

Nightshade

Designed by Ellie Dix

3-5 players | 30 minutes | Age 10+

Nightshade drops you into the back alleys where black-market apothecaries deal and every player is racing to bottle the deadliest brews. Every round centres around one tense choice: play your best card for initiative in order to go first, or hold it back for its powerful action... but risk your rivals stealing it before you can play. Programme your actions, bottle your poisons and raid your rivals.

Components:

- 108 ingredient cards
- 5 player boards
- 7 turn order cards
- 25 tokens

Set up:

- Shuffle the cards to form the draw deck.
- Give each player a player board.
- Deal 4 cards to each player.
- Take the correct turn order cards for your player count as shown below. Return the rest to the box.
 - 3 players: 1, 2, 3*
 - 4 players: 1, 2, 3, 4*
 - 5 players: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- Each player counts the total value of the cards in hand. Distribute the turn order cards so that the player with the lowest value cards in hand gets the highest number turn order card and so on.

How to play:

Nightshade is played over a series of rounds. Each round has four phases.

1. Deal

Deal five cards to each player. If a player already has cards in hand (from Snatching or Saving a card the previous round), these are simply added to their hand, giving them a larger pool to choose from.

If the draw deck runs out, shuffle the discard pile to form a new draw deck.

2. Programme

Play simultaneously.

Choose one card from your hand for your initiative and place it face down on the space on the left of your player board.

Then choose four more cards from your hand and place them face down on the four slots on your player board.

Important: Cards may be played either way up. You may always rotate cards while deciding which to play, but they must be placed in the final orientation when you programme them. They cannot be rotated when they are revealed.

Any cards remaining in a player's hand are discarded.

3. Determine turn order

Total the score on your initiative card and your turn order card. This is your combined total initiative. In the event of a tie, the player who has the highest number on turn order card wins.

Now redistribute the turn order cards. The player with the highest total initiative takes the 1st player card, and so on.

4. Play

Starting with the first player, each player takes their full turn before the next player begins.

On your turn, resolve your four Programme cards one at a time, left to right. For each card, choose one of the following:

- **Activate:** Carry out the card's ability (see below), using its rank (or its combined rank, if other cards have been tucked beneath it). You may use any number of tokens to boost the card's rank. 1 token adds 1 to the rank.
- **Tuck:** Slide the card (and anything already tucked beneath it) underneath the next card to its right. The ranks combine, powering up that card for when it is resolved. (Only cards in Programme slots 1-3 can be tucked; the card in slot 4 has nothing to tuck under.)
- **Save:** Return the card to your hand to use next round.

Card abilities

BOTTLE NEXT: Put your next programmed card into the store area above your player board so that most of the card is tucked through the slot in the player board but the poison bottle is showing. The value of the card you are storing must be equal to or less than the value of your Bottle card. You have five slots for poison bottles.

CORK: Flip an uncorked bottle in your scoring area face down to cork it. The value of the bottled card must be equal to or less than the value of the cork card. Corking your bottle prevents other players from stealing it in a raid.

SNATCH: Choose a face-up card on another player's board, of rank less than or equal to your Snatch card's rank. Take that card into your hand to use in the next round. (The stolen card leaves a gap in that player's line; nothing replaces it.) You only attack players who are later than you in the turn order. The attacked player takes a token from the supply.

RAID: Steal an uncorked bottle in another player's store. The player must be later in the turn order to you. The value of the bottle card you are stealing must be equal to or less than the value of the Raid card. Place the stolen bottle into your own store, uncorked. The attacked player takes a token from the supply.

When you have finished resolving all four of your Programme cards, discard them along with your Initiative card and flap the top of your board closed to hide your stored bottles. This makes it clear to the table that you have completed your turn and no later player can attack you.

Play then passes to the next player in turn order. When all players have taken their turn, players re-open their boards and a new round begins.

Game end and scoring:

The game ends at the end of the round in which at least one player has five bottles in their store (corked or uncorked).

Then, each player scores the sum of the ranks of all bottles in their store.

The player with the highest total score wins. In the event of a tie, the tied player with the most tokens wins.