Now that Balatro’s on mobile, here are some tips to get started



Now that *Balatro* is out on mobile, I wanted to see what all the fuss was about. And while it’s a great game, its tutorial doesn’t do the best job of setting you up for the kind of success necessary to hook you. In my first few hours, though I was completing the objectives laid out, it felt like I was stumbling my way to success instead of achieving it through strategy. Onboarding was a bit too abrupt, focused on the barebones of how to play instead of blending that with tips on how to play *effectively.* With that in mind, here’s some useful info and tips on how to get started.

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underline-gray-63″>*These are the math equations assigned to every hand. Using special cards, you can modify these base equations to increase your score.*

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>Scoring works by adding up all the chip values and all the multiplier values and then multiplying the two numbers together.

a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin [&>a]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-white”>Cash rules everything around me

I wish the game took more time to explain that, early on, money is *everything*. For each blind, you have a number of chances or hands to earn enough chips, and if you don’t like the cards in your hand, you have a number of opportunities to discard cards in hopes of getting better ones. You earn the most money by beating blinds in the least amount of hands and with the fewest discards as possible. There are other ways to earn money, too, with special cards and perks you can get. Once you unlock it, use the special deck that starts you off with an extra $10 instead of the regular $4. Look for the perk (called a “tag”) that gives you $25 for beating “boss blinds” — or harder blinds that introduce some kind of negative effect like lowering equation values while requiring you to earn abnormally high amounts of chips. Bank as much as you can, as early as you can in order to…

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black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>*In the shop, you can buy cards that modify other cards or increase the value of specific hands.*

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>Even Balatro's developer knows this game is a problem.

a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin [&>a]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-white”>Install an app blocker (seriously)

Runs in *Balatro* are short and seamless, making it trivial to get into a groove even after having to start over after a failed attempt. And if you're an adult with responsibilities, that's going to be a problem — especially on mobile. Three hours in real time feels like only 20 minutes, making *Balatro* the closest human beings have gotten to legitimate time travel. After wrapping up my first day with the game sometime around 5AM without feeling the slightest bit tired, I added it to my app blocker, setting it to cut off access every day at midnight. Those jokes about *Balatro* being a productivity problem aren't that far off the mark, so if you want to try to get some sleep or work done, put guardrails in place so you can.

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