HOW TO PLAY

4–16 players • Ages 6+ • 30–60 minutes • 3 rounds • 5 cards each

You bring the presents. We’ll bring the mayhem.

1. Bring the presents

Each player brings a wrapped gift. Randomly distribute the gifts so everyone starts with one. Put any extra gifts in the middle.

Provide gifts for your guests if you’re feeling extra merry.

2. Build your deck

Count your players. Remove any cards marked with a number higher than your player count. Shuffle the remaining deck and deal five cards to each player.

3. Crown the Favorite

Start each round with a mini-game to choose the Favorite. The Favorite goes last that round. The player to their left goes first, then play continues clockwise.

More on mini-games below.

On your turn

Play a card, or pass. You may play as many cards as you want on your turn, or pass without playing any.

Resolve each action completely before playing another card.

Discard played cards face down. Do not draw replacement cards.

When you finish, the next player takes their turn. The round ends when the Favorite finishes.

GO 3 ROUNDS

A new mini-game chooses the Favorite at the start of each round.

ROUND 1 / GUESS IT

The host secretly picks a number between 1 and 100. Whoever guesses closest becomes the Favorite for Round 1. When the Favorite's turn ends, move to Round 2.

ROUND 2 / HOLD IT

Start Round 2 with a breath-holding contest. The last player still holding their breath becomes the Favorite for Round 2. Don't pass out. It's just a game! When the new Favorite's turn ends, move to Round 3.

ROUND 3 / WIN IT

Run a rock-paper-scissors tournament until one player remains. That player becomes the final Favorite and gets the last turn of the game. When the final Favorite's turn ends, the mayhem is over!

Play your own mini-game if you've got a house favorite… I like "bubble gum, bubble gum, in a dish…"

Keep the gift you finish with

Bask in victory or mourn your loss. Then high-five and stay friends.

Make your hand last!

Your cards can change, but you do not refill your hand after a turn. Card actions such as Sibling Swap and Thrift Store may let you exchange or gain cards.

GIFTS & HOUSE OPTIONS

Keep presents moving. Keep the mayhem going.

More gifts, more possibilities

Throw a few extra wrapped gifts into the middle for optimal fun.

Manage the gifts

When you steal a gift, put yours in the middle. If someone steals yours, choose a replacement from the middle. You may peek at a gift in your possession, but keep it wrapped unless a card tells you to open it.

House options

Short on time? Play fewer rounds for a shorter game. A bigger crowd? Deal fewer cards to each player to make the deck go further. Have a favorite mini-game? Use your own between rounds to crown the next Favorite.

CARD RULES

Read the full action before playing a card.

PORCH PIRATE

GREEN CARD

Steal an unopened gift from another player or take one from the middle. Put your gift in the middle. If you steal from another player, they choose a replacement from the middle. Opened gifts are off-limits.



You're the worst.

SNEAK PEEK

GREEN CARD

Privately peek inside three unopened gifts without showing anyone else. You may take one of the gifts you inspected or keep your own. Leave every gift unopened. If you take a gift, put yours in the middle. If you take it from another player, they choose a replacement from the middle. Opened gifts are off-limits.



You really can't help yourself, can you?

CARD RULES

Read the full action before playing a card.

WHITE ELEPHANT

GREEN CARD

Steal any gift, opened or unopened, from another player or take one from the middle. Put your gift in the middle. If you steal from another player, they choose a replacement from the middle.



Such a classic.

CRAZY UNCLE

GREEN CARD

On the count of ‘1…2…3!’, all players point at another player, but they can't point at you. Whoever gets the most votes gives you their gift. Put yours in the middle, then let that player choose a replacement from the middle. If there’s a tie, you choose among the tied players.



You’re not above mooching.

CARD RULES

Read the full action before playing a card.

MAGIC SANTA

GREEN CARD

Rearrange four gifts, excluding your own. Swap gifts between other players, exchange them with gifts in the middle, or do both. You cannot move your own gift.



That would be very un-Santa-like.

SIBLING SWAP

GOLD CARD

Choose another player and set aside any number of cards from your hand to give them. Before those cards enter their hand, randomly draw the same number of cards from their hand. Then give them your set-aside cards. You may play your new cards on the same turn.



Gotta love a good trade.

CARD RULES

Read the full action before playing a card.

THRIFT STORE

GOLD CARD

Search the face-down discard pile, choose two green cards, and add them to your hand. Return the remaining discards face down. You may play your new cards on the same turn.



You know a good deal when you see it.

LUMP O' COAL

GOLD CARD

When someone tries to take or move your gift with a green card, you may give them Lump o' Coal instead. You can't block their action until they actually try to take your gift. Once you play Lump o' Coal, the attacker's action ends immediately. You keep your gift. They discard their green card, but the Lump o' Coal goes into their hand. It cannot block red or gold cards.



hehehehe

CARD RULES

Read the full action before playing a card.

LITTLE STINKER

RED CARD

Unwrap three gifts so everyone can see what’s inside. You may take one of those gifts or keep your own. If you take a gift, put yours in the middle. If you take it from another player, they choose a replacement from the middle. All three revealed gifts stay unwrapped for the rest of the game.



It’s not your fault they left presents in reach of your sticky little fingers.

CHRISTMAS DINNER

RED CARD

Choose left or right and how many seats to pass the gifts. Every player passes their gift in the same direction and the same number of seats. Gifts in the middle stay put.



See something you want? Don't be shy.

CARD RULES

Read the full action before playing a card.

GIFT RECEIPT

RED CARD

During your turn in Round 3, discard this card to keep your gift and exit the game immediately. You can’t play any more cards or actions, even this turn, and no card can affect your gift for the rest of the game. You take no more turns.



You love your gift soooo much you throw away the gift receipt.

MAIL MIX-UP

RED CARD

You have two minutes to redistribute all gifts, including those in the middle. Give each player one gift and leave any extras in the middle. You may give yourself any gift.



Will you be naughty? Or nice?

Q&A

Answers for the moments that make you check the rules.

Who goes first, and when does a round end?

The player to the Favorite’s left goes first. Play continues clockwise, with the Favorite going last. The round ends when the Favorite finishes their turn.

Can I play more than one card?

Yes. Play as many as you want on your turn, resolving each card completely before playing the next. You may also pass.

Do I draw new cards after my turn?

No. You do not refill your hand after a turn. You only gain or exchange cards when a card action tells you to.

What happens when a gift is stolen?

The stealing player puts their current gift in the middle. The player who loses a gift chooses a new one from the middle.

Can I peek at or unwrap my gift?

You may peek at any gift in your possession. Unwrap gifts when a card instructs you to.

How does the game end?

The game ends after the Round 3 Favorite finishes their turn. Keep the gift you finish with.

Where do played cards go?

Put played cards in the discard pile, face down. Lump o' Coal goes into the hand of the player whose green action it blocks.

Can Lump o' Coal block Magic Santa, Crazy Uncle, or Sneak Peek?

Yes. Lump o' Coal stops any green card action that would make you lose your gift, including Magic Santa, Crazy Uncle, Sneak Peek, Porch Pirate, and White Elephant. Wait until the player actually tries to take your gift. It does not stop a Sneak Peek inspection or a Crazy Uncle vote before your gift is taken. Hand Lump o' Coal to the player who played the green card; their action stops, they discard that card, and Lump o' Coal goes into their hand. Red and gold actions cannot be blocked.

Can I play another card after Gift Receipt?

No. Gift Receipt takes you out of the game immediately. You cannot play any more cards or actions, even if you still have cards and were planning to use them on the same turn. Your gift stays protected from every remaining card and action.

Q&A / CONTINUED

Answers for the moments that make you check the rules.

What if fewer than three unopened gifts remain for Sneak Peek?

Peek only inside the wrapped or unopened gifts that remain, up to three. Opened gifts are off-limits. If fewer than three remain, tough luck: you waited too long to get the full benefit. You may take one you inspected or keep your own gift.

When do I draw cards with Sibling Swap?

Choose and set aside the cards you will give. Randomly draw from the other player’s existing hand before adding your cards to it. Then hand over your set-aside cards. You cannot draw back the cards you are giving them.

Can I give more cards with Sibling Swap than the other player holds?

Yes, but that would be a silly trade. Draw all the cards they already hold, then give them all the cards you set aside. You receive fewer cards than you give.

Can I search the face-down discard pile with Thrift Store?

Yes. Search it for two green cards to add to your hand, then return the remaining cards face down. If there is only one green card, take one. If there are none, you get none. Tough luck: you played it too soon or weren’t paying attention. You still used the card.

What if a mini-game ends in a tie?

Let the host or current Favorite choose the winner.

What happens when Mail Mix-Up’s two minutes run out?

The player’s turn ends immediately. Anyone still without a gift takes one from the middle, starting with the Favorite and continuing clockwise among players without a gift. Then play continues with the next player, or the round ends if the Favorite’s turn just ended.

What happens if I run out of cards?

Once you run out of cards, you’re done taking turns. You get no more turns and keep whatever gift you end up with when the game ends. Your gift can still be affected by other players’ cards; running out of cards does not protect it.