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Your Cardano onboarding guide

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Olga Hryniuk

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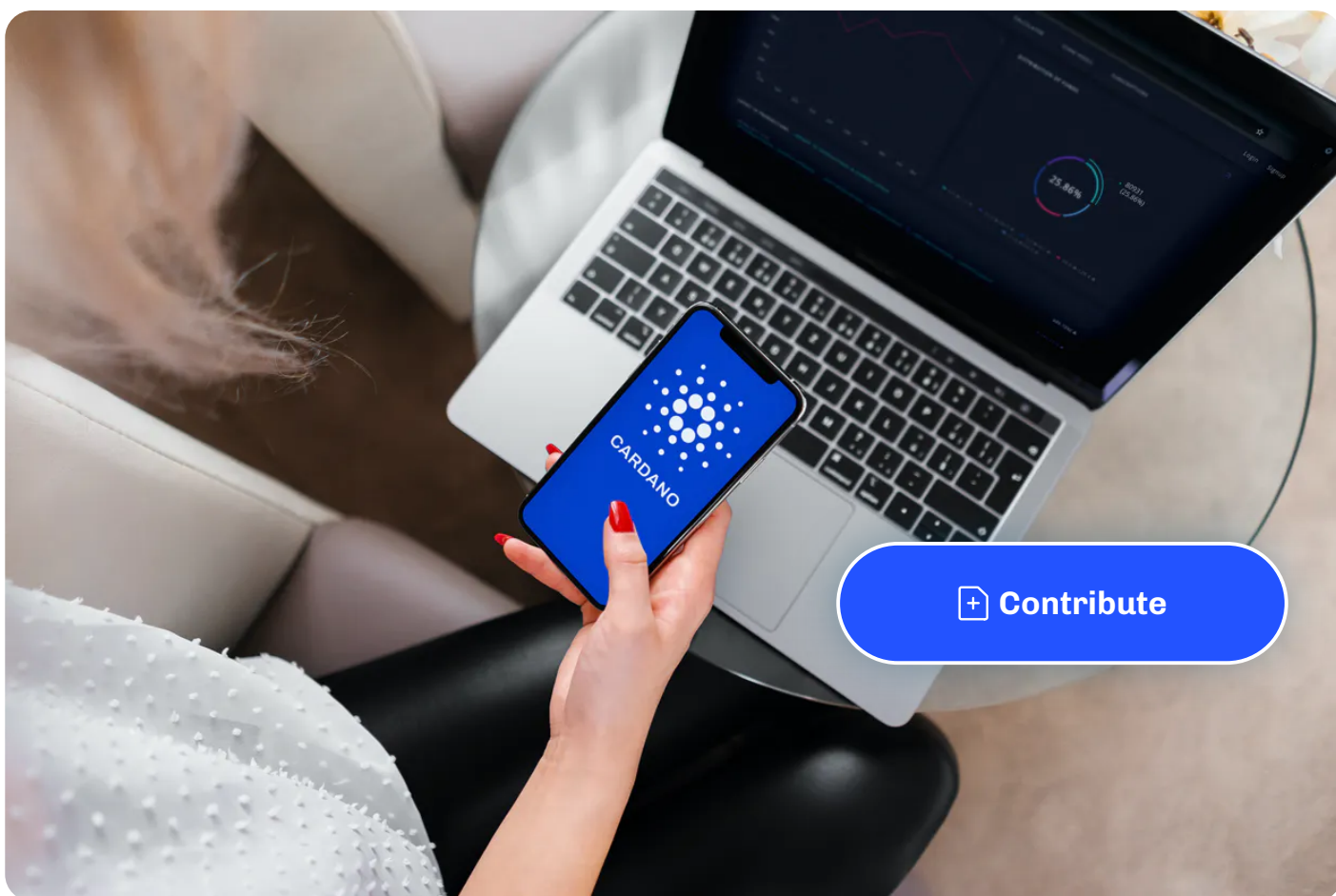
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Cardano



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Your Cardano onboarding guide



New to Cardano? No worries, here's a list of essentials to get you started

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Blockchain is one of the most influential technologies of the 21st century. It provides solutions for more efficient business processes, data traceability, and, of course, decentralized digital payments.

The platform's evolution has attracted massive amounts of new users into the Cardano ecosystem. Specifically, Cardano has delivered some of the most promising features that position the platform as a secure and versatile environment for application development and enterprise deployment.

However, despite the increasing numbers joining the space, getting onboard remains challenging for the average user. Onboarding often involves complex processes that lack visibility or clear information for the new user.

Getting started with Cardano

So let's say you heard about the benefits of blockchain technology and about Cardano in particular. You're now interested to see how it works and how you can benefit from it. Where to start? To streamline your Cardano journey, we have compiled a list of essential resources and some tips to get you started.

Learn some basics

Let's start with the blockchain basics:

- [What is a blockchain?](#)
- [What is a cryptocurrency?](#)
- [What is consensus?](#)
- [What is proof of stake?](#)

Now that you know how a blockchain works and what a cryptocurrency is, it is time to learn more about Cardano.

Cardano aims to provide an opportunity for global communities to easily access and use the blockchain in their daily lives. Using blockchain, you can for example send funds to your friends, pay for products or services, or use decentralized applications (DApps). Yet, blockchain is much more than just a financial system.

You can go over [Essential Cardano FAQs](#) or ['New to Cardano' section on Cardano Docs](#) to learn more about Ouroboros, ada, and what makes Cardano a third-generation blockchain:

- [What is Cardano?](#)
- [What makes Cardano a third-generation blockchain?](#)
- [How does Cardano work?](#)
- [What is Ouroboros?](#)
- [Why is Cardano called the 'green blockchain'?](#)
- [Why use Cardano?](#)

Getting involved

Having read about the basics you're now ready to try Cardano out.

Let's start with some simple payments. You will first need to choose and create a [wallet](#) and get some [ada](#).

1. Explore different types of cryptocurrency wallets and download the one that suits your needs best. Make sure it supports ada:
 - [Types of wallets](#)
2. Explore and choose a cryptocurrency exchange to get some ada:
 - [How to purchase ada?](#)
3. Try out the wallet. Ask your friend for their wallet address and try sending some minimal amount of ada.
4. You can now track your transactions and activities using Cardano Explorer. See how to use the tracking tools and find your recent transaction there:
 - [Cardano tracking tools](#)

Understanding staking and delegation

As an ada holder, you own a stake that is the amount of ada you have. This means that you are now part of the Cardano network and can help maintain it. A developer or a tech-savvy person can set up a stake pool and run it to help verify transactions, create blocks, and get rewards.

If you are not interested in running your own pool, you can instead choose to delegate your stake to an existing pool and share its rewards. There is no risk to this and no ada leaves your wallet. Ada can be delegated from your wallet or spent at any time.

Ada holders can delegate stake using their wallets. Here are some useful articles to review:

- [How to choose a stake pool](#)
- [How safe is it to delegate to a stake pool?](#)
- [How to delegate to a stake pool](#) using Daedalus
- [Staking and delegating for beginners](#) (Daedalus)
- [How to delegate from the Yoroi wallet](#)
- [What other wallets support staking?](#)

Being part of decision making and innovation

One of the key pillars for Cardano's long-term sustainability is active community engagement and participation. The Voltaire phase of the Cardano roadmap will introduce community voting mechanisms to democratize decision-making so every ada holder can vote on Cardano's changes and upgrades.

The process of decentralized governance has already started. Project Catalyst is one of the world's largest decentralized innovation funds, where ada holders can vote on the most promising projects to get funded from the treasury.

There are many ways to get involved with Project Catalyst – as an innovator, voter, commenter, proposer, proposal reviewer, community advisor, or even a mentor. The first step is [creating an account](#) on the Catalyst collaboration platform, Ideascale.

Find out more:

- [Project Catalyst and Voltaire bring power to the people](#)
- [Project Catalyst Innovation](#)
- [Cardano Catalyst community site](#)

Ready for more? Discover decentralized finance (DeFi)

Decentralized finance or DeFi is a blockchain-based form of finance that addresses the same needs as traditional finance. The goal of DeFi is to help individuals and companies engage in financial activity without going through a central, expensive middleman such as a bank.

The DeFi explainer unpacks the complexity of some blockchain notions. Head over and take

a look at what terms like DeFi, RealFi, DApp, DEX, liquidity, and so on mean:

- [DeFi demystified](#)

You can now experiment with some DApps. Just like a mobile app runs on your iOS or Android device, a Cardano DApp runs on the Cardano blockchain. There are various categories of DApps, from gaming and health to finance and government applications.

There are a number of community-driven resources gathering information about the latest projects launched on Cardano:

- [CardanoCube](#)
- [Built on Cardano](#)
- [Cardano crowd](#)

Non-fungible tokens

Every ada is the same as another. You can trade one ada for another and get the same value; this means that ada is fungible.

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs), on the other hand, are unique and can represent digital ownership rights of real-world assets such as a building or a painting. Anyone can create their own NFTs on Cardano without needing a smart contract, which avoids the error-prone complexity found on Ethereum, for example. This makes Cardano NFTs more secure, cheaper, and faster to transact with.

NFTs have been booming recently. You can create, buy, and sell digital representations of anything - drawings, video clips, music, tweets, articles, trading cards, game items, and more. Make sure to explore:

- [Cardano NFTs: everything you need to know](#)
- [CNFT](#)
- [Cardano cube: NFT projects](#)

What do you need to know about smart contracts?

A smart contract is an automated digital agreement that tracks, verifies, and executes the binding parts of a deal between various parties. The contract stages are automatically executed when predetermined conditions are met.

As a beginner, you don't need to dive straight into how to write a smart contract. What's

important to know is that DApps use smart contracts for you to experience safe deal execution.

Cardano provides the possibility to work with Plutus and Marlowe contracts:

- Plutus is a set of programming tools for developers to write smart contracts on Cardano.
- Marlowe is a 'domain specific' language designed specially for writing financial smart contracts. It is limited to financial applications and its 'low-code' approach means it is perfect for experts in finance rather than in programming.

If you're interested in learning how to write Plutus and Marlowe contracts, you can take part in the [Plutus Pioneer](#) and [Marlowe Pioneer](#) training courses.

Digital identity

Identity is key to accessing a range of private and public services. From opening a bank account to obtaining loans or a driver's license, access to education, etc., the need to prove to others who we are is almost omnipresent in everyday life.

Atala PRISM is a decentralized identity solution on Cardano. It enables people to own their personal data and interact with organizations seamlessly, privately, and securely. Visit the [Atala PRISM website](#) for more information.

Continue exploring

To conclude we should state that this is just the beginning. You have probably chosen the topics that interest you most about Cardano. Here's a handy list of resources to keep going:

- [Essential Cardano](#)
- [IOHK blog](#)
- [IOHK Twitter](#)
- [Cardano Docs](#)
- [Cardano developer portal](#)
- [Cardano Foundation](#)
- [Emurgo](#)
- [Cardano Forum](#)

- [Cardano community](#)

 1 Comments

 Michael Murray | June 2, 2022

Perhaps add a bulletpoint list of unique Cardano features, e.g.: - Native, liquid staking (no lockup on staked coins) - Self custodial staking (coins don't leave wallet) - 3rd largest community (after BTC & ETH) - High Nakamoto Coefficient/MAV (decentralized) - Low inflation % - Low, stable, fees - 100% uptime, no restarts - Hard fork combinator to allow smooth updates - Treasury funded by tx fees (Catalyst) - Mint tokens on base layer (no smart contract/ERC-20 needed) - Send multiple assets in 1 tx - 3000+ SPOs (stake pools/block producers) - Fixed token qty, monetary policy never changed - High-security programming language (Haskell/Plutus) - No failed tx fees - No slashing



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 1 contributors



Olga Hryniuk | contributed June 2, 2022

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[Foundation](#)



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