

How to Play Carbles — the Complete Rules

These are the rules of Carbles exactly as the app plays them. If you know Pegs and Jokers, Wahoo, Tock, or Aggravation, you already know most of this game — skim the card table and the finish-lane section and you're ready. This page is printer-friendly.

The goal

Race all **four of your marbles** out of your lot, once around the board, and into your finish lane. The first player (or team) to fill their finish lane wins.

Setup

Each player takes the four marbles of one color; they start in that player's **lot** (the holding area beside the track). The game is played with a shuffled deck of standard playing cards including Jokers — the deck is reshuffled when it runs out. Everyone is dealt a hand of cards; hands are dealt again each time all players have used up their cards (a **deal**).

Two or three players share the classic 4-color board: with 2 players each person runs two colors as a team, and with 3 players the first player runs two. From 4 up to 12 players, the board grows — square, hexagon, octagon and beyond — with a start spot, home stretch, and goal for every seat.

Getting out

Marbles begin in your lot and enter the track on your **start spot**. Play an **Ace**, **King**, or **Joker** to move a marble out.

A marble sitting on **its own start spot** is a wall: no marble may land on it **or pass over it** — in either direction. Your own marble parked there also blocks you from moving out another marble.

Moving and capturing

Cards move one marble forward (clockwise) by their value. You **jump over** marbles freely along the way — only the space you **land on** matters, with the start-spot wall above as the one exception.

Landing on another marble sends it **home to its lot** — opponents and teammates alike. You can never land on your own marble.

If any card in your hand can make a legal move, you **must** move. If no card can move, you discard one card instead — and if your hand is completely stuck (no marbles on the track and no way to get out), you **fold the whole hand** and sit out until the next deal.

The cards

Ace	Move a marble out of your lot, or move one forward 1.
King	Move a marble out of your lot, or move one forward 13.
Queen	Move a marble forward 12.
Jack	Move forward 11, or swap one of your track marbles with any other player's track marble. A marble is protected from the swap while it sits on its own start spot.
10, 9, 8	Move a marble forward by that value.
7	Split seven single steps across any of your marbles, in any order. Every step lands — so a 7 captures everything it lands on along the way.
6, 5	Move a marble forward by that value.
4	Move a marble backward 4. A slick escape — but you can never back into your finish lane.
3, 2	Move a marble forward by that value.
Joker	Move a marble out of your lot onto your start spot — or choose to do nothing and save it. With a team, it can also move your partner out.

The finish lane

Your finish lane (the goal) is entered through the space **two before your start spot**, and only by **exact count** — walk to the entry and step in with the moves you have left.

You can't jump over your own marbles inside the lane, so fill it **back to front**. The **4** can never back into the lane; a marble that overshoots or retreats must come around the board again the long way.

Partners and teams

With **partners** (4 or more players, even count), teammates sit opposite each other. Both partners must bring all their marbles home; once your own marbles are finished, your cards move your partner's marbles. A Joker can move your partner out of their lot, and each deal begins with the two of you passing one card to each other.

2 and 3 player games use the 4-seat board: each person runs two colors that play as a team (with 3 players, the first player runs two).

Big games and wild cards

Games with **8 or more players** mark some card ranks as **wild (★)**: a wild card can be played as any rank you choose.

Carbles rules by player count

The core rules never change — what changes is the board shape and who runs which colors. Here is exactly how each table size works.

Carbles rules for 2 players

Two players use the classic 4-color board. Each person runs **two opposite colors as a team** — you win when **both** of your colors' finish lanes are full. Each color keeps its own hand and takes its own turn, and your two colors work like partners: a Joker can bring either of your colors out, and once one color's marbles are all home, its cards move your other color. Watch your spacing, though — landing on any marble sends it home, including your own second color. Two-player Carbles is the fastest, most tactical version of the game.

Carbles rules for 3 players

Three players also share the 4-color board: **one player runs two opposite colors** (finishing both lanes to win), and the other two run one color each. It plays surprisingly evenly — the dual-color seat has twice the marbles but also twice the lanes to fill.

Carbles rules for 4 players

The classic square board, everyone for themselves — or flip on **Partners**: teammates sit opposite, pass one card to each other at the start of every deal, and win together when both lanes are full (see Partners and teams).

Carbles rules for 5, 6, and 7 players

The board reshapes itself — a pentagon, hexagon, or heptagon with a start spot, finish lane, and lot for every seat. All rules are unchanged (7-player games shuffle in a second deck). With an even count you can play **Partners** (three teams of two in a 6-player game, sitting opposite).

Carbles rules for 8 to 12 players

Big tables use the same growing board — octagon and up — with **two decks shuffled together**, and some card ranks marked as **wild (★)** so hands stay playable. Wilds can be played as any rank. Everything else is the standard game.

Optional house rules

The app supports the table variants below — turn them on or off when creating a game.

Center marble

One slot sits in the middle of the board, entered by exact count through an inside corner. Escape it with any move-out card (Ace, King, Joker) to any inside corner. A marble parked in the center is safe from everything but a direct hit.

Around again

When every possible move would push a marble past its own finish entry — forcing another lap — you may burn a card instead of moving.

Hop in home

Allows jumping over your own marbles inside the finish lane; you still have to land on an open slot.

Open hands

All hands are played face-up — a teaching table's best friend.

Winning

The first player to park all four marbles in their finish lane wins. In partner games, the team wins when **both** partners' lanes are full — finish your own marbles first, then bring your teammate home.