

Gauldron

A board game of competitive
alchemy for 2-5 players



Rulebook

Overview

In **Cauldron**, you play as a mystical, magic-wielding character on a quest to master the arcane art of potion-making. You compete with other aspiring potion-makers for dominance as the one true master of the art. The goal of the game is to harvest a bounty of eldritch ingredients and combine them into powerful potions. Each potion increases your Magik, with the first player to reach 35 Magik earning the victory, and the title of Grand Infusionist forever after, or at least until the next game.

1 Omen Cards

2 Basic Potion Cards

3 Advanced Potion Cards

4 Basic Spell Cards

5 Advanced Spell Cards

6 Cellar Cards

7 Fields

8 Ingredient Tokens

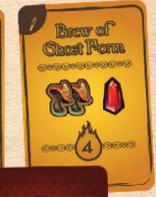
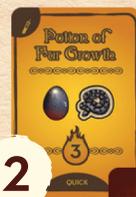
9 Character Cards

10 Character Tokens

11 Magik Track

12 “Used” Tokens





Setup

Step 1 - Select a Character

Each player chooses a character and takes the corresponding character card and character token. Each character's unique abilities are described on the cards. Some abilities are usable once per season, while others are available as often as you wish, so long as you can satisfy any listed requirements. Use of abilities is covered under Harvest Season (page 6).

Each character's abilities lend a unique flavour to the experience of the game. Will you use your talents to reap nature's bounty as The Druid, or do you prefer to stealthily pilfer your opponents' supplies as The Trickster? It's up to you to pick a style of play that suits you best.



This is a symbol of Magik. It is used to denote Magik on cards and the Magik track.

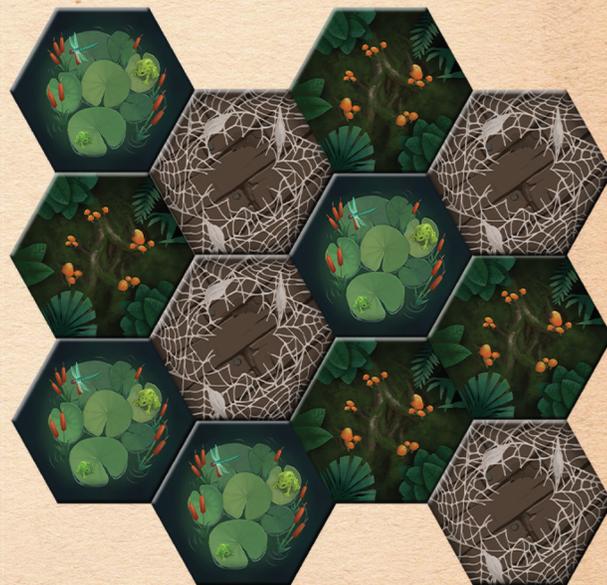
Step 2 - Set Up The Magik Track

Place your character tokens on the space marked "Start" on the Magik Track. You all begin with a sliver of knowledge, so "Start" corresponds to 2 Magik. As your Magik changes, your tokens will move forward and back along the Magik Track. The most common way to grow your Magik is to brew potions.

Step 3 - Place the Starting Fields

It is time to place the fields where the ingredients will grow. Gather the Starting Fields - a number of Spider Web Fields, Frog Legs Fields and Toadstool Fields, each equal to the number of players plus 1. Thus, for a four player game, gather five Cobweb Fields, five Frog Legs Fields and five Toadstool Fields.

To create the starting game board, place any two of these Fields together on the table, then lay out the rest of the Starting Fields randomly around them, making sure each new one is adjacent to at least two Fields that have already been placed. As you play, the game board will grow as more Fields are added.



Sample field setup for a three player game: four Fields of each type are used.

- Take the Fields not yet placed and separate them by type, then stack them near the starting Fields. Do the same with all the Ingredient Tokens. These ingredients form the game supply.



Setup

Step 4 - Shuffle and Deal Cards

Separate the Cards by type into five decks, one for each of:

- Omen
- Basic Spell
- Advanced Spell
- Basic Potion
- Advanced Potion

Remove the six Basic (Easy) Potions from the Basic Potion deck and set them aside. Then shuffle each deck separately, and place them face down near the starting Fields, so they're within easy reach of all players. Place the stack of Cellar Cards within easy reach.

To start the game, each player gets:

- One Basic (Easy) Potion
 - These come from the six Potions that were set aside. Discard any extras, as they won't be used in the game.
 - Once the game starts, Basic (Easy) Potions are considered the same as Basic Potions for all effects and gameplay.
- One additional Basic Potion from the Basic Potion deck.
- Two Basic Spells.



Basic (Easy)
Potions



Basic
Potions



Advanced
Potions



Basic
Spells



Advanced
Spells



Omens

Spells are always kept secret, while Potions are always visible to all players.

Playing The Game

Once setup is complete and you've gathered your wits, it's time to begin. **Cauldron** runs in alternating seasons - Harvest Season and Market Season - with skill at both essential if you hope to become Grand Infusionist. The game begins with Harvest Season.



Harvest Season

The aspiring potion makers venture out into the fields to collect ingredients, bring them back to their cauldrons and transform these into potions, growing their power. As you try to get ahead of your opponents, you might just accidentally pick up that ingredient that they really needed, cast a spell to bring them ill fortune or plain steal one of their prized possessions.

Step 1 - Draw an Omen Card

Each Harvest Season begins with a new Omen. Draw one Omen Card, read it aloud and do whatever is described. Omens either introduce a one-time effect that takes place at the start of the Harvest season, or an ongoing effect that is continuously applied throughout the Harvest Season.

Omens and Spells will sometime refer to LSP or HSP. LSP stands for Lowest Scoring Player and HSP for Highest Scoring Player. See page 13 for more detail.



Step 2 - Populate the board

On each Field of the Game Board, place one corresponding Ingredient Token from the game supply. So, place one Cobweb Token on each Cobweb Field, and so on. Some Omen Cards may affect this step by reducing or increasing the number of ingredients certain fields produce.

Step 3 - Determine Turn Order

All players roll a 6-sided die, with the highest roll going first. Break ties by rolling again, only among the tied players. Turn order proceeds clockwise from the starting player.

Step 4 - Take Actions and Quick Actions

Now it comes time to bubble up toil and trouble. During Harvest Season, players alternate turns until every Ingredient is harvested from the Game Board. Thus, each of you will have multiple turns during each Harvest Season. Each of your turns during Harvest Season allows for **one Action and any number of Quick Actions**.

Actions

You must take one (and only one) of the following actions, as long as you are able to:



Harvest Season

- **Harvest:** Take one available Ingredient Token from a Field on the game board and add it to your supply, placing it near your character card and visible to other players.
- **Steal:** Attempt to steal one Ingredient Token from another player's supply. To steal, roll a six-sided die. If the roll is 4 or higher, you successfully steal and add the Ingredient Token to your own supply. If you roll 3 or lower – your action produces nothing, you have been spotted and have to make awkward excuses for why you are snooping around.
 - Unless otherwise noted, you cannot steal an Ingredient Token stored in a cellar.
- **Brew:** Combine Ingredients to brew a Potion. Each Potion Card you possess lists the Ingredients needed to brew it. Upon brewing, discard those Ingredient Tokens from your supply, and return them to the game supply. The Magik yield of the Potion increases your Magik by the amount described, and your Character Token advances accordingly on the Magik Track.

The Character you chose may have their own way of harvesting, stealing or brewing that replaces the way that action normally works. Follow instructions on your Character Card.

For example, The Witch's "Little Helpers" ability replaces the regular Harvest action, allowing her to harvest not one, but two available ingredients from the board.

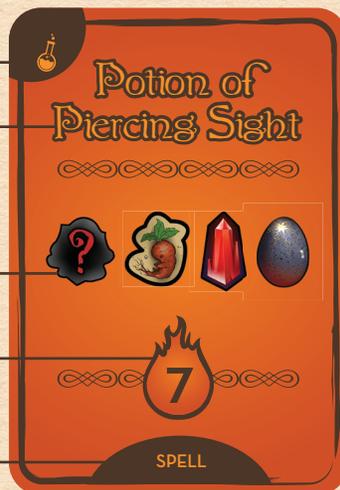
Card Type Icon

Potion Name

Ingredients Required

Magik Yield

Special Rules



This symbol means that this ingredient requirement can be satisfied by discarding any ingredient token when brewing the potion.

Remember that if, on your turn, you harvest the last Ingredient you need to brew a non-Quick Potion, you cannot brew it on the same turn (since harvesting an Ingredient and brewing a Potion are two separate Actions).

You do not need to discard the Potion Card after brewing – you are able to brew the same potion later in the game.



Harvest Season

- Brewing a Potion marked as “Quick” is a Quick Action. Quick Actions are described momentarily.
- Brewing a Potion marked as “Spell” allows you to immediately receive one free Basic Spell.
- You can cast that Spell during the current turn, as casting Spells is a Quick Action.

Quick Actions

You may take as many of the following quick actions as you wish, either prior to or after the non-quick Action of your turn:

- **Brew a Quick Potion:** During your turn, you may brew a Quick Potion by combining Ingredients, just as you would with any Potion. Upon brewing, those Ingredient Tokens are returned to the supply. The Magik yield of the Quick Potion increases your Magik by the amount described, and your Token advances on the Magik Track.

Concerning Spells

- You can hold a maximum of three Spells, in any combination of Basic or Advanced. If any effect causes you to have more than three Spells, you must choose Spells to discard (or cast if possible, and if you choose) until just three remain.
- A Fizzle Spell cancels the effect of the last Spell played.
- Casting Magik Dome cancels the effect of the last Spell played, and prevents any further Spell casting for the rest of the season. It is immune to cancellations.
- Spells can only be cast during Harvest Season.

- **Cast a Spell:** During your turn, you can cast any number of Spells from your hand. Upon casting, follow the directions on the Card, then discard it.
 - Spells marked as “Instant” can be played at any time, even during any other player’s turn. These meddlesome Spells are crafted to disrupt your fellow potion-makers’ actions. Casting spells in this manner is a sure way to foil someone’s plans.
- **Move Ingredients:** You can move ingredients between your supply and cellars as a quick action but only on your turn.

An example of gathering and brewing

- Luke wishes to brew an Oil of Earthquakes. He possesses three Spider Web Tokens from earlier rounds, and now harvests a Dragon Egg, the final Ingredient needed.



Harvest Season



- Since Oil of Earthquakes is a Quick Potion, Luke brews it on the same turn as he harvested the final Ingredient. He gets the resulting 6 Magik, and moves his Character Token six spaces along the Magik Track, then discards the used ingredients to the game supply.
- If it had been a regular Potion as opposed to a Quick Potion, Luke would have needed to wait until the next turn to brew it, thus exposing his Ingredients to potential thievery from other players.

Play progresses clockwise until the last ingredient is harvested from the board.

Step 5 - Finish Harvest Season

As soon as the last Ingredient is harvested, the Harvest Season ends. No more actions can be taken this season, with one exception. The player who harvested the final Ingredient can choose to take any Quick Actions they desire, including brewing a Quick Potion.

- At the finale of each harvest season, **ALL INGREDIENTS IN PLAYERS' SUPPLIES SPOIL AND MUST BE DISCARDED** to the game supply. Any Ingredient Token stored in a cellar can be kept. Cellars are explained in detail momentarily.



Market Season

Once the frantic activity of the harvest season subsides, the potion brewers have a moment to rest up and to consider their future strategies. They can perform mysterious rituals and use the Magik they acquired to obtain new arcane knowledge or bring new fields or storage spaces into existence.

Step 1 - Continue Turn Order

As the new Market season begins, turn order continues. The player immediately clockwise of the player who harvested the final Ingredients in harvest season goes first.

Step 2 - Make Purchases

It is now time to build your store of incantations and mystical miscellanea for the ongoing struggle. Each player may make one purchase, by spending their hard-earned Magik. You can purchase additional Fields, Spells, Potions or Cellars.

The cost of a purchase is immediately subtracted from your Magik total, moving your Character Token backwards on the Magik track.

It is critical to make purchases to be successful in Cauldron, but invest your Magik wisely. Learning when and what to buy is often what separates the powerful from the weak.

Some characters might have discounts for certain purchases – consult your Character card to make sure you take advantage of these!



Fields. Cost = 

You can choose any of the seven Field types to purchase and add to the board. The new Field must be placed adjacent to at least two existing Fields. If all the Fields of a particular type are already on the Game Board, no more of that type of Field can be purchased.

Player purchasing a new Field immediately receives one corresponding Ingredient Token, for use in the next Harvest Season. At the start of that next Harvest Season, a new Ingredient Token is still placed in the freshly purchased Field, and all players have an equal chance to harvest it. Nobody “owns” a particular Field, just because they purchased it.



Basic Spells. Cost = 

Draw the top card from the Basic Spell deck and take it into your hand.



Market Season



Advanced Spells. Cost = 3

Draw the top card from the Advanced Spell deck and take it into your hand. Advanced Spells can only be purchased once “Rituals of Power” has been triggered on the Magik Track.



Basic Potions. Cost = x equal to the number of Basic Potions you own. Thus, if you already have 2 Basic Potions and look to purchase a third, the cost for that third Basic Potion would be 2

Draw the top card from the Basic Potion deck and place it face-up next to your existing potions.



Advanced Potions. Cost = x equal to the number of any Potions you hold + 2. Thus, if you already hold 2 Potions and look to purchase an additional Advanced Potion, the cost for that Potion would be 4

Advanced Potions can only be purchased once “Rituals of Power” has been triggered on the Magik Track. Draw the top card from the Advanced Potion deck and place it face-up next to your existing potions.



Cellars. Cost = 3 for a player’s first cellar, 4 for the second. Unless otherwise specified, you may own a maximum of two cellars.

Take a Cellar Card from the game supply and place it next to your Character Card.

Each cellar can contain a single Ingredient Token at any given time. During Harvest Season, Ingredient Tokens can be moved in and out of cellars on your own turn, as a Quick Action. Ingredient Tokens cannot be moved in and out of cellars at any other time. Cellars provide two means of assistance:

1. Any Ingredient Token stored in a cellar does not spoil at the end of a harvest season, and is thus available for the following season.
2. Unless otherwise noted, Ingredient Tokens stored in a cellar cannot be stolen.

Step 3 - Finish Market Season

Unlike Harvest Season, you can choose to do nothing during Market Season. Once every player has either made one purchase or passed on their turn, **the next Harvest Season begins.**



You can hold a maximum of three Spells, in any combination of Basic or Advanced. If you currently hold three Spells, you must discard one of your choice before purchasing a new one.

Winning the Game

Victory, with all its glory, goes to the first player to reach 35 Magik. You must brew a Potion to win the game; Spells and Omens can only take you as high as 34 Magik.

Upon reaching 35 Magik, you are crowned Grand Infusionist, and all lesser alchemists will quake in your presence forever more. Enjoy your new title and power, for you surely earned it.

Magik Track

Wonder abounds on the path to greatness, and a variety of mysterious effects are triggered by the first player to reach certain points. Follow the instructions detailed on the Magik Track, and know that each of these effects occurs but once. A reminding "Used" marker should be placed on the effect as its triggered. Consequent passing of these points produces no additional effect.



As well, there are two Magik Zones that exert their power on all players within them. Pay careful attention to these during game play:

- **Enthusiasm:** Players with 10 Magik or less get an extra point of Magik when they brew basic Potions, including Basic (Easy) Potions.
- **Advanced Alchemy:** Players with 25 or more Magik can no longer brew Potions that require only two Ingredients. As well, they no longer receive an Ingredient Token upon purchasing a new Field.

What is LSP and HSP?

Some cards mention the LSP or HSP. LSP refers to the Lowest Scoring Player. If there is a tie for least Magik – all those tied for least roll the dice. The player with the lowest roll is considered the LSP.

HSP is the Highest Scoring Player. If there is a tie for most Magik – all those tied for most roll the dice. The player with the highest roll is considered HSP.

Rule Alternatives to Explore

Quick game

For a faster and less involved game, don't use Spells. Remove the Spell Cards, and any Omen mentioning Spells should be ignored, with a new Omen Card drawn instead. Magik Track effects mentioning Spells are ignored. The Wizard Character should not be used.

Advanced game

For a game with more strategy and interaction between players, allow up to 2 purchases during Market Season, instead of 1. This will increase the length of the game to approximately 2 hours.

Less Luck

For players familiar with the game and who prefer less luck and more strategy, make the following adjustments. Instead of rolling for turn order at the beginning of each Harvest Season, the Lowest Scoring Player goes first. Disregard all Omens referencing turn order rolls, drawing new ones instead. When purchasing a new Spell or a Potion, draw two Cards each time – select one and discard the other.

∞ Frequently Overlooked Rules ∞

- Brewing a regular Potion (not a Quick Potion) requires an action (full turn during Harvest Season.)
- You cannot brew any Potion that requires just two Ingredients after you reach 25 Magik. Turn these Potions over to remind yourself. Getting rid of these towards the end of the game is a viable strategy.
- At end of Harvest Season all Ingredient Tokens not stored in a cellar spoil, and must be discarded.
- The most Spells you're allowed to hold is three. If an effect leads to having more than three, you must immediately discard (or cast if possible, and if you choose) the Spell of your choice so you are back down to three.
- When you buy a new Field, you receive an Ingredient Token of the corresponding type. The Field still generates an Ingredient Token at the beginning of the harvest season. The bonus Ingredient Token is a one-time effect and players with 25 or more Magik no longer receive the bonus Ingredients.

Good luck, and may the grandest infusionist win!



Credits

Reference

Harvest Season

Step 1 - Draw an Omen Card and do whatever is described.

Step 2 - Place Ingredients.

On each Field, place one corresponding Ingredient Token (unless an Omen Card affects this).

Step 3 - Determine Turn Order

by rolling a die. Play then proceeds clockwise.

Step 4 - Take Actions and Quick Actions. Each of a player's turns during Harvest Season allows for **one Action (Harvest, Brew or Steal)** and **any number of Quick Actions.** Continue until all Ingredients are harvested.

Step 5 - Finish Harvest Season.

All Ingredients not stored in a cellar are discarded. Players can choose to discard Spells or Potions.

Winning the Game

Victory goes to the first player to reach 35 Magik! You can only win the game by brewing a potion.

Market Season

Step 1 - Continue Turn Order with the player clockwise from the last player to go in Harvest Season.

Step 2 - Make Purchases. Every player has the option to make **one purchase** of additional Fields, Spells, Potions or cellars.

- Cellars: 1st Cellar - 3M, 2nd cellar - 4M
- Field - 3M
(and take a corresponding ingredient)
- Basic Spell - 1M
- Advanced Spell - 3M
- Basic Potion - Cost equal to current number of Basic Potions
- Advanced Potion - Cost equal to current number of all Potions + 2

Step 3 - Finish Market Season.

Once every player has either purchased or passed, **the next Harvest Season begins.**

LSP - Lowest Scoring Player
HSP - Highest Scoring Player