
ILLIMAT

WHAT IS ILLIMAT?

In early 2009, the band The Decemberists had an idea for a photoshoot where they would be a secret society playing a weird and wonderful game in different locations. Carson Ellis and photographer Autumn de Wilde created a game board as a prop and called it *The Illimat.*

FLASH FORWARD TO 2015:

The band, having played many board games on the road during their down time between soundcheck and show, decided to try and make this strange game-board-without-a-board-game into a real living, breathing game. Chris Funk from the band approached us at Twogether Studios to see what we could do. Keith Baker (creator of *Gloom* and *Eberron*) worked to make *Illimat* feel like an old forgotten card game that would be compelling to modern players: a game that feels of its time, yet weirdly out of time altogether.

THIS BOOKLET CONTAINS THE STANDARD RULES FOR A 2–4 PLAYER GAME OF ILLIMAT, PLUS A BEGINNER MODE AND OTHER RULES VARIANTS.



Go to *illimat.com* for links to videos and other player resources.

ILLIMAT OVERVIEW

On each turn, you'll play one card from your hand into any of the four fields on the board. You'll either **Harvest** (collect cards in the field that match the value of the card you've played), **Sow** (discard a card into a field) or **Stockpile** (combine your card with other cards in a field). The Illimat sits in the center of the board, and dictates the season of each field... and the season restricts the actions that can be performed in that field. But seasons can change, and Luminaries can alter your plans.

The goal of Illimat is to be the first player to earn 17 or more points. Points are tallied at the end of each round. *Want to learn more? Read on!*

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

A cloth board, divided into four fields.

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Four metal okus tokens.

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Four scoring tokens.

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A deck of 65 cards, divided into five suits:
Spring (♈), Summer (☀), Autumn (♆), Winter (❄), and Stars (★).
Each suit includes 13 cards with values from 1–14;
Fools are worth 1 or 14, decided by the active player.

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Eight Luminaries. These are special cards that have no suit or number.

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Four player reference cards.

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A cloth bag for token and luminary storage.

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This booklet.

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The box itself. This is called The Illimat.



SETTING UP THE GAME

Choose one player to serve as dealer. Lay out the game mat and place the bottom of the Illimat box in the center of the mat, with the arrow pointing towards the dealer. The dealer shuffles the card deck and deals three cards face-up into each field, then deals four cards to each player. The player immediately to the left of the dealer only receives three cards in this initial deal, and it is this player who goes first. Set the remaining cards aside to form the draw pile. Each player places an okus token on top of the Illimat. Finally, deal one Luminary face down into each corner of the board—four Luminaries in total.

2–3 Players: Remove the Stars suit before play.
Beginner Mode: For a simpler experience, don't play with the Luminary cards.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

The goal of Illimat is to be the first player to earn 17 or more points. Points are tallied at the end of each round of play. A typical game of Illimat is played over 2–3 rounds. Points are earned each round as follows:

 **Bumper Crop.** The player who harvests the most cards earns 4 Points

 **Sunkissed.** The player who harvests the most Summer cards earns 2 points

 **Frostbit.** The player who harvests the most Winter cards LOSES 2 points

Each **Fool**, **Luminary**, or **okus token** collected is worth 1 point.

TURN OF PLAY

Play begins with the player to the left of the dealer and continues clockwise. On a player's turn they must play one card in their hand to either Harvest, Sow, or Stockpile into one field of their choice. See page 7 for more information about the Harvesting, Stockpile, & Sowing actions.

THE ILLIMAT AND THE SEASONS

The Illimat sits in the center of the board and defines the seasons of each field. Each season imposes limitations on what actions may be performed in that field.

Cards cannot be Harvested in Winter.

Cards cannot be Stockpiled in Spring.

There are no restrictions in Summer.

Cards cannot be Sown in Autumn. Stockpiling is still allowed.

See the page 9 for more information about how the Illimat is turned to change the seasons of a field.

LUMINARIES

Luminaries are powerful cards that exert influence over a field. They begin play face-down. All Luminaries have special effects; these may be triggered immediately when revealed, or they may be ongoing rules that affect their field. A Luminary cannot be Stockpiled or Harvested; it remains in place until the field is cleared of cards.

The first time a field is cleared, the Luminary is flipped over and revealed. The field is reseeded with three new cards. If this is impossible because there are fewer than three cards in the deck, the Luminary is immediately discarded with no effect.

When the field is cleared a second time, the active player claims the Luminary and gains one point.

See page 15 for more information about each Luminary and its effects.

STARTING THE GAME

The player immediately to the left of the dealer goes first.

ON YOUR TURN: PLAY A CARD

On your turn, you must play **one card** from your hand into **one field** of your choice. You may perform any one of the following actions with your card as long as the season in the field permits it:

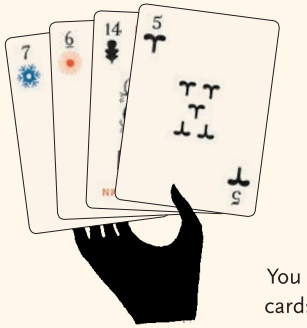
Sow. Discard a card from your hand into a field.

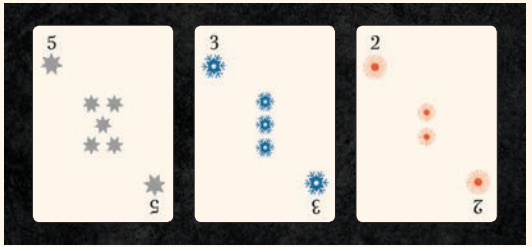
Harvest. Play one card from your hand to collect one or more cards from the field that match the value of your card. If you play a five, you could harvest another five, a two and a three, a Fool (1) and a four, or all of these! After you harvest, set the card you used and all cards you collected aside in your harvest pile. If you harvest the last card in a field, you clear the field; see page 9 for more information.

Stockpile. Play one card from your hand and combine it with one or more cards already in the field, creating a stack that can be harvested by any player on a future turn. The stack can either be multiple instances of one value (a stack of three fives) or it can be cards combined together to create a new value (a three and a four combined to create a seven). Once stockpiled, elements of the pile cannot be separated. To Stockpile, you must have a card in your hand that matches the value of the stack you are creating. Stockpiling is described in more detail on page 11.

Always remember that you only play a single card from your hand into a single field. The only exception to this occurs based on some Luminary card effects.

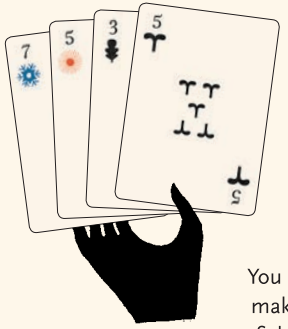
HARVEST

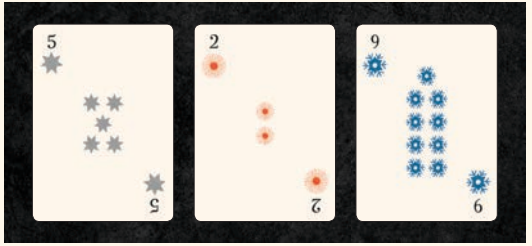




You can play the five in your hand to harvest all of these cards: the five and the combination of the three and two (which adds up to five).

STOCKPILE





You can play your 5 and combine it with the 5 on the field to make a stack of two 5s, or combine your 3 with the 2 in the field to create a stack with a value of 5... and combine that with the 5 already in the field to make a stack of 5s.

ON YOUR TURN: CHANGING THE SEASON

If on your turn you have played a face card from your hand (Fool, Knight, Queen, King), turn the Illimat so the season of the field it was played in matches the season of the played card. If a face card from the Stars suit was played, the player may decide what season the field is changed to. The Illimat is only turned when a player plays a face card. It does not turn if a face card is dealt from the deck into the field.

ON YOUR TURN: DRAW UP

Once you've played your card, draw until you have four cards in your hand. If there aren't enough cards left in the deck, draw as many cards as you can.

ON YOUR TURN: IF YOU HAVE CLEARED THE FIELD

If you remove the last card from a field, a number of things may occur after you have drawn up:

If there are okus tokens on the Illimat, claim one of them for your score pile.

If there is a face-down Luminary in the field, reveal it and resolve any of its immediate effects.

If there is a face-up Luminary in the field, claim the Luminary for your score pile and resolve any of its reward effects

Once these are resolved, reseed the field as described below.

***Reseed the field* with 3 cards** from the draw pile if there were unclaimed okus tokens at the start of your turn or you revealed a face down Luminary in the field.

Do not reseed the field if there were no unclaimed okus tokens at the start of your turn ***and*** you did not reveal a face down Luminary in the field. This field lies fallow until new cards are sown into it by players.

Do not reseed the field if there are fewer than three cards in the draw pile.

Play passes in rotation to the left. The round is played until all players have played all cards in their hands and no cards remain from the draw pile.

SCORING A ROUND

After the draw pile is exhausted, play continues until all cards have been played. At this point, any cards remaining on the board are set aside and discarded. Compare your harvested cards to those of other players, scoring as follows:

Bumper Crop. The player who harvests the most cards earns 4 Points

Sunkissed. The player who harvests the most Summer cards earns 2 points

Frostbit. The player who harvests the most Winter cards LOSES 2 points

Each Fool, **Luminary**, or **okus token** collected is worth 1 point.

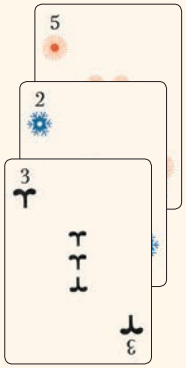
When determining who gets these points, ties break in favor of the player who has collected the most Luminaries in the current round. If this fails to resolve the tie, no one receives points for that category. For Sunkissed or the Bumper Crop, the player with the most Luminaries receives the points; with Frostbit, the player with fewer Luminaires suffers the penalty. If you are playing in Beginner Mode and aren't using Luminaries, use the number of okus tokens to break ties.

STOCKPILING

Stockpiling is difficult to master, but it opens up strategies and allows you to create huge harvesting opportunities. When you stockpile, you're utilizing two cards in your hand—an active card and a passive card. The active card is the one that you play and combine with cards in a field to create a new card value. The passive card is the card in your hand that matches the value you are creating in the field.

In the example pictured, the active card being played from the player's hand is the Three. It's being stockpiled with the Two and the Five in the field to form the value of ten. **The player is only able to stockpile to create a Ten because they have a Ten in their hand.**

When Stockpiling, stack all the cards together in a vertical row so it's easy to see the combined value, as shown in the image.



You can only stockpile to create a value of a card you have in your hand.

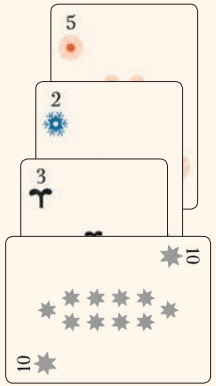
Once a stockpile is created, any player with the right card can harvest it on their turn.

Once a stockpile is created, the cards cannot be separated. However, a player may add to a stockpile to change its value. In this example, a player could add a Two to the stockpile to change the value to 12... provided they have a Queen (Twelve) in their hand.

Do you want to lock in the value of your stockpile and further increase your future harvest? You can do this by combining multiple cards of the same value in a stockpile. Looking at the example to the the right, what has been created here is a stack of Tens: two separate sets of cards, each with a value of ten. In the future, a player could use the stockpile action to add an additional Ten to the pile... or they could harvest the entire pile by using a Ten. They can't change the value of the stack to something other than ten, or remove any individual cards from it.

When you create a stockpile containing multiple iterations of the same value, set a card that represents the value of the pile at a right angle to the pile, as shown in the image. This cocked card remains as a reminder of the value people need to use to harvest the pile or add additional cards to it.

So when you stockpile, you can either combine cards to create a set with a new value, or you can stack multiple iterations of the same value. You can also do both of these actions with one move. If the field contained a Five, a Two, and a Ten, you could play a Three from your hand; combine it with the Five and Two to create a stockpile with a value of ten; and then add the Ten in the field at a right angle, creating a pile of multiple Tens. In a future turn, any player could harvest this entire pile with a single Ten. However, you can only create this stockpile if you have a Ten in your hand.



KEY STRATEGIES

Harvest Wisely. It can be worth it to pass over a card you could harvest, if it's a winter card that will make you Frostbit and cost you two points. Conversely, if you've taken enough winter cards to be sure you're Frostbit, go ahead and take as many Winter cards as possible—things can't get any worse, and you might get the Bumper Crop! Remember that only one player will get the Bumper Crop; if another player has a huge lead in harvested cards, start focusing on getting the most summer, avoiding winter, and clearing fields. If you collect two okuses and the most Summer cards, you're earning four points—the same as the player who takes the Bumper Crop. Getting the most cards is good, but it's not the only way to win.

Be quick to claim a Fool. These are the only cards in that are worth victory points, and if you collect all of the Fools you're getting as many points as the player who takes the Bumper Crop. As soon as you see a Fool on the board, you want to find a way to take it. If you can't, see if you can stockpile it or change the season to prevent other players from harvesting it.

Use the seasons. The ability to change the season is a powerful tool. Has your opponent created an awesome stockpile you can't steal? You can prevent them from harvesting by making it winter in that field. By the time the season changes, you may have drawn the card you need to steal the stockpile. If you have to sow cards at the end of a round, sowing them into winter ensures that an opponent can't immediately harvest them.

Pay attention to stockpiles. When an opponent creates a stockpile, they are setting up a future play and telling you about a card in their hand. Often there's a way to take advantage of that. Can you set up a situation that will allow you to clear the field after they claim the stockpile? If something changes and they don't claim the pile, don't forget what you know about their cards!

These are just a few useful tips. As you play, you'll unlock the many secrets of the Illimat. Good luck!

HARMONIC CONVERGENCE

If there are four face-up Luminaries on the board at the same time, all players move one seat to the left, leaving their hand behind. This exchanges both hands and the score earned in previous games.

CREDITS
Game Design: Keith Baker, based on the board design by Carson Ellis and Autumn De Wilde
Additional Game Design: Colin Meloy
Developers: Colin Meloy, Chris Funk
Producer: Jennifer Ellis
Art: Carson Ellis
Graphic Design: Carson Ellis, Jeri Heiden, Glen Nakasako
Thanks to Autumn De Wilde, Jason Colton, our many playtesters, and all of the Kickstarter supporters who helped bring *Illimat* to life.



THE MAIDEN



THE CHANGELING

THE LUMINARIES

A Luminary is revealed the first time its field is cleared, and claimed the second time the field is cleared. You must deal three cards into the field when a Luminary is revealed. If there aren't enough cards left to do this, the Luminary is immediately discarded and has no effect.

THE MAIDEN

While the Maiden is on the board, Winter has no effect: Cards may be harvested from the Winter field. This effect occurs even if the Maiden isn't in the Winter Field.

THE CHANGELING

Once during your turn, you may exchange a card from your hand with a card in the same field as the Changeling. You may do this at any point in your turn, either before or after your play. You can't exchange cards that are part of a Stockpile. **This act of exchange does not change the season.** When you claim the Changeling, you may immediately exchange two cards from your hand for any other two cards on the board.

THE RIVER

When the River is revealed, deal six cards into the River's field instead of the usual three cards. If, at the end of the hand, you have claimed the River and you are Frostbit, you gain two points instead of losing two points.

THE CHILDREN

When the Children is revealed, deal three cards (if available) beneath the Children. These cards are kept hidden and aren't revealed to any player. When you claim the Children, these cards are added to your Harvest pile. You may examine them, but do not have to reveal their values to the other players.



THE RIVER



THE CHILDREN



THE FOREST QUEEN

THE FOREST QUEEN

It is always summer in the field of the Forest Queen. When the Forest Queen is revealed, turn the illimat so it is Summer in her field. **As long as the Forest Queen is on the board, the seasons do not change for any reason.** When you claim the Forest Queen, you may immediately turn the illimat to any new position.



THE RAKE

THE RAKE

Once during your turn, **you must sow one card into the field containing the Rake.** You may do this at any point in your turn, either before or after your play. This ignores restrictions of season, and sowing a face card in this way will change the season as usual. When you claim the Rake, each player must give you one Summer card from their harvest pile, if they have one.

THE UNION

When you perform the Harvest action in the field of the Union, you may play two cards from your hand instead of one. Combine these two cards and proceed as if you had played a single card of that combined value. So if you play a Seven and a Knight (11) from your hand, you may harvest as if you'd played one card with a value of eighteen. At the end of your turn, draw until you have four cards in your hand.



THE UNION

THE NEWBORN

When the Newborn is revealed, it reveals the Luminary in the opposite field; so if the Newborn is revealed in the field that is currently Summer, reveal the Luminary in the field that is in Winter. If there is no Luminary in that field (because it's already been claimed), randomly deal and reveal a new Luminary from those not currently in use. If there is already a revealed Luminary in the field, the Newborn has no effect.



THE NEWBORN