

# PICNIC BLITZ



## Rules of Play



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For 2 to 4 players  
Age: 7 to adult  
Playing time: 30–40 minutes  
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## Picnic Blitz

A strategic dice game for 2-4 players

### Contents

- One board made of four pieces to be assembled
- 24 wooden Ant tokens (6 black, 6 red, 6 blue, 6 yellow)
- 4 wooden Queen tokens (white)
- 28 stickers to affix to the corresponding tokens
- 6 dice
- Game rules

### Introduction

Everyone loves a picnic, especially the ants! While the humans relax in the park, getting ready for a nice snack, things are heating up, down at ground level. Four rival ant colonies have spotted the food simultaneously, and now it's a race to see who gets there first. Those who control the food will bring glory to their Queen and colony, while the losers will go home hungry. The battle for the picnic blanket is on!

## Objective

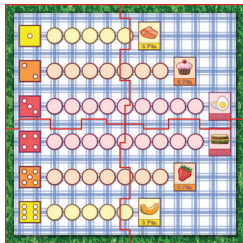
Picnic Blitz is a dice game in which players roll the dice in an attempt to move their ants towards the food, while calling on their soldier ants to bump their opponents back. Reaching the food at the end of a track earns the player a certain number of points, although these points are lost if control of the food is wrested away by another player. In order to win, a player must capture and hold enough Food squares; the exact number of points needed to win depends on the number of players.

## Preparation

Assemble the board as shown in the diagram.

Each player chooses a color and takes the six ants of that color. Place the Queen tokens beside the board, in reach of all players.

Determine randomly who takes the first turn — play will proceed clockwise thereafter.



## Playing with beginners

Although not a complicated game, Picnic Blitz contains a few more complex rules that some players may wish to omit on their first play. These are indicated by green-tinted boxes in the following instructions. Leaving these rules out at first allows players to learn the game more gradually. The full rules make for a deeper, more rewarding game, however, so players are encouraged to play with with them as soon as they feel comfortable.

## About the board

The board consists of six tracks, each corresponding to one of the numbers on a die, and ending at a Food square. The Food square counts as a space, but the numbered die icon does not. Longer tracks have more valuable food:



6 spaces, 2 pts.



8 spaces, 3 pts.



10 spaces, 4 pts.

## How to play




Each player's turn is played in three phases; rolling, attack and movement.

The attack and movement phases may be skipped in order to take a Queen Token instead (see page 13).

## Rolling and re-rolling

The player starts the rolling phase by rolling all six dice. He or she looks at the dice, and then decides how many to re-roll. If playing the simplified version, then a player must keep at least three dice, and may re-roll up to three. These are re-rolled simultaneously, not one at a time.

The number of dice a player may re-roll is equal to the number of his or her active ants. An ant is considered active if:

-  It is on the board,
-  It is not covered by another ant, AND
-  The Food square at the end of its row is not already occupied by an opposing ant.

**Example:** In this position, Arthur can re-roll up to two dice, Beatrice can re-roll up to four, and Charles cannot re-roll at all.



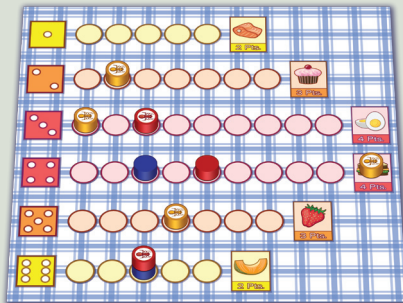
Arthur



Beatrice



Charles



If the player is allowed three or fewer re-roll dice, they must all be rolled at once. However, if the player has four or more available, then they may be split into two groups. For instance, in the example above, since Beatrice can re-roll up to four dice in total, she is allowed to re-roll two dice, then re-roll up to two more dice. Or she could re-roll a single die, then re-roll up to three more, et cetera.

**Queen Token:** If the player has a Queen Token available (see page 13), it may be spent, after the regular re-roll, to gain a fresh set of re-rolls. For instance, in the example above, if Beatrice, having re-rolled, still did not like her roll, she could spend her Queen Token in order to re-roll up to four more dice, in two groups.

## Attacking

If, after the re-roll(s), the dice show any straights of four or more, the player gets to employ his colony's soldier ants to attack his opponents, as follows:

- ♣ 4-Straight (□□□□; □□□□; or □□□□): One Attack
- ♣ 5-Straight (□□□□□; or □□□□□): Two Attacks
- ♣ Full Straight (□□□□□□): Four Attacks

*Note: The soldier ants are a game concept, not a physical piece — there are no “Soldier Ant” tokens.*

Each Attack may push one ant of another color back one space. Any number of different ants (of the same or different colors) may be pushed back in a single turn, and the same ant may be pushed back more than one square.

**Exception:** When an ant is controlling a Food square, it requires two Attacks to push it back one space. After it has been pushed back once and is no longer on the Food square, it can be pushed back normally by subsequent Attacks, even in the same turn. Thus, 4 Attacks could push an ant back a total of three spaces if it began on a Food square — the first two Attacks bump it off the Food, and the remaining two each push it back one more space.

If the player cannot (or does not want to) use all of his or her Attacks, he or she forfeits the remainder; they may not be saved for a subsequent turn.

**Queen Token:** If the player has a Queen Token available, it may be spent to gain an additional Attack, whether or not any straights were rolled. For instance, if a player rolls a 4-Straight (earning one Attack), he or she may spend a Queen Token to gain an additional one, for a total of two.



**Example:** Arthur rolls [1][2][3][4][5][6]. He has a 5-Straight, and thus gets two Attacks. He could bump Beatrice's two ants (on the [1] and [6] Tracks) back one space each, or he could bump one of them back two spaces. Alternately, he could bump Charles's ant off of the cantaloupe, but this would use up both Attacks, so he could not bump another ant.



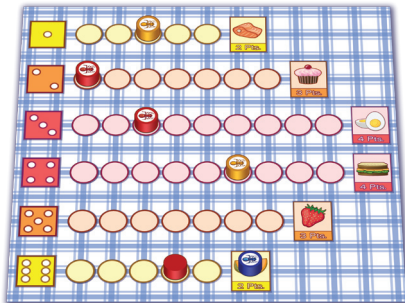
Arthur



Beatrice



Charles



## Moving

After using his or her Attacks (if any), the player chooses one (and only one) track to move on this turn.

The number of spaces an ant may move is equal to the number of dice showing the number of the chosen track, including those that were part of a Straight. The player may not voluntarily choose to move a shorter distance, but it is not necessary to land on a Food square by exact count - if the ant would overshoot the end of the track, the excess movement is simply lost.

If the player already has an active ant on the track, that ant is moved ahead, otherwise, a new ant is moved onto the track, starting from the first space and counting it as a step. It is never possible for two ants of the same color to be on the same track.

A player may not move on a track if: a) the Food square is already controlled by another player, or b) his or her ant on that track is “pinned” under another ant (see page 11)

A player may always choose to pass, if he or she cannot or does not want to move.

**Example:** Beatrice rolls [1][2][3][4][5][6]. She can move her ant on the [1] Track two spaces ahead, or bring a new ant onto the first space of the [6] Track. She would be able to move her ant three spaces ahead on the [3] Track, except that Arthur already controls the sandwich, so no one else may move on this track until he is bumped off of it.



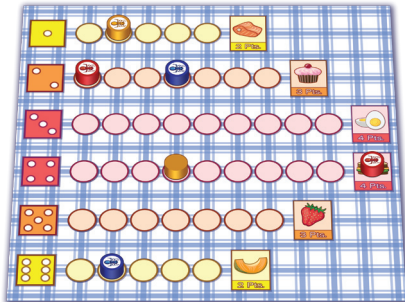
Arthur



Beatrice



Charles



**Queen Token:** If the player has a Queen Token available, it may be spent to move two different ants, using two different numbers. For instance, in the example above, Beatrice could spend a Queen Token in order to move her ant on the □ Track two spaces ahead AND bring a new ant onto the first space of the ☒ Track.

## Pinning

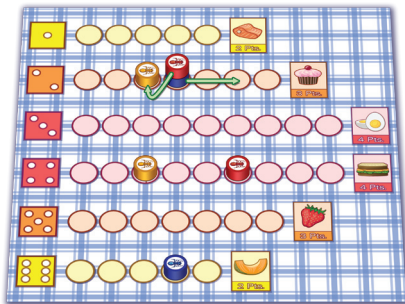
When two or more ants occupy the same space, they are placed in a pile. Only the top ant is considered *active* and may move — all ants below it in the pile are considered *pinned*, and may no longer move, nor be moved by an Attack.

When an ant is moved by its owner into a space occupied by one or more other ants, it goes on top of the pile.

When an ant is pushed back by an Attack, and ends up in a space occupied by one or more other ants, it goes at the bottom of the pile, and thus becomes pinned.

When the top ant in a pile is moved, either voluntarily, or by an Attack, then the ant directly below it is active once more, and may be moved or bumped as usual.

**Example:** Charles rolls [1][1][1][1][1][1]. He would like to move on the [1] Track and get closer to the cupcake, but his ant is pinned by Arthur. Fortunately, he has a 4-Straight, and therefore gets one Attack first. By bumping Arthur's ant back, he liberates his own ant, and may then move two spaces along the [1] Track. As an added bonus, Arthur's ant ends up in the same space as Beatrice's. Since Arthur is being bumped, his ant goes underneath Beatrice's, and he is now the one who is pinned!



## The queen

After a player has rolled, and taken whatever re-rolls are available, he or she may elect to skip the remainder of the turn - that is, the Attacking and Movement phases. This can be done for strategic reasons, or simply because the player was unlucky and has no productive move to make.

If a player decides to skip the rest of the turn, he or she may take a Queen Token instead, which can be used to gain a special advantage. The player may choose to use a Queen token for an extra re-roll (page 6), an extra Attack (page 7), or the ability to move two ants in a single turn (page 11).

A player can only have one Queen Token at a time. It is permissible, however, to use a Queen Token for an extra re-roll and then, if the roll is still unsatisfactory, skip the turn and take the Queen Token back again.

## Capturing food

When an ant occupies the Food square at the end of a track, the points for that Food square are added to the player's score for as long as he or she continues to control it. In addition, the entire track, and all ants on it, are considered pinned - players should flip these pieces over onto their backs, as a reminder that they are pinned. None of these ants may move, nor may any new ants be brought onto the track, until the ant controlling the food is bumped off.

## Winning

A player's score at any given moment is the total of the values of the Food squares he or she controls. If a player's ant is bumped off of a Food square by Attacks, he or she loses those points. The game ends immediately, however, as soon as a player has simultaneous control of enough Food squares to meet the total necessary for victory. These totals are as follows:

- 2 Players — 9 Points
- 3 Players — 7 Points
- 4 Players — 6 Points

## Adjusting game length

The point totals given on page 14 are designed to produce a fairly short (30-40 minutes) game for an average group of players. Players wishing to create a longer or shorter experience may increase or decrease the totals required to win by 1 or 2 points. It is recommended, however, to stay between 5 and 11 points to win, as going any higher or lower will drastically alter the balance of the game.

## Strategy

- Pay attention to which possible combinations of Food squares add up to the target number; for instance, in a 3-player game, you can win by taking 4+3, or 3+2+2.
- Rushing for a single Food item is tempting, but playing on several tracks maximizes your re-rolls.
- Beware of getting too heavily invested in a close race for a given piece of food; even if you get there first, if another player is close behind, they'll have a strong incentive to try to bump you back!
- Pinning opponents is likewise very valuable, but also gives them a strong reason to attack you.