

# MAGIC MOUNTAIN

*Build the Mountain. Master the Climb.*

Rulebook & Game Concept

Prepared for KOSMOS Verlag

2-4 Players | Ages 10+ | 45-60 Minutes

*A modular tile-laying expedition game with a 3D-printed board*

## Contents

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Game Concept.....                 | 3  |
| 2. Components.....                   | 3  |
| 3. Symbols.....                      | 4  |
| 4. Setup.....                        | 5  |
| 5. Playing the Game.....             | 6  |
| 6. The Mountain and Movement.....    | 8  |
| 7. Winning the Game.....             | 10 |
| 8. Equipment.....                    | 11 |
| 9. The Cards.....                    | 12 |
| 10. Design and Production Notes..... | 14 |
| 11. The Prototype.....               | 15 |
| 12. Playtesting.....                 | 15 |

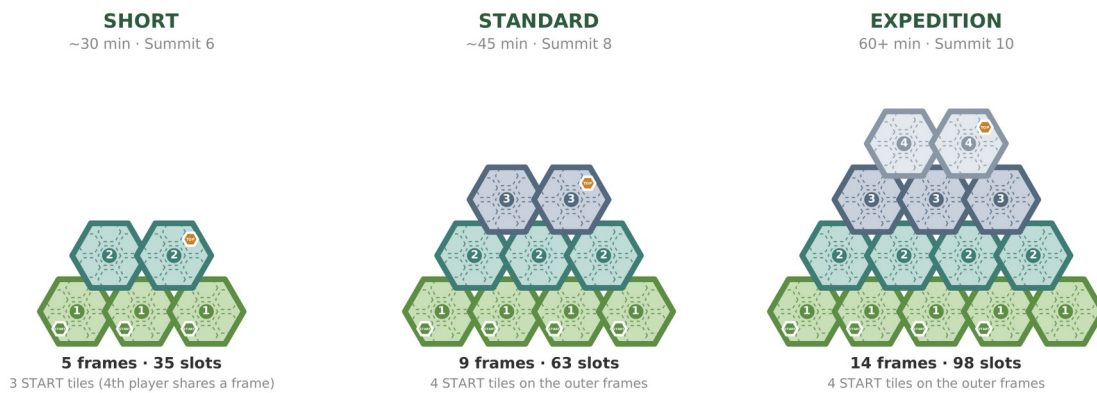
# 1. Game Concept

Magic Mountain is a competitive expedition game in which players build the mountain while they climb it. The board does not exist at the start of the game: it grows turn by turn as players draw hexagonal terrain tiles from four elevation bags and clip them into colour-coded frames. Every expedition creates a mountain that has never existed before.

Each climber begins with four Energy cards and nothing else — no boots, no rope, no tent. Energy recycles every turn and never accumulates, so the only way to climb higher is to build an engine of permanent food provisions. Every round opens with a weather card that changes the mountain for everyone. The first climber, or the first complete team, to stand on the Summit wins.

## MAGIC MOUNTAIN — THE THREE BOARDS

Each frame holds 7 tiles. The frame's colour and number define the elevation.



*The three mountains: one set of frames, three different expeditions*

## Why Magic Mountain

- Players physically construct the mountain during play, so route-building, tile placement and climbing strategy are inseparable.
- Terrain tiles are sculpted in relief — snow, rock, water and lava are visible and touchable — and each tile carries its elevation number and the icons of exactly the equipment it demands. The board teaches the rules.
- Four Energy cards per turn, recycled, never banked. Permanent provisions are the only way to grow, which gives the game a clear arc: first you build income, then you climb.
- Equipment and food cards may be traded freely between players; energy never can.
- Three included mountains — Short, Standard and Expedition — scale the same box from a 30-minute family climb to a full expedition.

## 2. Components

| Component                                     | Qty | Notes     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|-----------|
| Terrain tiles, Elevation 1 (3D printed, 4 cm) | 35  | green bag |

| Component                           | Qty     | Notes                                        |
|-------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------------------|
| Terrain tiles, Elevation 2          | 35      | teal bag                                     |
| Terrain tiles, Elevation 3          | 35      | blue bag                                     |
| Terrain tiles, Elevation 4          | 35      | white bag                                    |
| Summit tiles                        | 3       | Short, Standard, Expedition                  |
| START tiles                         | 4       | one per player, outer frames                 |
| Draw bags                           | 4       | one per elevation, colour-matched            |
| Frame hexagons (each holds 7 tiles) | 14      | 5 green · 4 teal · 3 blue · 2 white          |
| Energy cards                        | 16      | 4 per player, recycled every turn            |
| Equipment cards                     | 7 types | Boots, Camera, Rope, Axe, Tent, Boat, Helmet |
| Food cards                          | 49      | see §9                                       |
| Golden Ticket cards                 | 10      | separate deck, 1 copy of each                |
| Day cards                           | x       | weather and events                           |
| Viewpoint tiles (camera icon)       | 10      | 3 / 3 / 2 / 2 across the elevations          |
| Photographed markers                | 10      | mark a viewpoint as used                     |
| Climber figures                     | 4       |                                              |
| Six-sided dice                      | 2       | first-player roll                            |

Frames, draw bags and terrain tiles share one colour code per elevation. Quantities marked "x" are finalised through playtesting.

### 3. Symbols

Every symbol used on the tiles and cards, in one place. The tiles repeat this information: each one shows its elevation number and the icons of exactly the equipment needed to enter it.

## SYMBOLS

### EQUIPMENT



Ice Axe  
3 ⚡



Rope  
3 ⚡



Snow Boots  
2 ⚡



Boat  
6 ⚡



Tent  
4 ⚡



Helmet  
6 ⚡



Camera  
2 ⚡

### ELEVATION · FRAME COLOUR



**Elevation 1**  
2 ⚡ · green frame



**Elevation 2**  
2 ⚡ · teal frame



**Elevation 3**  
4 ⚡ · blue frame

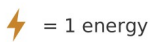


**Elevation 4**  
8 ⚡ · white frame



**Summit**  
6/8/10 ⚡ · gold frame

### MARKERS



= 1 energy



Viewpoint  
with camera: Golden Ticket or +3 ⚡



Lava  
cannot be entered

## 4. Setup

1. Build the mountain. Arrange the frames into any shape you like — there are no connection rules. Play one of the three included layouts, or invent your own. Every frame is colour-coded and numbered with its elevation: green 1, teal 2, blue 3, white 4, and holds 7 terrain tiles.
2. Place the Summit tile in the highest frame of the layout. Each game length has its own Summit tile, with its energy cost and equipment requirements printed on it (see §7).
3. Each player takes a START tile and places it in a slot on an outer frame, each player on a different frame, normally at Elevation 1. For a harder game, players may agree to start higher.
4. Fill the four draw bags, one per elevation, colour-matched to the frames. Everything between the START tiles and the Summit will be drawn from these bags during play. Groups may also place a few tiles by hand now if they want a particular feature on the map.
5. Shuffle the Food deck, the Golden Ticket deck and the Day deck, and lay out the Equipment display.
6. Each player takes 4 Energy cards and places their climber on their own START tile.
7. Players begin with no equipment. Every item must be purchased during the game.
8. Each player rolls two dice. The highest roll becomes the first player.

Choose the mode of play: Free-for-All, or Teams of two.

## Your First Climb

For your first game, play the Short mountain, place all START tiles on green frames, and use the Short Summit tile. It teaches every rule in about 30 minutes, and needs only three pieces of equipment: boots, axe & rope, and the boat.

## 5. Playing the Game

The game is played in rounds. Each round is one day on the mountain. At the start of every round a Day card is revealed; then each player takes one full turn in clockwise order.



### Start of Round: The Day Card

- Reveal the top card of the Day deck. It describes the day's weather and its effect: conditions may ease movement, worsen it, or stay neutral, and may apply only to certain terrain.
- The card is revealed before anyone acts, so it applies equally to every player for the whole round.
- A few Day cards are harsh enough to cost equipment. Because they hit everyone at once, they read as weather rather than as bad luck.
- Every Day card is described in §9.

### Your Turn

1. Refresh Energy: take back your 4 Energy cards and add the energy from your permanent provisions in play.
2. Actions, in any order and as often as energy allows, within the limits below.
3. End of turn: spent Energy cards are set aside and recycled; play passes to the left.

### Actions

| Action        | Cost     | Rules                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Buy terrain   | 2 Energy | Draw 2 tiles from the bags of your choice. Place each in any empty slot of a matching-colour frame (see §6); a tile that cannot be placed returns to its bag. Once per turn. |
| Buy equipment | See §8   | Buy exactly one equipment card. Once per turn.                                                                                                                               |
| Buy food      | 2 Energy | Draw the top card of the Food deck, face unknown. Once per turn.                                                                                                             |
| Move          | See §6   | Move your climber any distance your energy and equipment allow.                                                                                                              |

| Action            | Cost     | Rules                                                                                          |
|-------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Photograph</b> | 1 Energy | Only on a viewpoint, only with the Camera (see §6).                                            |
| <b>Trade</b>      | Free     | Exchange equipment and food cards with other players by agreement. Energy may never be traded. |

## The Energy Engine

Energy does not accumulate. Each turn you take back the same 4 cards, plus whatever your permanent provisions give you. This is the heart of the game: a climber with no provisions lives on 4 energy a turn and cannot afford the higher slopes, while a climber with three provisions in play can reach 10 or more. Early turns are spent building that engine; later turns spend it on the mountain.

If the Food or Day deck runs out, shuffle its discard pile to form a new deck. The terrain bags always hold more tiles than the board has slots, so they never run out.

## Where the Energy Goes

Across a full game roughly a third of a climber's energy is spent moving, a quarter on food, a sixth on equipment, an eighth on terrain, and the last tenth on the Summit itself. The balance holds on all three mountains.

|                                 | Short     | Standard  | Expedition |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Movement along the route</b> | 12 Energy | 22 Energy | 36 Energy  |
| <b>Food</b>                     | 14        | 20        | 28         |
| <b>Equipment</b>                | 8         | 12        | 18         |
| <b>Terrain</b>                  | 6         | 10        | 14         |
| <b>Summit</b>                   | 6         | 8         | 10         |
| <b>Total</b>                    | 46 Energy | 72 Energy | 106 Energy |

Income climbs from 4 energy on the first turn to about 10 by the twelfth. A climber on 4 energy takes a single step at Elevation 1; a climber on 10 takes four steps there, two at Elevation 3, or one at Elevation 4. The mountain slows the expedition down even as the engine grows.

## Example of Play

It is Lena's turn. The Day card reads "Clear skies: Elevation 1 movement costs 1 less." She takes back her 4 Energy cards and adds 1 from her permanent provision — 5 energy available. She buys terrain for 2 energy and draws one tile from the Elevation 1 bag and one from the Elevation 2 bag, clipping each into an empty slot of a matching frame. With her remaining 3 energy she moves onto an Elevation 1 snow tile ( $2 - 1 = 1$  energy, wearing her boots) and then onto a second one. Her last energy is not enough to enter Elevation 2, so she ends her turn.

## 6. The Mountain and Movement

### Frame Colours Define Elevation

The mountain is built from frame hexagons. Each frame is colour-coded and carries its elevation number, and every terrain tile clipped into it takes that elevation. The colour under a climber's feet tells everyone the elevation, the movement cost, and which bag feeds that zone.

Players build the frame freely. There are no connection restrictions: any arrangement of frames is a valid mountain. The board is agreed before play, together with the position of the Summit and the START tiles on the outer frames.

### Placing Tiles

- A tile goes in any empty slot of a frame whose colour matches its elevation. The player chooses the slot freely — placements need not connect to existing tiles.
- Where frames meet, a slot sits at the intersection of two or more frames. A tile of any of those elevations may go there, as long as the slot is empty.
- A tile that cannot be placed returns to its bag.
- A lava tile may never be placed in a slot adjacent to the Summit.

### Movement

| Elevation          | Frame colour | Number | Cost to enter a tile       |
|--------------------|--------------|--------|----------------------------|
| <b>Elevation 1</b> | Green        | 1      | 2 Energy                   |
| <b>Elevation 2</b> | Teal         | 2      | 2 Energy                   |
| <b>Elevation 3</b> | Blue         | 3      | 4 Energy                   |
| <b>Elevation 4</b> | White        | 4      | 8 Energy                   |
| <b>Summit tile</b> | Gold         | —      | 6 / 8 / 10 Energy (see §7) |

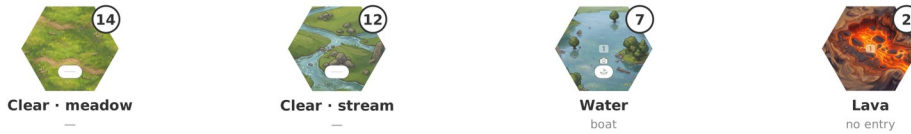
Entering a tile costs the energy of its elevation — the colour of the frame it sits in. This applies in every direction: climbing down costs the same as climbing up. The destination decides the price. Any number of climbers may stand on the same tile; climbers never block each other.

# Terrain Types

## THE TERRAIN TILES

35 tiles per bag · every tile is printed with its elevation and the equipment it requires

### 1 Elevation 1



### 2 Elevation 2



### 3 Elevation 3



### 4 Elevation 4



Every terrain type, with the number of tiles in each bag

- Equipment is checked tile by tile: you need the required gear at the moment you enter each tile you cross. Losing an item later never moves you back — the climb you already made stands.
- Open water requires the Boat. On a deep-water tile the Boat is all you need; on a shore tile, where the route crosses both land and water, the Boat is demanded alongside whatever the land itself requires. Higher ground is more technical, so the tile shows the full combination.
- Lava tiles cannot be entered by any climber, whatever their equipment. Routes must go around them.
- Every tile shows icons for exactly the equipment it requires. When in doubt, the tile is the rule.

## Viewpoints

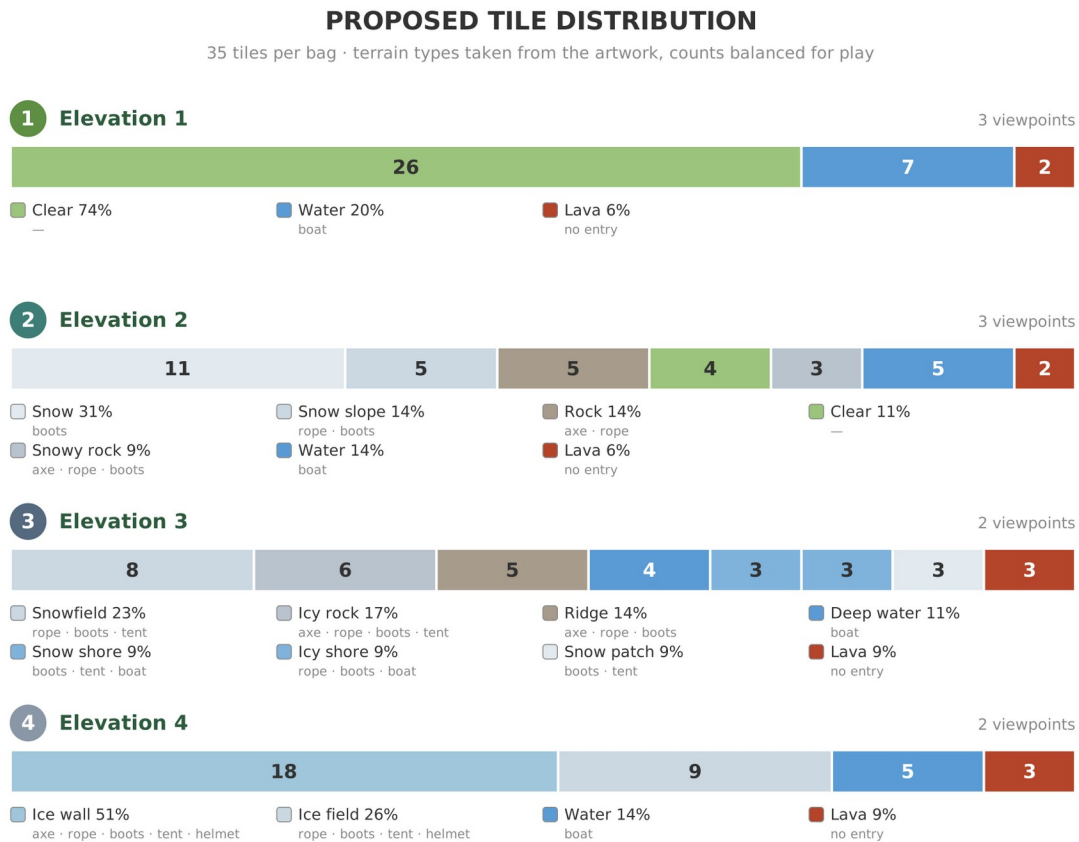
Ten tiles carry a camera icon. Entering a viewpoint costs the same as any tile of its elevation and demands the same equipment; the camera changes nothing about movement.

A climber who ends a move on a viewpoint and owns the Camera may pay 1 additional energy to photograph it. If nobody has photographed that viewpoint before, they draw a Golden Ticket. If it has

already been photographed, they gain 3 energy instead. Mark the viewpoint as photographed either way.

Without the Camera, a viewpoint is an ordinary terrain tile.

## Tile Distribution



*The proportion of each terrain type in the four bags*

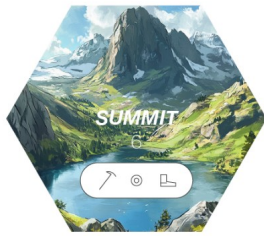
## 7. Winning the Game

The moment the winning condition is met, the game ends immediately.

- **Free-for-All:** The first climber to reach the Summit tile wins.
- **Teams:** A team wins when both of its climbers stand on the Summit. Teammates trade under the normal rules — equipment and food freely, energy never.

## THE THREE SUMMIT TILES

Each game length has its own Summit, with its cost and gear printed on the tile



### SHORT

6 ⚡

axe · rope · boots  
teal frame (2)



### STANDARD

8 ⚡

axe · rope · boots · tent  
blue frame (3)



### EXPEDITION

10 ⚡

axe · rope · boots · tent · helmet  
white frame (4)

The Boat is never required for a Summit

| Summit tile       | Highest frame | Energy | Required equipment                          |
|-------------------|---------------|--------|---------------------------------------------|
| Short Summit      | Teal (2)      | 6      | Ice Axe + Rope + Snow Boots                 |
| Standard Summit   | Blue (3)      | 8      | Ice Axe + Rope + Snow Boots + Tent          |
| Expedition Summit | White (4)     | 10     | Ice Axe + Rope + Snow Boots + Tent + Helmet |

The Boat is never required for a Summit. The final push is always the hardest step of the expedition.

## 8. Equipment

Climbers start with nothing. One equipment card may be bought per turn, and each item is required to enter the tiles that show its icon. Equipment may be traded freely between players. Essential climbing gear is always available in unlimited supply; special items such as the Camera exist in limited copies.

| Equipment         | Cost     | Function                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Snow Boots</b> | 2 Energy | Snow and most mixed ground, from Elevation 1 upward. The most widely demanded item on the mountain.                       |
| <b>Camera</b>     | 2 Energy | Optional. Lets you photograph viewpoints: pay 1 energy for a Golden Ticket, or gain 3 energy on a viewpoint already used. |
| <b>Rope</b>       | 3 Energy | Roped travel on snow slopes, ice and ridges. Demanded far more often than the axe, and required for every Summit.         |
| <b>Ice Axe</b>    | 3 Energy | Cutting steps in rock and hard ice. Demanded on the steepest tiles only, so it buys flexibility rather than access.       |
| <b>Tent</b>       | 4 Energy | Shelter from Elevation 3 upward, and for the Standard and Expedition Summits.                                             |

| Equipment     | Cost     | Function                                                                                                                  |
|---------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Boat</b>   | 6 Energy | Open water at any elevation, alone on deep water and together with the land gear on a shore. Never required for a Summit. |
| <b>Helmet</b> | 6 Energy | Elevation 4 and the Expedition Summit.                                                                                    |

Total cost of the full set: 26 energy. Each item is priced below the income a climber will have by the time the mountain demands it, so no purchase ever requires saving across two turns.

## Equipment by Elevation

| Elevation          | Required Equipment                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Elevation 1</b> | Nothing on clear ground (74% of the bag); Boat on water.                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Elevation 2</b> | Boots on snow; Rope + Boots on snow slopes; Axe + Rope on rock; all three on snowy rock; Boat on water. 71% of the bag is passable without the Axe.                      |
| <b>Elevation 3</b> | Rope + Boots + Tent on snowfields; Axe added on icy rock and ridges; Boots + Tent + Boat on a snow shore; Rope + Boots + Boat on an icy shore; Boat alone on deep water. |
| <b>Elevation 4</b> | Rope + Boots + Tent + Helmet on ice fields; Axe added on ice walls; Boat on water.                                                                                       |
| <b>Summit</b>      | Printed on the tile. Never the Boat.                                                                                                                                     |

In the Short mountain the Tent and Helmet are never demanded by the terrain, so a first game teaches four items rather than seven. The Axe and the Rope are separate cards: the Rope is the workhorse, demanded on most technical ground, while the Axe opens the steepest tiles and can often be routed around.

## 9. The Cards

Magic Mountain uses three decks. The Day deck sets the conditions of each round for everyone. The Food deck is bought from during a turn. The Golden Ticket deck is never bought — it is reached only through viewpoints.

### Day Cards

One Day card is revealed at the start of every round, before any player acts, and applies to all players for that entire round.

| Day card            | Type     | Effect                                    |
|---------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Clear Skies</b>  | Positive | Elevation 1 movement costs 1 Energy less. |
| <b>Calm Morning</b> | Neutral  | No change to movement today.              |

| Day card              | Type     | Effect                                                               |
|-----------------------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Spring Thaw</b>    | Positive | Elevation 1 and 2 movement costs 1 Energy less.                      |
| <b>Fresh Snowfall</b> | Negative | Snow tiles cost 1 Energy more.                                       |
| <b>Meltwater</b>      | Mixed    | Water tiles cost 1 Energy less; Elevation 4 costs 2 more.            |
| <b>Whiteout</b>       | Negative | No climber may enter Elevation 4 or the Summit this round.           |
| <b>Storm</b>          | Negative | Every climber above Elevation 2 loses one random piece of equipment. |
| <b>Supply Drop</b>    | Event    | Every player takes one free equipment card of their choice.          |

The table shows the range of effects; the full deck is printed on the cards. Only two or three cards in the deck cost equipment, and they strike every exposed climber at once. Several cards specifically ease the lower elevations, which is what keeps a trailing climber in the race.

## Food Cards

Once per turn a player may pay 2 Energy to draw the top card of the Food deck. The draw is blind: the card type is revealed only on the draw. Rations are played at once and discarded; provisions stay in front of the player and pay out every turn for the rest of the game.

| Card                | Copies | Effect                    |
|---------------------|--------|---------------------------|
| <b>Ration +1</b>    | 8      | Gain 1 Energy this turn.  |
| <b>Ration +3</b>    | 12     | Gain 3 Energy this turn.  |
| <b>Ration +4</b>    | 7      | Gain 4 Energy this turn.  |
| <b>Ration +5</b>    | 4      | Gain 5 Energy this turn.  |
| <b>Provision +1</b> | 10     | Gain 1 Energy every turn. |
| <b>Provision +2</b> | 5      | Gain 2 Energy every turn. |
| <b>Provision +3</b> | 3      | Gain 3 Energy every turn. |

- **Limit:** A player may have at most 3 provisions in play, but chooses freely which ones: when drawing a new provision or trading with another player, any provision may be swapped in or out — including discarding the new card.

Across a 15-turn game a player who buys food every turn nets around 110 energy and climbs from 4 energy per turn to roughly 10.

## Golden Tickets

Ten unique cards, each a single copy, in a deck of their own. They are never bought: the only way to a Golden Ticket is to reach a viewpoint that nobody has photographed yet, with the Camera in hand.

| Golden Ticket              | Effect                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Helicopter Lift</b>     | Single use. Move immediately to any tile of Elevation 2 or lower, ignoring movement costs and equipment requirements. |
| <b>Sponsor's Gift</b>      | Single use. Take any one equipment card of your choice for free.                                                      |
| <b>Sherpa's Blessing</b>   | Single use. Your next move to a higher elevation costs half energy, rounded up.                                       |
| <b>Weather Charm</b>       | Single use, play anytime. Cancel the current Day card's effect for yourself for the entire round.                     |
| <b>Cartographer's Map</b>  | Single use. Look at the top 4 tiles of any bag, place any 2 of them for free, return the rest.                        |
| <b>Hidden Energy Cache</b> | Single use. Gain 6 Energy this turn.                                                                                  |
| <b>Master Negotiator</b>   | Single use. Force one trade: exchange one of your cards for any one card another player owns.                         |
| <b>Expedition Backpack</b> | Permanent. You may keep 4 provisions in play instead of 3.                                                            |
| <b>Guardian Spirit</b>     | Single use, play anytime. Cancel any negative effect targeting you, including equipment loss from weather.            |
| <b>Summit Permit</b>       | Permanent. Your step onto the Summit requires one less equipment item of your choice (Axe & Rope always required).    |

## 10. Design and Production Notes

- **Physical identity:** All terrain is 3D printed. Water, snow, rock and lava are modelled in relief, giving immediate visual feedback and strong table presence.
- **Self-explaining components:** Colour-coded, numbered frames show elevation at a glance, and every tile carries the icons of the equipment it requires. New players read the mountain instead of the rulebook.
- **Scalable difficulty:** One set of 14 frames builds three mountains of increasing length. Free-form layouts and an adjustable starting elevation widen the range further.
- **A readable economy:** Energy never accumulates, so the game has a clear arc: build an engine of provisions, then spend it on the mountain. Every price is set below the income a climber has when the terrain first demands that item.
- **Economy of systems:** Five systems, each with a distinct job: terrain bags build the map, equipment buys access, food manages energy, weather applies shared uncertainty, and viewpoints reward routing. No system duplicates another, and none inflicts a private misfortune.
- **Built-in catch-up:** Trailing climbers stay in the race: several Day cards ease the lower elevations, and viewpoints remain worth a detour after their Golden Ticket is gone.

- **Replayability:** Random terrain, blind food draws, daily weather, viewpoints and open trading combine into a different expedition every game.
- **Expansion potential:** Additional terrain sets, new Day cards, themed mountains and seasonal expansions integrate directly into the existing frame system.

## 11. The Prototype

Magic Mountain exists as a physical prototype. Terrain tiles and frame hexagons are 3D printed, with snow, rock, water and lava modelled in relief and elevation numbers and equipment icons printed on the tiles.

[Photo 1 — the assembled mountain on the table]

[Photo 2 — close-up of a frame hexagon with its seven tiles]

[Photo 3 — terrain tile detail: relief, elevation badge, equipment icons]

[Photo 4 — a game in progress]

Production note: the tiles are prototyped by 3D printing and designed for injection moulding at scale.

## 12. Playtesting

| Measure                                             | Result            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Sessions played                                     | x                 |
| Group sizes tested                                  | x                 |
| Average game length (Short / Standard / Expedition) | x / x / x minutes |
| Age range of testers                                | x                 |
| First-time players taught without the rulebook      | x                 |

### Changes Made Through Testing

- [Change 1 — what was observed and what was adjusted]
- [Change 2]
- [Change 3]

All figures marked "x" are completed as testing continues.

## MAGIC MOUNTAIN

Design, mechanics, graphics and rulebook: Christian Corral Bureau

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Prototype status: 3D-printed components in development