How to print your natal card

You get three print files, one for each way of printing. If you're not sure, start with the paper card: almost every print shop can make it.

CARD	FILE	WHERE
Paper card Easiest · almost anywhere	Print PDF (paper card)	Almost any print shop
Plastic card, one at a time Single plastic cards	Print PDF (card printers)	ID card shops, some online shops
Digital press or UV printer, bank card size Highest quality · digital press (or UV)	Print PDF (digital press / UV)	Print shops and card makers, bigger orders

EVERY TIME

- **Check one card first:** the small words (like MERCURY or ether-real.com) should be readable, and the QR code on the back should open your page when you scan it.
- Printed cards look a little darker than on screen, and gold looks flatter: no printer prints shiny metallic gold without foil.
- If you make a new QR code later, cards you already printed stop working. Print again from a freshly downloaded file.

Your natal card is a digital product: you get the files and these instructions, and EtheReal doesn't print or ship physical cards. · ether-real.com/natal-card.html#howprint

EASIEST · ALMOST ANYWHERE

Paper card

Printed like a premium business card: with a digital press on thick paper, laminated, and cut to the standard business card size (85 × 55 mm, almost exactly bank card size). Almost every print shop can make it, it comes out sharp and detailed, and it's cheap enough to print a whole stack.

Use the file **Print PDF (paper card)** `(ethereal-natal-card-print-business-card.pdf)`

WHERE TO PRINT IT

Any print shop that does digital printing: the kind that prints flyers, posters and business cards. Most towns have several.

WHAT TO ASK FOR

1. **Business cards, 85 × 55 mm, printed on both sides.** Page 1 of the file is the front, page 2 the back.
2. **Thick paper**, 350 g or heavier.
3. **Laminated on both sides**: glossy or matte. Soft-touch matte feels the most premium.
4. **Rounded corners**, about 3 mm, if they offer it.
5. **No scaling:** the file already has 3 mm of extra background around the edge for cutting.

WHAT IT COSTS

It usually costs about what a box of business cards does, and many shops print 50 or 100 at a time. If a shop does single cards, ask for one test card first.

GOOD TO KNOW

- Thinner than a plastic card, so it bends more, like a business card. The lamination protects it from scratches and splashes; just don't leave it soaking.

SINGLE PLASTIC CARDS

Plastic card, one at a time

A real plastic (PVC) card like a bank or ID card, printed on a card printer onto a ready-made blank card, one card at a time. This is the usual way to get just one or a few plastic cards. The quality depends on the printer: an HDP printer gives a very good card, a cheaper thermal printer a noticeably weaker one.

> Use the file **Print PDF (card printers)** `(ethereal-natal-card-print.pdf)`

WHERE TO PRINT IT

Shops that make ID, membership or loyalty cards, and some online shops that post single plastic cards to you (look for “retransfer” or “HDP” and “from 1 piece”). Not every shop prints a single card, so call first.

WHICH CARD PRINTER

- **HDP (also called retransfer): the best card printer for your card.** The color goes right over the edge and dark backgrounds come out smooth.
- **UV printer?** Use the digital press and UV file instead (below): it has the extra edge a UV printer needs.
- **Thermal (direct-to-card): the cheapest, but the weakest.** It often leaves a thin white edge, softer small text and tiny specks on dark cards.

WHAT TO ASK FOR

1. **One double-sided plastic (PVC) card**, bank card size 85.6 × 54 mm (also called CR80).
2. **An HDP printer** (also called retransfer) if they have one, in its best quality mode, at 600 dpi if possible.
3. **Print at 100%**, no “fit to page”: the file is already exactly card size. Page 1 is the front, page 2 the back.

WHAT IT COSTS

Many of these shops mostly work for companies, so not every one will print a single card. Some add a small setup fee for one card.

GOOD TO KNOW

- Ready-made blank cards already have rounded corners.
- Turn the test card over left to right: the back should be the right way up. If it comes out upside down, the shop can fix it with one setting in its card printer ("rotate back 180°").

HIGHEST QUALITY · DIGITAL PRESS (OR UV)

Digital press or UV printer, bank card size

The highest quality of all. A digital press gives the sharpest card: many cards are printed together on a big sheet and cut out at the exact bank card size, 85.6 × 54 mm, on thick paper or plastic. A UV printer is the other way to get a real plastic card, on a sheet or straight onto ready-made blank plastic cards. It is very good too, but a little less sharp than a digital press on the smallest words and thinnest lines. This one file works for both.

Use the file **Print PDF (digital press / UV)** `(ethereal-natal-card-print-digital-press.pdf)`

WHERE TO PRINT IT

Print shops and card makers with a digital press or a UV printer. If a shop has both, ask for the digital press. Printing on sheets is usually for bigger orders; some shops with a UV printer also print a few cards onto ready-made blank cards.

WHAT TO ASK FOR

1. **Bank card size, 85.6 × 54 mm**, printed on both sides (page 1 is the front, page 2 the back).
2. **No scaling:** the file has 3 mm of extra background around the edge. On a sheet it is cut off; on a ready-made blank card the UV printer prints just past the edge, so no white rim is left.
3. **Rounded corners**, 3.2 mm, like a bank card (ready-made blank cards already have them).
4. Your material: thick laminated paper (350 g or more), or plastic (PVC).

WHAT IT COSTS

Paper is cheap, plastic costs more. Ask for a test card before a bigger order.

GOOD TO KNOW

- If the shop asks for a file without the extra edge, give them the card printer file (print.pdf): it is exactly card size.