

Cardomancer

A card-based RPG

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About the game

Cardomancer is a roleplaying game using cards from a standard playing deck. It is recommended for 1 to 4 players.

What you need

To play the game you need one standard deck of playing cards per two players. For 1-2 players 1 deck is required, 3-4 players will use 2 decks.

Setup

Remove the 2-5 cards from each deck. Each player should choose one of the 5 cards to represent their class. After selecting a class each player should take a second 5 card to track their health during the game.

Shuffle remainder of the deck(s) together and deal three (3) cards to each player.

Randomly choose one player to be the Cardomancer and give the initiative card to the person sitting to the left of the Cardomancer (for solo games you don't need the initiative card.)

Creating a character

The first thing you will need to do to play Cardomancer is to create a character.

Choose a class

Each character has a class which represents their profession. Each profession has strengths and weaknesses. Randomly pick your class by shuffling all of the 5s and letting each player randomly choose one of the cards, or choose any class from the class chart below.

Only one of any class per deck of cards in the dungeon is allowed. For example, if you have two decks you could have two guardians, but if you have only one deck then only one guardian may be in play.

Diamonds	Guardian
Hearts	Healer
Clubs	Wizard
Spades	Rogue

Diamonds – Guardian

The guardian is excellent at defense, therefore he always takes one less damage when he is hit, however, the guardian also deals one less damage.

The guardian is the only class that can play diamond cards to attack; when he attacks with a diamond he deals half the value of the card in damage. Additionally, the guardian can play a diamond to defend another character when they are attacked. When he does this he counts the full value of the card.

Special Ability

Once per dungeon the Guardian may make two attacks during his turn by playing two cards from his hand.

Hearts – Healer

The healer is a master of healing and can count the full value of any heart card that he plays when healing himself or another player. During his turn, the healer can spend his action to play a heart card to heal another character.

Only the healer is capable of attacking with heart cards, but when he does so he only counts half the value of the card when calculating damage.

Special Ability

Once per dungeon on his turn, the healer can call down the wraith of god on any one monster by discarding his entire hand. This instantly destroys the target.

Clubs – Wizard

The wizard knows the art of crafting energy into powerful magical attacks. When attacking, the wizard deals one additional damage, but the wizard is also weaker in physical combat and takes one additional damage whenever he is damaged.

When a wizard attacks with cards of the suit of clubs, he uses the full value of the card.

Special Ability

Once per dungeon the wizard may invoke the ability of another class by playing a card from his hand as if he were the class that matches the suit of the card. For example, if the wizard plays a diamond card and invokes his special ability he can defend another player at the full value of the diamond card played, or he can attack with the full value of the diamond card as if he were a guardian.

Spades – Rogue

The rogue is a master of stealth and combat. A rogue uses the full value of any spade when attacking. Whenever the rogue takes damage he deals half the damage he takes back to the attacker. Calculate the damage total, including any reduction from diamond cards, and then deal half of that damage back to the attacker (minimum of 1.) This damage cannot be reduced in any way.

Special Ability

Once per dungeon a rogue may sneak attack an enemy. Double the damage of any one card played to attack an enemy.

Starting Health

For each deck of cards remove the 5s and give 2 of them to each player; each player should have the 5 of the suit that matches his class. These represent your characters health; all players start with 10 health.

Whenever your character takes damage arrange the cards to show your remaining health by covering the suit markers. For example, if you are a healer and have the 5 of hearts and 5 of diamonds as your health cards, cover two of the hearts with the diamond card.

How to play

The general sequence of play is as follows:

1. Setup
 - a. Each player chooses a class.
 - b. Remove all the 2-5s from each deck, give 2 fives to each player for a total of 10 health. Set the 2-4 cards aside.
 - c. Shuffle remainder of all the decks together to form the dungeon.
 - d. Choose a player to be the Cardomancer (a.k.a. the dealer) and deal three cards to each player
 - e. At the beginning of each dungeon, a player may trade his hand with another player. Only one trade per player is allowed.
2. Monster Phase
 - a. The Cardomancer draws 1 monster per player -1 from the dungeon and places them on the table.
 - b. The Cardomancer draws one action card per monster and attacks each player in turn starting with the player who has the initiative card, progressing clockwise around the table.
3. Player Phase
 - a. The player with the initiative card takes one action by playing any one card and discarding it.
 - b. After resolving the action, the active player draws until he has three cards in his hand
 - c. Play progresses clock-wise until all players have taken one action
 - d. Move the initiative card one player to the left.
4. Rest
 - a. After the current round of monsters are defeated each player gets to rest and restock.
 - b. All players heal 2 health
 - c. Starting with the player who has initiative each player.
 1. Will draw up to their three (3) card limit.
 2. May play any number of heart cards in their hand
 3. May discard one non-heart card
 4. Will draw back up to their three (3) card limit.
5. Repeat phases b through d until the dungeon is complete.

Steps 2 to 5 are repeated until the the players complete the current dungeon or until the players all die.

Cardomancer

Choose a dealer at random from the table. The dealer is the Cardomancer. The Cardomancer is responsible for shuffling, dealing cards, playing monsters from the dungeon and declaring and directing the action during play.

At the end of a dungeon the position of the Cardomancer advances clockwise to the next player.

The Dungeon

The Cardomancer begins the game by shuffling the deck and placing it in front of himself: This is called the dungeon. Deal three cards from the dungeon to each player.

Every time the dungeon is reduced to zero cards the players have successfully completed the dungeon. If there are still monsters on the table when the deck runs out of cards, reshuffle and play until all monsters have been defeated, at which point the dungeon is complete. If you have to reshuffle because of combat you only need to defeat the monsters at the table (not the entire deck again).

Whenever a new dungeon is dealt, as long as at least one player survived the previous dungeon, any dead players are resurrected to life and all players are restored to full health

Actions

Each character and monster gets one action on his turn. Playing any one card counts as your action. The suit and value of the card determine the outcome of the action you take. Unless otherwise noted (See **Class Suit** below) all cards are worth half their value (rounded down). For example, playing the 10 of clubs would have a value of 5. Playing the seven of hearts would have a value of 3 (7 divided by 2 is 3.5, round down to 3.)

Clubs and Spades are used for attacking. When you play a club or a spade your target takes damage equal to half the value of the card you play.

Diamonds are used to attack or defend; they are the only card that

can be played during someone else's turn. Whenever you are the target of an attack you may play one diamond card to reduce the damage from the attack by half the value of the diamond you play. You do not get to draw a card to replace this card until the end of your next turn. The guardian is the only class that can play a diamond to defend another character. If you are playing a guardian you can play one diamond to defend the player who is about to take damage. The player being attacked can also play one diamond card as well.

Hearts can be used to heal your character. Whenever you play a heart your character is healed up to half of the value of the card (not to exceed your characters maximum health) The healer is the only class that can use a heart to heal another character. If you are a healer, during your turn you may spend your action to play a heart on another player for the full value of the card.

When a monster plays a heart it will heal itself if it is damaged. If the monster is a healer then it will heal the most damage monster on the table. Monsters can also use a heart to attack. A healer monster would attack at the full value of any heart that it plays.

Discard

If a player finds that he has no useful cards in his hand, he may use his action to discard one card and draw another.

Pass

A player can always forgo taking an action and let his turn pass to the next player.

Call for Help (Monster only)

If a monster ever draws a card that matches its number (or face), the monster instead calls for help. Discard the drawn card and draw a new card and place it with the other monsters. A call for help can only happen once per combat (a Queen's bodyguard is not a call for help, so a Queen can still call for help.)

Class Suit

Whenever you (or a monster) plays a card that matches the suit of your class, your action is considered a critical success. Use the full value of the card (instead of half value) for whatever action you are taking. For example, if a rogue uses the 10 of spades then he deals 10 damage, if a

healer plays the 10 of spades he deals 5 damage.

Combat

Play is composed of multiple combats between the players and the monsters they discover in the dungeon. A combat consists of multiple monster and player phases.

Each combat consists of multiple rounds. After all monsters and all players have taken one action then a new round begins.

After all the monsters have been destroyed then the combat ends and the players get to rest.

Initiative

The player to the left of the Cardomancer begins the game with initiative. Give him one of the Joker cards from the deck. The player with initiative is always the first player to get attacked during the monster phase, and the first player who gets to take an action during the player phase. At the end of each round of combat the initiative advances one player clockwise from the current initiative holder.

Combat setup

The Cardomancer begins by dealing cards from the top of deck (based on the number of players in the game) and places them in the middle of the table. These cards represent the monsters that the players must defeat. This is called a combat.

If you are playing solo, deal one monster from the dungeon. If there are multiple players then the Cardomancer will deal one monster for each player - 1. For example, if three players are playing the Cardomancer will deal 2 monsters ($3 \text{ players} - 1 = 2$).

The monsters each have a class (See **Choose a class** above) based on the suit of the card just like the class powers of a character. The health of each monster is determined by the value of the card. Each face card has a value of 10 and any ace has a value of 15.

Monster phase

Starting with the player who has initiative the monsters will take turns attacking the characters in order, clockwise around the table.

To attack, the Cardomancer will draw one card from the deck and place it face-up below the attacking monster. This is the action that the

monster takes. Monsters take actions as described above under the Actions section.

Whenever a character takes damage, he uses his health cards to denote how much health he has left by covering the suit markers on his health cards until only his current health is showing. If a character ever reaches 0 hit points he has been defeated. He must wait until the end of the current dungeon to re-enter play.

Monsters also have the advantage of class suit (just like characters), using the full value of a monster's action card if the card matches the suit of the monster.

Once all of the monsters have taken an action the monster phase is over and the players begin their turns.

Player phase

Starting with the player who has initiative, each player takes a turn by playing any one card. Use these cards (and cards from the discard pile) to track damage dealt to a monster by covering the suit markers to denote remaining health. For example, if the players are fighting the 10 of hearts and they deal 5 damage, use the action card to cover 5 of the hearts on the 10 of hearts card.

Whenever a monster is reduced to 0 health it is defeated, discard the card from the combat.

At the end of his turn the active player draws from the Dungeon until he has three cards, then play advances to the player on his left.

After all the players have taken an action the initiative advances to the player left of the current initiative holder.

Play continues with another monster phase, followed by a player phase, and this continues until all the monsters have been defeated or until all the players have been defeated.

Resting

After all monsters have been defeated the combat ends and the players have a chance to rest.

Resting automatically heals 2 health on all characters. Players also may play any heart cards that are in their hands (only healers can play them on other players). The the player may also discard any one card from their remaining hand. After playing all hearts and discarding any one card the player then draws until they have three cards in their hand.

Once everyone has rested another combat begins. This process

repeats until the dungeon has no cards remaining.

Special Monsters

Face cards and the Ace are special monsters that have additional abilities.

Jack

The Jack gets two attacks per round. Both attacks targets the same player.

Queen

The Queen is always escorted by a body guard. Draw an additional monster whenever a Queen is drawn.

King

The King is a powerful monster who damages all characters whenever he attacks. Whenever a King deals damage all characters suffer the damage dealt.

Ace

The Ace is a vicious opponent who is both hardy and strong. The Ace has a value of 15, thus it has 15 health, and it always uses the full value of any card it plays instead of half the value.

Damage

When a character takes damage mark the damage by using suit markers on the 5s to record your health. If you reach zero hit points you are dead and removed from the game.

When a monster take damage mark the damage by using cards from the discard pile or the attack cards that were played on the monster to keep track of the damage. When a monster is reduced to zero hit points it is discarded (along with any cards that it played, or that were played on it.)

Artifacts

Whenever a player draws an ace during play (not during setup and not when the Cardomancer is dealing monsters or monster actions) then they have discovered an artifact. Place the artifact on the table where all players can see it. While an artifact is in play it has the following benefits.

Ace of Hearts

All characters heal one additional health when resting and when heart cards are played on them.

Ace of Clubs

All players deal one additional damage.

Ace of Spades

Whenever a character is damage by a monster that monster takes one damage (this stacks with the rogue's damage shield ability)

Ace of Diamonds

Whenever a character is damage the damage is reduced by 1 (this does not reduce damage from a rogue's special ability.)

Only one artifact can be found per dungeon, if an additional Ace is found by a player then they have found a magic item (See Magic Items below).)

Magic Items

Only one artifact can be discovered per dungeon. If an artifact has already been claimed in the current dungeon and another Ace is uncovered by a player while drawing up to his three card maximum, the player has uncovered a magical item!

Player use

A player may use a magical item at any time, even if it's not their turn. When a player uses a magical item the following results can occur:

Ace of Hearts

The Ace of Hearts allows a full heal of any one character. If the character is dead at the time the ace of hearts is played, that character is resurrected and healed to full health. Any player may play the Ace of hearts on any character, even if they are not of the healer class.

Ace of Clubs

The Ace of Clubs can be played to instantly defeat any one monsters that is in play. If the monster is a rogue class, the player who

plays the Ace suffers no damage in retaliation for killing the monster.

Ace of Spades

The Ace of Spades can be played when a monster attacks any character in the party. This prevents the attack from hitting its intended target and instead deals the damage the monster would have dealt back itself.

Ace of Diamonds

The Ace of Diamonds will prevents all damage against one character for one turn when it is played (this includes stopping all damage from both attacks of a Jack.) Any player may place the Ace of diamonds on any character even if he is not of the guardian class.

Monster use

If a Monster draws an ace as its action card, the monster like-wise gets use of the ace as a magical action, however, monsters treat the outcome slightly different than a player would. If a monster draws an ace as its action use the following results:

Ace of Spades, Clubs or Diamonds deals the monster's value in damage.

Ace of Hearts will heal all monsters back to full health.

If an Ace monster draws an ace card as its action it calls for help instead of using the ace as a magical action (See **call for help** above) instead of using the ace as an action card; unless a call for help has already been used during the combat.

Level up

Whenever the players successfully make their way through a dungeon their character will level up. When a character levels up they gain more health.

Level 2

Give each player a 2 card to add to his health.

Level 3

Replace the 2 card with a 3 card.

Level 4

Replace the 3 card with a 4 card.

Level 5

Replace the 4 card with the 2 and the 3 card.

Level 6

Replace the 2 and 3 card with the 2 and 4 card.

As you continue to level use the 2-4 cards to continue to increase your characters health by one.

The maximum level a character can ever achieve is 9th level, which uses all three of the 2, 3 and 4 cards giving your character a maximum health of 19.

Death

If a player dies during a dungeon but the party successfully completes the dungeon, the player is resurrected and restored to full health.

Losing

At any point, if all of the characters die the game is over.

Winning

The goal of Cardomancer is to find the four artifact pieces that have been hidden in the depths of Darkmist Castle. When all four pieces

are discovered and the players complete the dungeon they are in, the players win.

Epic Mode

If you're up for a more challenging game of Cardomancer we recommend trying to play in epic mode. Draw one monster per player in the dungeon, characters don't heal the additional two health when resting, and monster's are no longer limited to a single call for help per combat.