Morels

Strategic Foraging and Feasting for Two

Game overview

Morels is a light strategy game for 2 players that nourishes clever play at every turn. The object of the game is to cook mushrooms, thus garnering the most MVPs (Mushroom Varietal Points) at game's end. MVPs are acquired by cooking sets of 3 or more like mushrooms. Each mushroom card has two values: the MVP value for cooking and the foraging value for selling. Selling 2 or more like mushrooms earns foraging sticks that expand your options for collecting cards in future turns. As players collect, cook, and sell, each turn will result in 1 card from the forest (the line of cards face-up on the table) moving into a decay pile. Cards in the decay remain available for a short time and are then discarded. The Day Deck continuously refills the forest from the back, creating the effect of a walk in the woods along which some strategic morsels are collected, some are passed by, and others lay ahead.

Setup

Place one Pan token in each player's play area. Separate the Night Deck from the Day Deck and shuffle each deck individually. Choose a player to go first. From the Day Deck, set out a string of 8 cards face-up. This string of 8 cards is "The Forest". Deal each player a starting hand of 3 cards from the Day Deck. You are now ready to begin your walk in the woods.



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On Your Turn

On your turn, perform one of the options below (passing is not an option):

A. Take a card from the forest
B. Take all the cards from the decay
C. Cook 3 or more like mushrooms
D. Sell 2 or more like mushrooms
E. Play an empty Pan

Option A: Take a card from the forest

You may only take a card from the forest if doing so will not exceed your hand limit, which begins at 8 cards but may be increased over the course of the game (see "Baskets"). If you choose to take a card from the forest, you may *either*:

a) Take 1 of the 2 cards closest to the decay at no cost. These mushrooms are "at your feet" and make for easy collecting, *or*
b) Take any face up card in the forest for a cost. Use foraging sticks to collect a card that lies deeper in the woods, 1 stick per card beyond the 2 at your feet. Return used sticks to the supply.



In this example, Player 1 may take the Fairy Ring or the Pan card at no cost. Alternatively, the Butter could be taken for a cost of 1 foraging stick, or the Chanterelle for 2 foraging sticks, or the Lawyer's Wig for 3, and so on. If Player 1 chooses instead to take the decay (Option B), he must take all 3 cards in the decay.

If the card collected is a Basket or Destroying Angel, it goes into your play area without entering your hand and does not count against your hand limit. If it is a Moon, immediately play it into the discard and add the top card from the Night Deck to your hand.

Option B: Take all the cards from the decay

If selecting this option, you must take all of the cards in the decay. As with Option A, you may only take the decay if doing so will not exceed your hand limit.

Option C: Cook 3 or more like mushrooms

You may cook as your turn when you have 3 or more of a single mushroom variety and a Pan available in which to cook them. There are two ways to do this: place the like mushrooms into a Pan that is already in your play area (this may be the Pan token or a Pan card) *or* place the like mushrooms into your play area along with a Pan card from your hand. Butter may be played with a set of 4 or more like mushrooms. Cider may be played with a set of 5 or more like mushrooms. Only 1 type of mushroom may be cooked per turn. Once mushrooms are cooked, no further cards may be added to that Pan during the game. The MVP value of each mushroom cooked appears under the pan icon. If you cooked 3 Chanterelles, as shown, you would score 12 MVPs (4 MVPs each) toward winning the game.



Option D: Sell 2 or more like mushrooms

You may sell mushrooms as your turn when you have 2 or more of a single mushroom variety. Only 1 type of mushroom may be sold per turn. Place the 2 or more like mushrooms that you wish to sell into the discard and take the appropriate number of foraging sticks from the (infinite) supply. The sale value of each mushroom appears under the foraging stick icon. If you sold 2 Fairy Rings, as shown, you would collect 4 foraging sticks (2 foraging sticks each).



Option E: Play an empty Pan

An empty Pan may be played into your play area as your turn. Mushrooms may be cooked in this Pan on a future turn.

After Your Turn

After your turn, prepare the forest for the next player. Preparing the forest requires 2 steps:

1. From the forest, move the card that is closest to the decay into the decay (regardless of which of the five options you chose for your turn). The decay can never have more than 4 cards. If there are 4 cards in the decay when you go to add the new card, discard the 4 that are there and start a new decay. After the first turn of the game, every turn will begin with 1-4 cards in the decay.
2. Slide the cards in the forest toward the decay, making room to refill the forest with either 1 or 2 cards from the Day Deck so there are once again 8 cards face-up in the forest (unless it is near the end of the game, when the Day Deck is empty and the forest is dwindling).



In this example, Player 1 has taken the Pan card at no cost. He then moves the Fairy Ring to the decay, slides each of the remaining 6 cards in the forest 2 spaces toward the decay, and turns over 2 new cards from the Day Deck. These new cards are added to the back of the line so that Player 2 begins her turn with 8 cards in the forest.

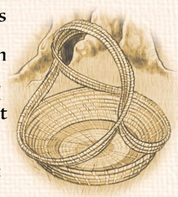
The Mushrooms (except the Destroying Angel)

Mushrooms vary greatly in their taste, rarity, and market price, as reflected by the two values listed on each mushroom card. The number under the pan icon is the MVP value, the value for cooking the mushroom in a set of 3 or more. The number under the foraging stick icon is the value for selling the mushroom in a set of 2 or more for "information" from local aficionados. Your enhanced ability to forage after the locals have clued you in is represented by the action of the foraging sticks.



Pans

A player cannot cook mushrooms without an available Pan. Each player begins the game with 1 Pan token in his/her play area, which plays the same as a Pan card and is ready for mushroom cooking at will. *If you start the game with a Pan card*, it stays in your hand until played by itself or with a set of cookable mushrooms.



Baskets

Baskets extend the limit of your hand size for the remainder of the game by 2 cards per Basket in your play area. When you collect a Basket, it goes into your play area without entering your hand. With 1 Basket in play, your hand limit would go from 8 to 10. With 2, it would be 12, and so on. *If you start the game with a Basket*, place it into your play area at the beginning of your first turn. This does not take up a turn.

Moons

Moons give you the ability to forage at night, seeking out a treasure of solitary glee. When you collect a Moon, place it in the discard and take the top card from the Night Deck. The Night card is worth 2 mushrooms but only counts as 1 card toward your hand limit. Note that any card from the Night Deck could be sold by itself since it represents 2 mushrooms. For instance, selling the Night Fairy Ring would yield 4 foraging sticks. There is no Morel or Destroying Angel Night card. *If you start the game with a Moon*, place it into the discard at the beginning of your first turn and take a card from the Night Deck. This does not take up a turn.



Cooking a set of 3 Shiitake mushrooms

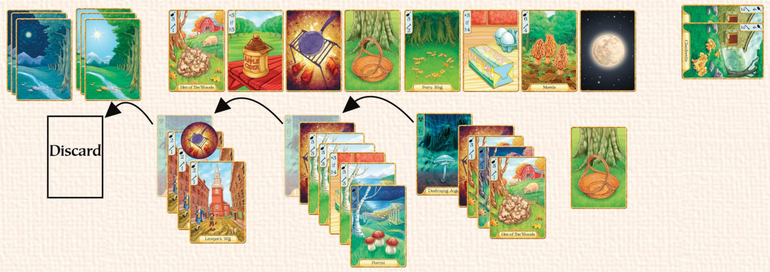
Butter and Cider



Butter or Cider are cooked with mushrooms to add flavor. Butter may be cooked with any set of 4 or more like mushrooms and is worth 3 MVPs. The Butter is simply played with the set of mushrooms into the pan on the same turn. Cider works similarly, but with sets of 5 or more like mushrooms and is worth 5 MVPs. As with mushrooms, Butter and Cider may not be added to a set of previously cooked mushrooms. Cider would not generally be used with rare, exquisite mushrooms, so it will be more likely that it is played with more common varieties. It is possible that 2 Butters, a Butter and a Cider, or even 2 Ciders are played in one cooking event, but only if it is an incredibly large set of mushrooms being cooked. It would take 8 like mushrooms being cooked to play 2 Butters at once, 9 like mushrooms to play a Butter and a Cider together, and it would take an "inconceivable" 10 like mushrooms to play 2 Ciders at once!

Destroying Angels

The Destroying Angel, as its name implies, is the mushroom equivalent of a fire laced weapon of the ancients. It is fear and wrath organically woven. When you collect a Destroying Angel from the forest or decay, it does not enter your hand. Rather it enters your "system" and you must fight through the ensuing pain. Upon collecting a Destroying Angel, choose as many cards as necessary to discard down to a hand size of 4 cards + 2 cards per basket. For example, with no baskets you would discard down to a 4 card hand. With 1 basket you would discard down to a 6 card hand, and so on. If your hand is already at the required size or less, no cards are discarded. The amount of time that a Destroying Angel will influence you varies, with 1 turn of influence per Pan of cooked mushrooms in your play area. While under the influence of a Destroying Angel you may play as you wish so long as your hand size does not exceed 4 cards + 2 cards per basket.



On her last turn, Player 2 took a juicy decay that also happened to contain a Destroying Angel. With the Destroying Angel in her play area, she had 9 cards in her hand. She discarded 3 cards so that she would have a 6 card hand (4 + 2 for the 1 basket in her play area). Now the suffering. She cannot take any cards this turn in spite of the tantalizing options. She sells her Night Honey Fungus for 2 foraging sticks. Next turn, she will only have 5 cards in hand, so she could take 1 card if desired. Each turn, the Destroying Angel moves through her play area toward the Discard, 1 set of cooked mushrooms per turn. After passing through the final cooked set of mushrooms, the Destroying Angel is discarded and Player 2 resumes her 10 card hand limit.

If you have yet to cook anything, the Destroying Angel requires the appropriate discard but nothing more. Cards being discarded should first be shown to your opponent. If you have cooked 1 Pan of mushrooms, the Destroying Angel will influence you for 1 additional turn. If you have cooked 2 Pans of mushrooms, it will influence you for 2 additional turns, and so on. Once you have worked the Destroying Angel through your system (it can be moved from cooked set to cooked set to mark how many turns of influence remain), discard it and resume play with your normal hand size limit. Because of their extreme toxicity, it is never permitted to have 2 Destroying Angels in your system at once. This would be a fatal dose. *If you start the game with 1 or more Destroying Angels*, simply discard them (without replacing them) since you have less than 4 cards in hand and no cooked sets of mushrooms.

Game End

The game ends immediately when there are no cards remaining in the forest. Add up the MVPs for each cooked mushroom (remembering to double the values for Night Cards) as well as MVPs for Butter and Cider to determine the outcome of the game. Cards remaining in the Player's hand have no value whatsoever, positive or negative, nor do any leftover foraging sticks.



The final score for the Player in this example is 36: 5 Porcini (15 pts) with butter (3 pts), 4 Hen of the Woods (12 pts), and 3 Lawyer's Wigs (6 pts).

Answers to Common and Not-So-Common Questions

Q: If I am at my hand limit with 3 cards in the decay, but one is a Basket, can I take the decay?
A: Yes. The Basket never enters your hand and is always played first, expanding your hand limit the moment you take it by 2 cards.

Q: If I am at my hand limit and there are 2 cards in the decay, but one of them is a Destroying Angel, can I take the decay?
A: No. You would be 1 card over your limit before the Destroying Angel goes into effect.

Q: If I have 4 cards in my hand, no Baskets in my play area, and am under the influence of a Destroying Angel, can I pick up a decay that has 3 cards, one of which is a Basket?
A: Yes. Baskets play first and will always protect 2 cards from the effects of the Destroying Angel.

Q: What happens if you are unable to make any of the 5 possible plays on your turn?
A: You lose your turn(s) until you are able to play. This could be bad...very bad, and is so rare that the taunting that could/should rain down on you from your opponent would be entirely justified.

Q: If I cook while under the influence of a Destroying Angel, does that add a turn of influence for the Destroying Angel?
A: Yes it does. Eating while you are deathly sick has its repercussions.

Q: What happens if the game ends in a tie?
A: It is a tie, a rare result to be celebrated.

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TWO LANTERNS GAMES