THE RULES

2-4 Players

Video Tutorial

Stop! Scan this QR code or head to dabbadashgame.com/howtoplay to watch the online video tutorial. It's the best way to learn the game.

Components



6 Customer Tiles


16 Road Tiles



4 Event Cards



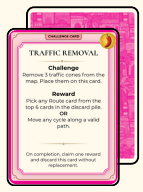
2 Green Light Route Cards



21 Route Cards



8 Role Cards



4 Challenge Cards



4 Player Aid Cards


4 Cycles



1 Vintage Ledger


6 Dabbas


4 Traffic Cones


2 Stations


1 Die


4 Markers

Overview

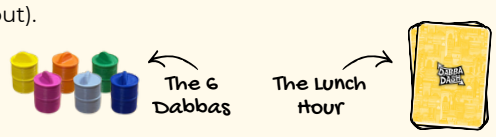
Dabba Dash is a **cooperative** game. The players all win or lose together.



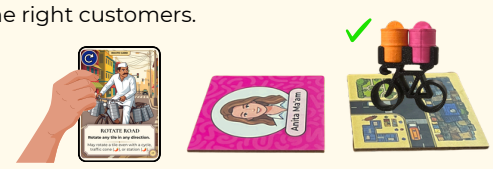
You play in the shoes of the legendary ***dabbawallas*** to deliver ***dabbas*** (lunch boxes) across the dynamic city of Mumbai.



You must **work together** with your fellow *dabbawallas* to **deliver 6 *dabbas* before the lunch hour ends** (when the draw pile runs out).



Build paths across the city of Mumbai by playing cards. **Move your cycle** along these paths to pick up *dabbas* and deliver them to the right customers.



Each *dabbawalla* has a **unique strength**. Create your dream team to fulfill your duty and make sure no customer goes hungry.

Mumbai Feels

Scan this QR code or head to dabbadashgame.com/music for our curated background playlists on Spotify and YouTube Music.

Standard Mode

Learn: 5 mins | **Setup**: 5 mins | **Play:** 30 mins

Get a feel for the core mechanic of the game.

Setup

1. BUILDING THE MAP

Shuffle the 16 **road tiles** and lay them out face-up randomly in a 4x4 grid. Leave a small gap between tiles to form the **map**.

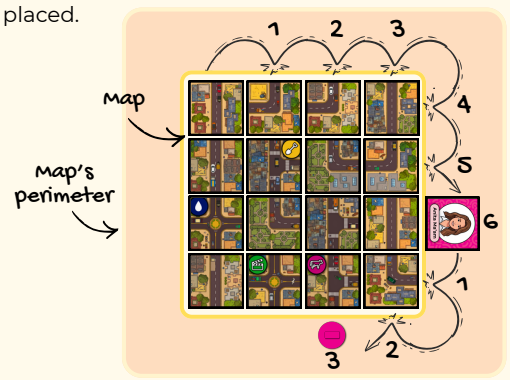
2. PLACING CUSTOMERS AND DABBAS

Customers and *dabbas* will be placed outside the map's perimeter. The game starts with 2 customer and *dabba* pairs placed as follows:

1. Pick any empty space on the map's perimeter.
2. Roll the die. Going clockwise, count empty spaces along the map's perimeter. Place a **customer** face-up here.
3. Roll again. Going clockwise from the customer, count empty spaces along the map's perimeter. Place the matching colored ***dabba*** here.
4. Repeat for the second pair, starting from the *dabba* you just placed.

Place the remaining 4 customers and 4 *dabbas* nearby.

Example: If a 6 and 3 are rolled, this is how it is placed.



3. CONFIGURING CARDS

Remove the 15 cards with 🌶 and put them back in the box for the advanced mode. Hand a **Player Aid** card to each player.



4. PICKING ROLES

Each player picks a **Role** card and places it face-up in front of them. Unused ones go back in the box. These cards give players unique strengths, which are explained in the "How To Play" section. For your first game, pick from this suggested set of Roles: Delivery Boost, Pickup Boost, The Strategist, The Operator.

5. SETTING UP THE DRAW PILE

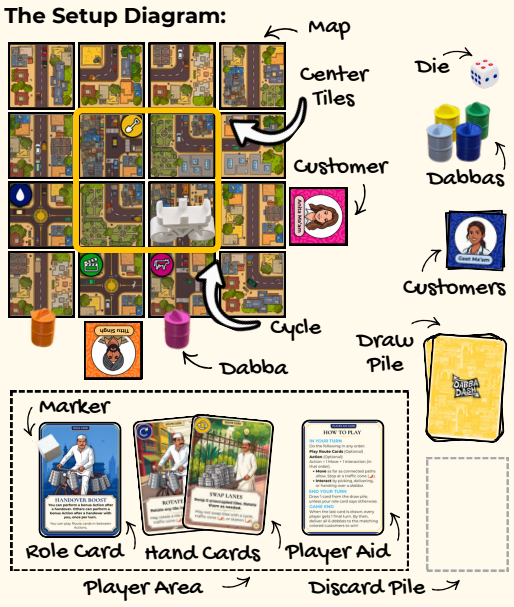
1. **Draw pile**: Shuffle the Route cards and place them face-down.
2. **Set-aside cards**: Draw 2 cards from the draw pile, reveal them to all players, and return them to the box as they are out of play for this game.
3. **Hand cards:** Deal 2 cards from the draw pile face-up to each player.

6. SETTING UP THE TOKENS

Deal a **cycle** and a matching colored **marker** to each player. Each player places their cycle on the closest of the **4 center tiles** on the map. Players place their markers on their Role cards. Unused cycles and markers go back in the box.

The **traffic cones** and **stations** are for the advanced mode and go back in the box as well.

The Setup Diagram:



How To Play

GOAL

Work together to **deliver 6 *dabbas*** before the lunch hour ends (when the draw pile runs out).

IN YOUR TURN

Do the following in any order:

Play Route Cards*: You can play any number of Route cards from your hand. They can be played before and after an Action. When playing a card, resolve the card's effect and then place it in the discard pile. Cards allow you to alter the map and create new paths. (See "Card Reference")

Action*: = 1 Move + 1 Interaction (in that order)

- **Move***: Travel as far as connected paths allow. A Move ends when you stop or Interact.
- **Interaction***: Perform a pickup, delivery, or handover of a *dabba*. (See "Interaction Rules")

* = optional

END YOUR TURN

Draw 1 card from the draw pile, unless your Role card says otherwise.

INTERACTION RULES

Pick Up: To pick a *dabba*, you must be on the adjacent road tile and the road tile must be connected to the *dabba*.



Place the picked *dabba* into 1 of the 2 slots as shown. Each cycle can carry up to 2 *dabbas* at a time.



Immediately after picking up, roll the die to place a new customer and *dabba* pair, counting empty spaces clockwise from the pickup spot (similar to the "Placing Customers and Dabbas" setup step). After the last *dabba* is placed, you no longer need to roll the die.

Deliver: To deliver a *dabba* to a customer, you must be on the adjacent road tile and the road tile must be connected to the customer. Place the *dabba* on the customer tile. They remain on the map's perimeter.



Handover: When moving, if you encounter another player's cycle, you may choose to stop to transfer *dabbas*. You can give or take multiple *dabbas*.

A player's cycle does not interrupt your Move.

GAME END

When the last card is drawn, every player gets 1 final turn. By then, deliver all 6 dabbas to the matching colored customers to win!

EXAMPLE TURN

Let's look at **Raj** (gray cycle) with the Pickup Boost Role and **Riya** (white cycle) with the Delivery Boost Role. The green and pink customer and *dabba* pairs are on the map.



In Raj's turn (gray cycle)
Route Card #1: He plays a Rotate Road card to rotate tile **A** on the map by 180 degrees. This connects his cycle to the green *dabba*.
Action #1:

- **Move**: He moves his cycle on this path to the green *dabba*.
- **Interaction**: He picks the green *dabba*. Immediately, he rolls a 3 and 2 on the die to place a new yellow customer and *dabba* pair at tile **B** and tile **C**.

He could play his Address Change card, but chooses to save it for later.
Action #2: The Pickup Boost Role gives him a bonus Action.

- **Move**: He moves to Riya at tile **D**.
- **Interaction**: He hands over the *dabba*.

Draw: He draws 2 cards to end his turn, as mentioned on his Role card.

After Raj's Turn:



In Riya's turn (white cycle)
Route Card #1: She plays a Swap Lanes card to swap tiles **E** and **F**. As she swaps, she also rotates them as needed. This connects her to the green customer.
Route Card #2: She plays a Look Back card to copy the Rotate Road card in the discard pile that Raj played. She rotates tile **C**, to connect the path to the yellow *dabba*.
Action #1: She decides to deliver the green *dabba* first since she has the Delivery Boost.

- **Move**: She moves to tile **K**.
- **Interaction**: She delivers the green *dabba*.

Action #2: Her Role gives a bonus Action.

- **Move**: She moves to tile **C**.
- **Interaction**: She picks the yellow *dabba*. She rolls to place the next pair (blue).

Draw: She draws 1 card to end her turn.

After Riya's Turn:



In Raj's turn (gray cycle)
Route Card #1: He plays his Address Change card to move the pink *dabba* to tile **G**.
Action #1:

- **Move**: He moves his cycle to tile **G**.
- **Interaction**: He picks the pink *dabba* and rolls the die to place the next pair (orange).

Action #2:

- **Move**: He moves his cycle to tile **F**.
- **Interaction**: He picks the blue *dabba* and rolls to place the next pair (gray).

Action #3: He could have picked the gray *dabba* but his cycle is at max capacity of 2.

- **Move**: Instead, he moves to Riya's cycle.
- **Interaction**: He hands over the blue *dabba* to her cycle.

Draw: He draws 2 cards to end his turn.

After Raj's Turn:



THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Now you're all set. **Read your Role cards** out loud so everyone knows each other's strengths. The **oldest** player starts. Good luck!

Advanced Mode

Learn: 10 mins | **Setup**: 10 mins | **Play:** 40 mins

Experience the full chaos of Mumbai, with unique events that add traffic to certain routes! Luckily, you have new tools and special side quest rewards at your disposal.

Setup

Follow the standard mode setup with these **modifications**:

1. BUILDING THE MAP
Same as standard rules.

2. PLACING CUSTOMERS AND DABBAS
Same as standard rules.

3. CONFIGURING CARDS
All cards are in play, including cards with 🌶️.

4. PICKING ROLES
For your first game, pick from this suggested set of Roles: Pickup Boost, Delivery Boost, The Strategist, Traffic Expert, Station Master.

5. SETTING UP THE DRAW PILE
Separate the cards into: 4 **Event** cards, 4 **Challenge** cards, 2 **Green Light** cards, and the remaining 21 **Route** cards.

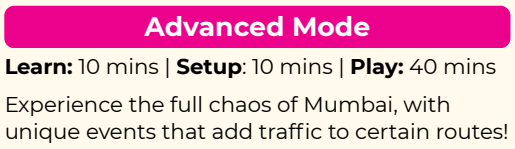
Follow the standard steps for "Setting Up The Draw Pile", then perform this step:

4. Divide the draw pile into 2 decks. Shuffle 2 **Event** cards and 1 **Green Light** card into each, then stack the decks to form the final draw pile face-down.

6. SETTING UP THE TOKENS
In addition to the standard setup, place the 4 **traffic cones** and 2 **stations** nearby.

7. SETTING UP THE CHALLENGE CARDS
Shuffle the cards and draw 2, placing them face-up. Return unused cards to the box.

The Setup Diagram:



How To Play

GOAL
The goal is the same: work together to **deliver 6 *dabbas*** before the lunch hour ends (when the draw pile runs out).

IN YOUR TURN
In addition to the standard rules:

Route Cards: Some cards allow players to place stations and remove traffic cones.

Move: You can move between 2 stations. If you encounter a traffic cone, you must stop there. (See "Move Rules")

Challenge Cards: These cards have side quests. On completion, claim 1 of the 2 rewards on the card and discard the card without replacement. Remember to periodically check if a challenge has been completed.

END YOUR TURN
In addition to the standard rules, when an **Event** card is drawn, you must resolve it immediately. Place a traffic cone on the tile indicated, discard the card and draw again.

MOVE RULES
In addition to the standard rules:

Stuck in Traffic: If your cycle encounters a tile with a traffic cone, you must:

1. **Stop** on that tile. You cannot perform an Interaction this Action.
2. You must place your **marker** on that tile. This indicates that you are stuck in traffic.



In your next turn, you can

1. **Remove** your marker
2. Perform an **Action** as usual

Note: Players are stuck in traffic only once while on a traffic tile. If you leave the tile and return, you'll have to stop again.

Traffic cones can be removed using a **Green Light** card or by completing a **Challenge** card.

Stations: Stations allow players to move between disconnected tiles. Certain cards let players place a new station on a road tile, or relocate an existing station. There are only 2 stations. Once both are on the map, you can treat the 2 underlying tiles as connected.



EXAMPLE TURN
Let's look at the example from the standard mode, but now with the advanced mode modifications. 2 Challenge cards are in play.

Raj has just finished his Action. At the end of his turn, he draws an Event card that forces him to place a traffic cone on tile **B**. He discards the card and draws another card to end his turn.

After Raj's turn:



In Riya's turn (white cycle)
Challenge: She notices that Raj has moved his cycle across 8 tiles, thus completing the Longest Move Challenge card. She claims the station reward and places one on tile **C**. They still need another station.
Route Card #1: She plays the Swap Lanes card to swap tiles **K** and **E**.
Action #1:
- **Move**: She moves to tile **K**.
- **Interaction**: She delivers to the blue customer.

Action #2:
- **Move**: She moves to the yellow customer but stops on tile **B** for the traffic cone. She places her marker on the tile to indicate that she is stuck in traffic.
- **Interaction**: She can't do an Interaction because she is stuck in traffic.

Draw: She draws an Event card, places a traffic cone on tile **K**, discards the card and draws another card to end her turn.

After Riya's Turn:



In Raj's turn (gray cycle)
Route Card #1: He plays a Catching The Local card and places a station on tile **H**.
Action #1:
- **Move**: He uses the station at tile **C** to move to tile **H** and continues on to the orange dabba.
- **Interaction**: He picks the orange *dabba*.

Action #2.
- **Move**: He moves to Riya's cycle.
- **Interaction**: He hands over the orange *dabba*.

Draw: He draws 2 cards to end his turn.

After Raj's Turn:



In Riya's turn (white cycle)
Action #1: She removes her marker. She doesn't have to stay on tile **B** anymore (unless she leaves and comes back to **B**).
- **Move**: She skips her Move.
- **Interaction**: She delivers the yellow *dabba*.

Route Card #1: Luckily, she has a Green Light card. She uses it to remove the traffic cone on tile **K**.
Action #2:
- **Move**: She moves to tile **L**.
- **Interaction**: She picks up the gray *dabba*.

Draw: She draws a card to end her turn.

After Riya's Turn:

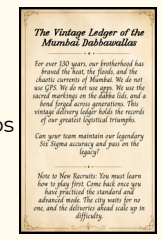


FAQs and More Examples

Confused about something? Need more examples? Scan this QR code or head to dabbadashgame.com/faq to learn more.

The Vintage Ledger

The **Vintage Ledger** holds the records of the dabbawallas greatest logistical triumphs. Spanning across 130 years, each entry introduces unique scenarios with escalating difficulty. The challenges are designed to test experienced teams. Can your team maintain the legendary Six Sigma accuracy and pass on the legacy?



Route Card Reference

Rotate Road: Rotate any tile in any direction. May rotate a tile even with a cycle, traffic cone (🌶️), or station (🌶️). (x9)

Swap Lanes: Swap 2 unoccupied tiles. Rotate them as needed. May not swap tiles with a cycle, traffic cone (🌶️), or station (🌶️). (x5)

Address Change: Move any customer or unpicked *dabba* 1 empty space along the map's perimeter in either direction. (x2)

Look Back: Copy 1 of the top 3 Route cards in the discard pile. Maintain the order of the deck. (x2)

Catching The Local (🌶️): Place a new station or relocate an existing station onto any tile. (x3)

Green Light (🌶️): Remove 1 traffic cone from any tile. (x2)

Role Card Reference

Delivery Boost: You can perform a bonus Action after delivering a *dabba*. You can play Route cards in between Actions.

Pickup Boost: You can perform a bonus Action after picking up a *dabba*. You must always draw 2 cards at the end of your turn. You can play Route cards in between Actions.

Handover Boost: You can perform a bonus Action after a handover. Others can perform a bonus Action after a handover with you, once per turn. You can play Route cards in between Actions.

The Strategist: You can discard any card to copy 1 of the top 3 Route cards in the discard pile. Maintain the order of the deck. With the Look Back card, copy 1 from the top 6.

The Operator: For your Action, you can move another player's cycle and utilize their Role. You may not use their Role while playing Route cards.

The Chameleon: At the start of your turn, you can pick a player and copy their Role. You must always draw 2 cards at the end of your turn.

Station Master (🌶️): You can trade your Action to place a new station or relocate an existing station onto any tile.

Traffic Expert (🌶️): You can move through a traffic cone without stopping, once per Action.

Challenge Card Reference

Longest Road (🌶️): Challenge - Make a continuous road path of a length of 10 tiles (no stations). Reward - Remove 1 traffic cone. OR Move any customer or unpicked *dabba* 1 empty space along the map's perimeter in either direction.

Traffic Removal (🌶️): Challenge - Remove 3 traffic cones from the map. Place them on this card. Reward - Pick any Route card from the top 6 cards in the discard pile. OR Move any cycle along a valid path.

Longest Move (🌶️): Challenge - Move a cycle across 8 tiles (roads or stations) with no tile repeats (no loops or detours). Reward - Place a new station or relocate an existing station onto any tile. OR Move any cycle along a valid path.

Diagonal Path (🌶️): Challenge - Connect opposite corners of the map (roads or stations). Reward- Place a new station or relocate an existing station onto any tile. OR Pick any Route card from the top 6 cards in the discard pile.

Event Card Reference

Monsoon Season (🌶️): Add 1 traffic cone on the tile with this symbol. Draw another card.

BMC Construction (🌶️): Add 1 traffic cone on the tile with this symbol. Draw another card.

Filming in Town (🌶️): Add 1 traffic cone on the tile with this symbol. Draw another card.

Cow on the Road (🌶️): Add 1 traffic cone on the tile with this symbol. Draw another card.

About The *Dabbawallas*

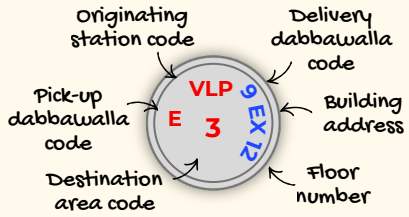
"**Dabba**" means lunchbox, and "**walla**" means the person who carries it.

130 years ago, a Parsi banker craved traditional home-cooked food instead of eating unfamiliar British or local street fare. So he hired a delivery man. Soon this became popular among the office workers. An entrepreneur named Mahadeo Havaji Bachche recognized the opportunity and organized the first team of ~100 dabbawallas to scale the service.

Today, **5,000** dedicated delivery men in white kurtas and Gandhi caps fan out across the city. Using bicycles, handcarts, and Mumbai's local trains, they deliver over **200,000** hot lunches every day and collect every empty dabba to return it home by late afternoon.

Despite the monsoon rain, heat, and traffic, they operate with near **Six Sigma** accuracy (less than one mistake in six million transactions) - all without digital tracking.

Each dabba lid is hand-painted with a visual **alphanumeric code** that dictates the route it must take to reach its customer.



Colors help visually identify which dabbawalla group owns the lunchbox, preventing mix-ups between teams operating at the same station.

Credits

Game Designers: Viha Gupta & Karan Rajpal
Playtesters: Riddhi, Surya, Heta, Arushi, Sumegha, Anirudh, Rocco, Andy, David, Ryan, Tam, William, Alex, Mike, Nathan, Pradeep, Anita, Manish, Neha, Bhavesh, Geet, Ram, Nainaa, Vivek, Divya, Akshay, Stuti, Anan, Srishti & more.

Thank you for all your help ❤️

CHAI TABLE GAMES