one onto a card in your Played Hand. That card gains +30 base points. Keep only the tokens that were NOT played after the Ante is over; they may be used once during a later Ante.
- **The Lovers:** Gain one "**wild token**" and place it onto a card in your Played Hand. That card may count as any suit. Do not keep the token after the hand is played.
- **The Chariot:** Gain one "**steel token**" and place it onto a card in your played hand. That card multiplies your mult by 1.5.
- **Justice:** Gain one "**glass token**" and place it onto a card in your played hand. That card multiplies your mult by 2. After the hand, flip a coin. If tails, place that card into your Reserve deck. Do not keep the token after the hand is played.
- **The Hermit:** Play this card when selecting Jokers or Tarot cards, before anyone has made their selection. You now select from that round of cards first.
- **The Wheel of Fortune:** Draw four Jokers from the top of the Joker deck. You **must choose exactly one** to add to your Joker Slots or replace a currently held Joker. If you replace a Joker, the replaced Joker is discarded. Shuffle the remaining Jokers back into the Joker Deck. This card may be played during or between Antes, but not during the Draw Jokers phase.
- **Strength:** Gain two "**strength tokens**" and place at least one onto a card in your Played Hand. That card counts as one rank higher. Keep only the tokens that were NOT played after the Ante is over; they may be used once during a later Ante.



- **The Hanged Man:** Place **up to three cards of your choice** from your hand into your Reserve Deck. This card may be played during the Discard phase; the removed cards do not count towards your discard limit.
- **Death:** Search your Reserve deck for the **identical card of one card in your hand** and add it to your hand. The identical card must be in the Reserve Deck in order for this card to work; if it does not exist, this card is not consumed.
- **Temperance:** Add cards of your choice from your Reserve Deck into your Active Deck equal to the amount of Jokers you currently control.
- **The Devil:** Play this card during the Draw Jokers Phase or Draw Tarots Phase between Antes **BEFORE** any player has chosen a Joker or Tarot card.
  - If this card is played during the Draw Jokers Phase, reshuffle all dealt jokers AND one discarded Joker of your choice back into the Joker deck. Deal Jokers again.
  - If this card is played during the Draw Tarots Phase, reshuffle all dealt Tarots, discarded Tarots, and this card back into the Tarot deck. Deal Tarots again.
- **The Tower:** Gain two “**stone tokens**” and place at least one onto a card in your played hand. That card is rankless, suitless, and counts for thirty base points. Stone cards always count as Scored Cards. Keep only the tokens that were NOT played after the Ante is over; they may be used once during a later Ante.
- **The Star:** Gain three “**diamond tokens**” and place at least one onto a card in your played hand. That card counts as a diamond. Keep only the tokens that were NOT played after the Ante is over; they may be used once during a later Ante.
- **The Moon:** Gain three “**club tokens**” and place at least one onto a card in your played hand. That card counts as a club. Keep only the tokens that were NOT played after the Ante is over; they may be used once during a later Ante.
- **The Sun:** Gain three “**heart tokens**” and place at least one onto a card in your played hand. That card counts as a heart. Keep only the tokens that were NOT played after the Ante is over; they may be used once during a later Ante.
- **Judgment:** Draw a card from the top of the Joker deck. You may add, replace, or pass this Joker. Discard it afterwards. This card may be played during or between Antes, but not during the Draw Jokers phase.
- **The World:** Gain three “**spade tokens**” and place at least one onto a card in your played hand. That card counts as a spade. Keep only the tokens that were NOT played after the Ante is over; they may be used once during a later Ante.

## Appendix J: Joker Cards

1. Joker Joker: Gain +5 mult per joker in your possession (including this one).
2. Business Suit: Choose one suit when this joker is chosen. Each Scoring Card of that suit in your hand gains +3 mult.
3. Half Joker: Gain +20 mult when your Played Hand is three or less cards.
4. Stencil Joker: Multiply your mult by (+1 for each empty Joker Slot). This card does not take up a Joker slot.
5. Four Fingers: Flushes and Straights can be made with only four cards.
6. Re-cyclotron: Gain +1 mult for each card you discarded this Ante. You may discard six cards per Discard round.
7. Grinning Coin: Flip a coin. If heads, Multiply your Mult by 2. If tails, keep flipping the coin until it lands on heads. Add mult equal to the number of consecutive tails you flipped..
8. Scary Face: Played face cards give +30 base points when scored.
9. Splash: All cards played count in scoring. Your high card hand types gain mult equal to your highest played card.
10. Mystic Summit: Gain +15 mult if you discarded at least twelve cards this ante.
11. Juggler: Gain +2 hand size.
12. Even Steven: Even cards (2, 4, 6, 8, 10) gain +4 mult when scored.
13. Odd Todd: Odd cards: (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) gain +4 mult when scored.
14. Card Shark: Multiply your mult by 2 if you've already played this hand type this game.
15. Cartomancer: After each player has chosen a Tarot card, you may take, play, or pass the last remaining one as well.
16. Oracle: You may hold one additional Tarot card. Gain +5 mult for each Tarot card you are currently holding.
17. Jokeamancer: After each player has chosen a Joker card, you may take, replace, or pass the last remaining one as well.
18. Bootstraps: Gain +8 mult for each Poker Chip you currently hold.
19. One-Upper: Your Pairs count as Three of a Kind, Three of a Kind counts as Four of a Kind, and Four of a Kind counts as Five of a Kind. Does not work with Full House, Flush House, or Flush Five.
20. Square Joker: If your Played Hand consists of exactly four cards, gain +44 base points and +4 mult per Scored Card.
21. Tiebreaker: If your Played Hand is the same Hand Type as another player, you win over them regardless of your score.
22. Negative Joker: This joker does not take up a Joker Slot. You may hold one additional Joker.
23. Card Printer: At the beginning of each Ante, take exactly one card of your choice from your Reserve deck and add it to your hand. This may increase your hand over your Hand Limit, but does not increase your Hand Limit.
24. Baron: Each King in your unplayed hand Multiplies your Mult by 1.5.
25. Ride the Bus: If your Played Hand contains no Scored Cards that are Face cards (J/Q/K), gain the following bonuses: +10 mult. Base points equal to the sum of the ranks of all your Scored Cards.

## Appendix C: Base Point Quick Reference (Printable)

High Card: 5 x 1 Pair: 10 x 2 Two Pair: 20 x 2 Three of a Kind: 30 x 3 Straight: 30 x 4 Flush: 35 x 4 Full House: 40 x 4 Four of a Kind: 60 x 7 Straight Flush: 100 x 8 Royal Flush: 100 x 8 Five of a Kind: 120 x 12 Flush House: 140 x 14 Flush Five: 160 x 16	High Card: 5 x 1 Pair: 10 x 2 Two Pair: 20 x 2 Three of a Kind: 30 x 3 Straight: 30 x 4 Flush: 35 x 4 Full House: 40 x 4 Four of a Kind: 60 x 7 Straight Flush: 100 x 8 Royal Flush: 100 x 8 Five of a Kind: 120 x 12 Flush House: 140 x 14 Flush Five: 160 x 16
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## Appendix D: Joker Printables

<p><b>Joker Joker:</b></p> <p>Gain +5 mult per joker in your possession (including this one).</p>	<p><b>Business Suit:</b></p> <p>Choose one suit when this joker is chosen. Each card played with that suit gains +3 mult for that hand.</p>	<p><b>Half Joker:</b></p> <p>Gain +20 mult when your Played Hand is three or less cards.</p>
<p><b>Stencil Joker:</b></p> <p>Multiply your mult by (+1 for each empty Joker Slot). This card does not take up a Joker slot.</p>	<p><b>Re-cyclotron:</b></p> <p>Gain +1 mult for each card you discarded this Ante. You may discard six cards per Discard round.</p>	<p><b>Grinning Coin:</b> Flip a coin.</p> <p>If heads, Multiply your Mult by 2. Do not continue flipping.</p> <p>If tails, keep flipping the coin until it lands on heads. Gain Mult equal to the number of consecutive tails you flipped.</p>
<p><b>Scary Face:</b></p> <p>Played face cards give +30 base points when scored.</p>	<p><b>Splash:</b></p> <p>All cards in your Played Hand are considered Scored Cards. Your High Card hand types gain mult equal to the rank of your highest Scored Card.</p>	<p><b>Mystic Summit:</b></p> <p>Gain +15 mult if you discarded at least thirteen cards this Ante.</p>

<p>Juggler:</p> <p>Gain +2 hand size.</p>	<p>Even Steven:</p> <p>Even cards (2, 4, 6, 8, 10) gain +4 mult when Scored.</p>	<p>Odd Todd:</p> <p>Odd cards (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) gain +4 mult when Scored.</p>
<p>Card Shark:</p> <p>Multiply your mult by 2 if you've already played this hand type this game.</p>	<p>Cartomancer:</p> <p>After each player has chosen a Tarot card, you may take, play, or pass the last remaining one as well.</p>	<p>Oracle:</p> <p>You may hold one additional Tarot card. Gain +5 mult for each Tarot card you are currently holding.</p>
<p>Jokeamancer:</p> <p>After each player has chosen a Joker card, you may take, replace, or pass the last remaining one as well.</p>	<p>Bootstraps:</p> <p>Gain +8 mult for each Poker Chip you currently hold.</p>	<p>One-Upper:</p> <p>Your Pairs count as Three of a Kind, Three of a Kind counts as Four of a Kind, and Four of a Kind counts as Five of a Kind.</p> <p>Does not work with Full House, Flush House, or Five Flush.</p>

<p><b>Square Joker:</b></p> <p>If your played hand consists of exactly four cards, gain +44 base points and +4 mult per card scored.</p>	<p><b>Tiebreaker:</b></p> <p>If your Played Hand is the same Hand Type as another player, you win over them regardless of your score.</p>	<p><b>Negative Joker:</b></p> <p>This Joker does not take up a Joker Slot. You may hold one additional Joker.</p>
<p><b>Card Printer:</b></p> <p>At the beginning of each Ante, take exactly one card of your choice from your Reserve deck and add it to your hand. This may increase your hand over your Hand Limit, but does not increase your Hand Limit.</p>	<p><b>Baron:</b></p> <p>Each King in your unplayed hand Multiplies your Mult by 1.5.</p>	<p><b>Ride the Bus:</b></p> <p>If your Played Hand contains no Scored Cards that are Face cards (J/Q/K), gain the following bonuses:</p> <p>+10 mult.</p> <p>Base points equal to the sum of the ranks of all your Scored Cards.</p>
<p><b>Four Fingers:</b></p> <p>Flushes and Straights can be made with only four cards.</p>		