

ISLAND IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

MADEIRA

FROM WOOD TO WINE

Introduction

MADEIRA is a complex game for expert players based on the development of the island with the same name, discovered by the Portuguese Explorers in the 15th Century and developed step by step by their settlers. The box contains quite a lot of components: the Board (720x480 mm) shows the main island of Madeira (Portuguese word for "Wood") and the smaller island of Porto Santo, located 50 km north East. The playing area is divided in Regions (region 1 is Porto Santo, Region 2 is the Southern part of Madeira and Region 3 is in the North) and each Region has 4 or 5 Fields. Each Field contains a symbol to show what is produced there (Wheat, Sugar, Wine or Wood): some resources are initially covered by wood tokens to simulate the initial situation, but once that you used the wood you will discover the final resource. Also on the board are depicted 5 areas (Cities, City Watch, Wind Mill, Colonies and Markets) that we will examine later. Around the board we have the usual Prestige Points (PP) track.

A smaller board (there are in effect two of them called GUILD board: one for the 4 players game and one for 2/3 players) will be used to define each turn order and to show the different CROWN requests that the players should satisfy to gain PP points. It is very important to understand from the beginning that you have to pay the highest attention possible to this board in order to collect the necessary requests at the right time: this means that you have also to decide if and when you want to go FIRST. Remember that you will win the game only if you satisfy the Crown requests so the right selection of the Guild Tile at the right moment is crucial.

The other components are ... classic: wooden colored meeples for workers, ships and markers (3 discs and 3 squares); cardboard tiles for the different resources (wood, bread, wheat, sugar, wine); cardboard larger tiles for the other tasks (Crown Requests, Guild Favors and Kings Rewards); cardboard round coins (Reals and Pirates) and four Characters cards. Finally we get 12 green "Guild" dice and 3 black "Pirate" dice (all of them are six sided dice showing twice each the numbers "1", "2" and "3").

During the Set-Up you fill the different areas of the board and then you give to each player his initial resources: 5 "Reals" (the money of the game), 4 "Bread" and 1 each of the other resources. Then you randomly distribute the 4 "starting" Crowns Requests (one to each player) that are the first objective: they also determine the order of the first turn.

Put one of your round markers on the appropriate turn position and put the other two round markers on position 3 of the Wind mill (to grant you 3 free Breads to feed your workers at the end of the turn) and on position "0" of the PP track. Randomly take the four Characters (Steward, Guild Master, Mayor and Commander) and place them on 4 of the five buildings depicted on the map.



It is time to roll the dice: the 3 black ones are placed in the City Watch and the others on the four lines of the Guild Board (3 per line).

In reverse order players now place one of their workers in one of the three cities (Porto Santo, Funchal and Machico) and two other workers in two different areas of the islands. Finally 2 workers are placed on the City Watch. Each player starts the game with those 5 workers on the game board and another 7 workers (plus 6 ships) in Reserve.

Let's start playing

Each turn has five phases to follow:

Phase A - Each player in turn selects one of the four lines of the Guild Board, takes the 3 green dice and select one of the 5 Crown Requests of that line: after turn 1 everybody will have two Requests in his hands and his strategy for the first turn should be decided accordingly, in order to be able to get the most PP at the turn's end. In the following

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Madeira is suggested to expert players that like long term strategies and do not fear 2-3 hours of tense and interactive gaming.

turns this move may also change the order: the player who select the first row of the Guild Board will be the first to play during the turn, the one on the second line will be second, etc. More on that on the final hint.

Phase B - It is time now to place the dice on the characters/buildings areas: novices usually have some problems in understanding how it works so I will be a little longer in my explanation.

Each building is connected to one of the 3 Regions and will allow the players who selected it to perform a special action:

- MOINHO will grant "bread" (2 Breads if you have 1-2 workers on that Region, 5 Bread if you have 3 or more workers)

- CAPITANIA will allow you to place new "citizens" (your workers) in the cities (1 citizen if you have 1-2 workers in the Region, 2 if you have 3 or more workers) and to get 1 or 3 PP.

- ALFANDEGA will allow you to place 1-2 "settlers" in the colonies

- CASA DA COROA will allow you to overturn 1-2 used Guild Favors (so they become again available)

- FORTALEZA will allow you to place 1-2 "soldiers" in the City Watch.

The correct use of the Buildings' special actions will allow you to reach your goals.



In every turn four of the five buildings will also have a Character randomly placed on

top (one building will remain empty in each turn): the Characters give you the possibility to perform a harvest action (you collect 1 resource per worker from the areas that you occupy on that Region) OR one of the following special actions:

- The STEWARD allows you to "move" two workers on the fields (areas) of the islands: you may take new workers from your Reserve or you may displace workers already on the board (but do not forget that you have to feed all your workers at the turn's end)

- The GUILD MASTER allows you to purchase one of the Guild Favors: you simply select one of the 12 Favors (4 tiles for each city) and pay it with "wood" (2-3-4-5 woods, depending on its position on the city). Note that when you take a tile you discover two new houses in that city.

- The MAYOR allows you to "move" TWO workers between the Cities: you may move your own workers or the "neutral" workers (there are three of them already in place since the set-up) or a mix of them. Then you collect resources: 2 for each of your workers and 1 for each "neutral" in each towns (Bread in Porto Santo; Reals in Funchal; Wood in Machico). So if you have, for example, 2 colored workers and 1 neutral in Funchal you get 5 Reals, etc.

- The COMMANDER allows you to place or move up to 2 of your ships: if you takes a ship from your reserve you have to pay 1 wood while moving a ship already on the board is free. You select the place where you want to send the ships and you pay the related cost (in resources). There are 3 Colonies (Azores, Brazil and India) and 3 Markets (for wheat, sugar and wine) but only 5 places available in each zone.

The first 2 ships in each Colony have to pay 1 wine (but may immediately collect and use one of the two KING REWARDS initially available there), the 3rd and 4th must pay 2 wine and the 5th 3 wines.

The 1st ship in each Market must to pay 1 resource (wheat in first market, sugar in the second or wine in the third) but will get a rewards in Reals (3-5-4); the 2nd will pay 2 resources (getting 6-8-7 Reals) and so on. The decision to send ships on Colonies and/or Markets depends mostly from the Crown Requests that you collected.

Are you still with me? OK? So let's go on ...

HOW IT WORKS

Now that we know how to use buildings and Characters let's go back to Phase B: in turn order each player places ONE DIE on one Character and immediately perform the related special action (workers, ships, etc.) or the harvest action (his choice). He also places a square marker in the building. It is possible to use a Pirate die instead (without placing your colored square marker), but you may do this only if you have a worker on the CityWatch: this worker is then send back to your reserve. Sending a pirate die allows you to perform only the Character bonus action and (mostly) to disturb the other players.

Dice may be placed in a Region (I mean "over" a Character that is connected to a Region) only if their numbers (1-2-3) match or are higher than that Region's number (remember: Porto Santo is "1" so you may use any die, Madeira South is "2" and you may use only dice with a "2" or a "3" and the North is "3"). Hopefully if you have a low numbered die you may still use it in a Region with a higher value if you pay the difference in "Bread". So, for example, you may use a die "1" in Madeira North paying "2 bread" to the bank (so you satisfy the requested "3").

Each Character may accept a number of dice equal to the number of players but never more than one black die. (So on a Character you may have up to 3 green dice and 1 black die or 4 green dice).

Phase C - It is now time to BUILD: starting from building 1 (Moinho) all the players that have a square market here may use the related action, provided that they pay the cost of the construction. Each Building has a basic cost of 10 REALS. All dice present on that building are rolled again and the green ones are added: their total is subtracted by the basic cost and the result is the amount of Reals that each player need to pay (if, for example, in Moinho we have 3 green dice and their total is 7 you should pay only 3 Reals). If you pay you are allowed to perform the action related to that building (taking bread in Moinho, for example): if you cannot or if you do not wish to pay you cannot perform that action and you also get a penalty of 1 Pirate token. If a black die is also present on that building his number is added to the 1 Pirate basic penalty. (Note also that the black numbers are not subtracted by the basic cost of each building: so putting a black die on a building that you will not use is a really disturbing action against your opponents).

Phase D - In this phase players get some PP points and receive goods from the Colonies,

but they must also pay the maintenance cost for their ships and feed their workers. In detail:

- The player with most workers of the CITY WATCH may get 4 PP if he decides to take back one of his men (his worker goes back to the player's reserve and may be used again later).

- Each settler on the colonies will get 1 resource of the type indicated (wheat from The Azores, sugar from Brazil and wine from India)

- For each ship on board the player must pay 1 wood (maintenance)

- For each worker on the board the player must pay 1 bread (using also those on the Wind Mill)

Phase E - During this phase PP points are assigned and some resources of the islands may change. In detail:

- On turn I players may collect PP fulfilling the conditions of ONE of their two Crown Requests (you get one at the set up and one from the Guild Board at the beginning of the game).

- On turn II all "convertible" wheat fields becomes SUGAR

- On turn III players collect PP fulfilling the conditions of TWO Crowns Requests

- On turn IV all "convertible" sugar fields becomes WINE

- On turn V players collect PP fulfilling the conditions of the last THREE Crowns Requests

Each area has a Resource: some of them are covered by wood tiles and become available only when the wood is completely used. Some are called "convertible" because they have two drawings (example: wheat/sugar or sugar/wine). During turns II and IV if the convertible spaces are free they must be covered by a tile of the "new" type.

The game is won by the player with most PP at the game's end but ... attention: after the fifth turn all your resources are converted in Reals (1 Real per resource) and every 5 Reals give you 1 PP. Unfortunately Pirates are an annoying characteristic of this game: the player with most Pirate tokens at the end of the game will lose 16 PP; the second one will lose 8 PP and so on. If you do not have Pirates ... you are not affected, of course, so pay attention at the "Black flag with a skull"!!!

I do not wish to bore you with a detailed list of all the Crown Requests or Guild Favors or the many "small rules" that must be

explained to new players (consider about 30-40 minutes extra for this task), so I will now try to summarize what we noted during our test sessions, hoping that they will be of some help to better understand this interesting game.

A few hints on play

- Your Crown Requests are the BASE for your final score, so you must try to fulfill all your SIX tiles. Your main strategy in the first turn should allow you to get the maximum PP for one of the two Requests that you have. In turn 2 you still have again two tiles and a third will arrive the turn after, so you have a clear indication on what to do in order to maximize your PP. Then you have to pay high attention on what remains available on the Guild Board after turn 3 and decide if you want to go first or second to be able to decide which line (and Tiles) to select. During one game I was obliged to take a tile that I already had in my hand so I lost a lot of points because I fulfilled only 5 requests and ... also the game was lost !!! So pay high attention on what remains available after turn 3 and decide if you want to be first or second. During Phase B keep an eye at the Guild Board and decide whether it is better to lose an action in order to go first on the next turn (and select the next Request that you absolutely need) or if it is better to get the maximum number of action "now".

- We already examined the Guild Board many times, but I never wrote about the "Bonus" that you may get: in effect the

FIRST player that decides to "pass" (if he has no more action to perform or because he want to be the first to select the next turn order) may place his marker on one of the FOUR possible available cases: Case 1 gives you 2 Reals and the opportunity to be First to select the next turn Guild line (and therefore the turn order); Case 2 allows you to place 1 worker in one city OR to get 3 Reals (and you are second to select the next Guild line); Case 3 allows you to place a worker in the City Watch (and you may get rid of 3 Pirate tokens) or to get 4 Reals; Case 4 allows you to place a ship on the board (paying the usual cost in wood) or to get 5 Reals. So be careful when you plan your actions and when nothing is really very appealing it is better to "pass" and decide your bonus and/or your options for the next turn.

- The WIND MILL also is important: here you may increase your available "free bread" paying 2 "wheat tokens" if and when you wish. You start with 3 free bread and I think that it is better to increase to 5-6 as soon as possible in order to facilitate the feeding of new workers and reduce the risk to receive Pirates tokens. But you may also SELL your "free bread" to get 1 "bread token" (sometimes necessary to increase the value of one die) or 3 Reals (if you have to pay a building). Do not forget to use those options when you need. Of course you have to place at least one worker in an area with "wheat" and harvest it sometimes.

- You also need WOOD during the game to build and to maintain your ships or to pur-

chase Guild Favors in the cities, but remember that you get Woods only if you have workers in an area with wood tokens on: once you used all that wood the area will not produce any wood again, but the new resource depicted on the board will become available. Luckily, there is one area in the island of Madeira that does not belong to any Region but has unlimited supply of wood: by turn TWO you should have a worker (and keep it) there until the game's end.

- As I wrote before you may acquire some Guild Tiles in the cities and use them to get BONUS actions: once used the tiles are reversed and cannot used again until they are overturned. You may do that at the Guild Board (selecting a line that has the same Guild color) or using the building effect of Casa da Coroa.

- The CITY WATCH may grant 4 PP per turn to the player with most workers there: that's nice but the main reason for having workers in the City Watch is that you may use a Black Pirate die (if you discard one worker). So do not forget to have at least one worker in the City Watch because sometimes is better to use a Pirate die, especially if you have very low value green dice. And, of course, remember that every time that you send a worker in the City Watch you discard 3 Pirate tokens.

- Pirates tokens are not so "heavy" during the game and sometimes it is better to get some of them instead of paying too much money for a building or for maintenance:



this will block you from using that building but you will save money for the next (surely more important) building. Pirates are also taken when you cannot maintain your ships or feed your workers. When you arrive on turns 4 or 5 you have to decide how to get rid of all (or most of) those tokens: there are some opportunities to do that (the City Watch, the Guild Favor tile "Constable", the King Reward Tiles "City Watch" and "Royal Support" if available) and you have to remember that the more Pirate you have the more ... PP you will lose, so, again, keep an eye on that "black flag".

You will not be able to perfectly learn how to play MADEIRA on your first two games: use the first to understand how the game's mechanics works and the second to try a first strategy, then you may start to really enjoy the game. Be prepared to spend more or less THREE hours on your very first game as there are a lot of rules to explain and it will take time: hopefully nothing is really difficult and the mechanics are not so innovative (after all it is a worker placement game) but tactics must be well understood if you wish to have serious possibilities to win. ☑

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INFORMATION

Designer: N. B. Sentieiro, P. Soledade
Artist: Mariano Iannelli
Price: ca. 45 Euro
Publisher: What's Your Game 2013
www.hutter-trade.de

PLAYERS:
2-4

AGE:
12+

TIME:
180+

EVALUATION

Worker placement
 Users: For experts
 Version: en
 Rules: de en fr nl
 In-game text: no

Comments:

Test games necessary * For rather experienced players * Long duration * Long-term strategies and planning are necessary

Compares to:

Other Worker Placement games

Other editions:

999 Games, iello, hobby.eu



My rating: ★★★★★

POWER PLAY BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND

RICHELIEU

SUPPORT RICHELIEU OR PROMOTE THE GREY EMINENCE

France in the 17th century. On one side of the conflict King Louis XIII. And Cardinal Richelieu fight for remaining in power, confronted by all of England, the Hapsburgs and the French nobility. If you were someone at that time, you were forced to side with someone.

This goes for the players in Richelieu, the game from White Goblins. And only if you support the "right" side you will be winning! Unfortunately, you will only now at the end of the respective power skirmishes if you have supported the "right", winning, side or will be left empty-handed after all. And if you are a real turncoat, you will enjoy of changing sides permanently, the trend is to go with the majority.

The main mechanism in Richelieu is the play for majorities. Players repeatedly choose one of the two rivaling powers and as soon as a scoring is triggered the players who put their trust in the more powerful side will win. The influencing of power structures is done by the players by placing agents onto the board. At any given time there are three power skirmishes available on the board, where you can place agents.

This board is the central element in the game on which all of the events do happen. It features the three areas already mentioned, where the balance of power between England and France are designed. Those areas are called intrigue boxes and are filled by players with agents in the course of the game. Those intrigue boxes are first covered with intrigue sheets - there are 13 of them supporting the Richelieu faction, and another 13 ones which can be grabbed by England, the French nobility, Protestants or Hapsburgs.

The sheets can be distinguished by their coat-of-arms and their background colors. Each intrigue sheet provides five spots for placing agents, a bonus for the player who contributed most to the winning of the skirmish with his agents, another bonus for the player in second place and an information on how Cardinal Richelieu will advance on the game board.

Three different counting tracks are printed onto the board; one is used for marking the amount of your own income, one for your

own military power and, finally, the obligatory prestige track - yes, in Richelieu, too, we are working or playing for Prestige, which decides the outcome of the game. This prestige track also features the starting position for Cardinal Richelieu, the red pawn in the game. The other two pawns in the game, a grey one, yes, really and incredibly grey, for the Grey Eminence or Eminence Grise and a pink one for the Queen have their given starting position on the board, which they take up, too, or - to stay in the diction of the game, even if it seems something of an exaggeration for a colored ellipse - they are in their palace.

The board is completed by two deposit areas, one for already scored agents and the other for jewelry markers, and a scoring track for the final scoring at the end of the game.

The tools for players in this game are their agents. Those agents are kept hidden and secret behind a screen. Each player commands ten agents in the guise of ten discs in his color, all with a distinct and different value of -2, 1, 2 or 3. At the start of the game each player has all his agents behind his screen.

Unfortunately those agents of yours do not work for free! In order to dispatch them to an intrigue skirmish the want to be and

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The game convinces with its simple rules and speedy flow, but offers few variations and is rather monotonous. The allure is in the correct assessment or guessing at actions of other players.

need to be paid. Fortunately you have always a bit of loose change in your pockets, either in the guise of gold coins, Louis d'Or of value 3, or as silver coins, Louis d'Argent, of value 1. At the start of the game each player owns coins of a total value of 7. Now and again it can happen that there is not enough money - sending out agents permanently on missions is rather expensive! Fortunately, you own a bit of jewelry that can be huckstered. Each player begins the game with two jewelry markers and two more jewelry markers are placed on the deposit area on the board. Jewelry can be converted into money in a separate, distinct action.