



# ARCHDUKE



2-6 PLAYERS



15-25 MINUTES



AGES 12+



Use the QR code or link below to learn how to play by video, access mobile-friendly rules, and more.

[playarchduke.com/learn](https://playarchduke.com/learn)

## COMPONENTS



104 CARDS



24 TOKENS



1 RULE BOOK

## OVERVIEW

Travel sunrise to sunset in a race through distant sand dunes and uncharted seas. To be the fastest explorer you'll need to travel light. Use quick thinking, memory, and sabotage to trade your heaviest treasures and arrive first to the land of Archduke.

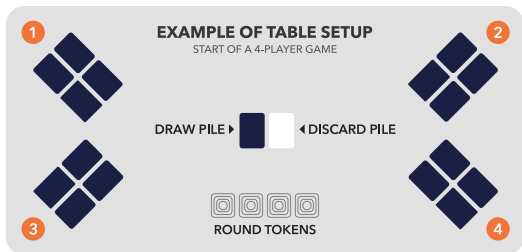
## GAME SETUP

To begin, remove all tokens and cards from the box.


### CARDS

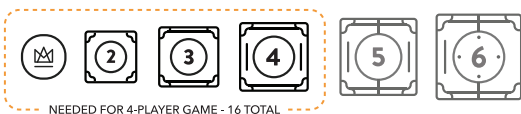
Shuffle, then deal 4 cards to each player face down\*. Players are not allowed to look at their cards yet. Each player arranges their cards in a 2x2 grid in front of them. The remaining cards are placed face-down in the center of the table to form the draw pile.

\* Throughout the game, it is important that as cards come and go, they always remain face down, and stay in their same positions.



## TOKENS

Tokens represent your ranked weight each round, and they range from 1 to 6. The '1' tokens are represented by a crown () and are the smallest tokens. The '1' token is given to the player with the lowest hand each round. You will only need tokens with values up to the amount of players. For example, in a 4-player game, you will only need tokens '1' through '4', and you can place all the '5' and '6' tokens back in the box.



Make a stack of tokens starting with the highest number on the bottom, and ending with the smallest (the one with the crown) on top, making a pyramid of tokens for each of the 4 rounds. These will be given out at the end of each round based on who has the lowest values in their grid.

## HOW TO PLAY

Your goal is to reduce the amount of higher value cards in your hand, more so than your opponents. On your turn, you draw and discard cards, ideally switching out higher cards for lower ones. You may also come across cards with actions that can help you along the way.

### PRE-ROUND PEEKING

Before a round begins, players have one opportunity to look at any 2 of their own cards, returning them to the same face-down positions. It's important that players remember the value on the cards and the positions in their grid.



**TIP:** When learning how to play, we recommend peeking at the 2 cards closest to you, as it's a bit easier to remember these positions.

### START OF ROUND

Once all players have looked at their 2 cards, the dealer (chosen randomly) turns over the first card of the draw pile to form the start of the discard pile. Once the initial card is flipped over, any player can MATCH a card (see MATCHING). The player to the left of the dealer goes first.

### ON YOUR TURN

Begin by drawing a card from either the draw pile OR the discard pile.

If picking from the draw pile, look at the new card (without revealing it) and either choose to keep it (to hopefully replace a higher value card) or immediately discard it. If you choose to keep the card, use it to replace one of your cards. You may choose to replace a card that you already know (e.g. replace a high value with a low one) or gamble on a card that you don't know. If picking from the discard pile, the card must be played into your grid.

In either case, the card being replaced is immediately discarded face-up in the discard pile. If the discarded card is an action card (see ACTION + SPECIAL CARDS) take the appropriate action. Once that action is resolved, your turn is over and play continues clockwise.

Play continues until a player announces "Archduke!" at the end of their turn, triggering the end of the round. You may call "Archduke!" at any time, however, you want to do this when you believe you have the lowest value in your hand compared to your opponents, otherwise you receive a penalty card (see PENALTY CARDS).



## END OF ROUND

After "Archduke!" has been called, each player has one more turn except the player that called "Archduke!" However, that player is immune to any actions from other players during these last turns. They can also continue to match cards, but are still subject to penalty cards if they match incorrectly.

If at any point a player matches down to zero cards, the round ends immediately and values are tallied. This may even happen after "Archduke!" has been called, triggering the player who called "Archduke!" to receive a penalty card if their hand is higher.

## ROUND SCORING

All players add up the values of each of their cards in their grid. The player with the least amount takes the smallest, '1' token. Distribute the other tokens based on the remaining ranks. Players must also stack these next to their grid in the order they receive them each round.

**IN CASE OF A TIE:** The player with the fewest cards at the end of the round has a better hand. If players have the same amount of cards, compare the lowest card in their hand. The player with the smallest value wins. In the unlikely event there is still a tie, each player draws a card from the deck, and the lowest value wins.

The player who came in last (the highest value) the previous round, goes first next round, and the player to their right deals.



**TIP:** Keep an eye on other players' token stacks to determine who's ahead/behind and direct certain action cards toward certain players.

## MATCHING

Matching is critical in Archduke as it's the only way to get rid of cards from your grid. At any point in the game, if a discarded card matches the value (or symbol in some cases) of one of the players' own cards, they may quickly discard that matching card without replacement, thus creating an empty space in the player's grid.

**EXAMPLE:** Player A discards a 7 at the end of their turn. Player C knows that they also have a 7 in their grid, and even though it's not their turn, they quickly place it on top of the discard pile before Player B is able to start their turn.



The window of opportunity for matching is only open until the next player in rotation starts their turn by touching either pile. The current player can begin their turn by touching the discard pile immediately to shorten this window as well.

If a player goes to match their card but is either too late (the discard pile is touched by the current player) or the cards don't actually match, they must keep the attempted match card AND take a penalty card from the draw pile, adding it to their grid without viewing it. There is no limit to the amount of cards that can be matched at one time as long as the next player hasn't begun their turn.

## PENALTY CARDS

Penalty cards are given to players that either incorrectly matched, tried to match too late, or mistakenly called "Archduke!" when they weren't the player with the lowest value. They can also be given to a player using the GIVE action. All penalty cards are dealt from the draw pile. If you end up with more than a 2x2 grid, continue to add cards to the right, adding new columns to your grid.



**OPTIONAL, BUT FUN:** If at any point a player knocks over their token stack, they must take a penalty card.

# END OF GAME

The game ends after 4 rounds, and all the tokens have been given out to players.



**FOR PROS:** Have a group you play with regularly? Try our Advanced mode (see VARIATIONS)

## FINAL SCORING

After all tokens have been given out after the last round, each player totals their token values. The player with the smallest value wins. In the event of a tie, the victory is shared. If this is unacceptable and you're bad at sharing, you can play a single round of a 2-player game.

## ACTION + SPECIAL CARDS

Throughout the deck you will find various action and special cards that allow you to learn about the cards on the table, interfere with your opponents, and even take someone else's cards. Playing them is easy, but mastering the perfect time to utilize them takes strategy. In order to play an action card, it must come from your grid; cards just drawn are ineligible.



**GIVE.** You may give a penalty card from the draw pile to any other player, adding it to their set. The receiving player does not get to look at their new card. Like other penalties, this may cause the player to have more than 4 cards.

**SWAP.** You may swap positions of any 2 cards (yours or another player's). This allows you to steal another player's card in exchange for their own. You can also switch opposing player's cards in order to confuse them.



**PEEK.** You may peek at any one card on the table (yours or another player's), allowing you to learn a bit more about what kind of values are on the table.

**ARCHDUKE.** Keep track of this card, as it's the only one worth a negative value and can come in handy in a close round.



**ECLIPSE.** Pay attention to these cards as some are worth 0, whereas others are worth 13! Note that the symbol here indicates these cards may be matched with one another as well.

# VARIATIONS

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**ADVANCED MODE:** If you're looking for a longer game, you can play 2 sessions (8 rounds total) which will give you more opportunity for strategy. Just take note of your first session's score and add it to your second session's.

**BATTLE ROYAL:** An alternative way to play is by eliminating a player at the end of each round, and the last player standing wins. The player with the highest value at the end of each round is eliminated. You don't need to use any tokens in this mode, and all other rules still apply.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## Can you match a card you just discarded?

Yes, if you know you have other cards in your grid that are the same value as the one you're discarding, you may match them, but do it quickly as it takes some slick maneuvering! If these are action cards, you may use multiple actions too!

## What happens if you match an Action card?

You may use your action after Matching, if multiple people match, actions are taken in the order they were matched.

## What's with the Eclipse cards? I don't understand.

Congrats! You just unlocked a power move because you're reading the FAQs! In the rare case you know you have a 13 and someone mistakenly just discarded a zero, you can match your 13 card to the 0.

## What happens if a player looks at their entire hand after being dealt cards?

If you're new to the game, shuffle and redeal. If playing with experienced players, they must take a penalty card.

## Can you match at the end of a round?

Yes. After the last player has played, players can continue to Match until the player who called "Archduke!" taps the discard pile.

## What happens if you run out of cards in the draw pile?

If at any point the draw pile is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile to form a new draw pile.

# CREDITS

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## PUBLISHER

Stellar Factory

## ORIGINAL GAME

Ryan Tibbitts

## ART + PRODUCT DIRECTION

Mathew Sisson

## ILLUSTRATION

Ryan Tibbitts

Red Halftone

## SPECIAL THANKS

Justin Biegger

Jon Conley

Katie Pemberton

Michelle Johnson