

Silk Road Game • Instructions

Preparation

Players

- Players should be in groups of 4-6. Each group represents a city along the Silk Road. The number of cities visited determines the length of the game. The box provides enough materials for 5 cities.
- Individual travelers. The number of travelers should be equal in number to the number of cities.

Playing pieces

The following sets will be prepared before beginning the game:

- Traveler cards – one set per traveler per game;
- City cards – one set per city per game (includes the “placemat” on which the banker places the banker cards);
- Chance cards – one set per game.

Traveler cards

Each traveler starts with the following:

- 3 camels
- 1 water jug
- 300 gold coins in this configuration: one–50, six-25s, five-10s, ten-5s)
- 200 or 210 gold coins worth of goods, defenders, or guides. (A mixture of types of cards is preferred. As goods are not all worth the same number of coins, all travelers will not start with the same number of cards.)

City cards

Each city starts with the following:

- 1 set of banker cards
 - five each – 5s, 10s, 25s, 50s
 - 6 water jugs
 - a placemat on which the cards are stacked
- 1 set of 12 merchant cards (includes all the goods cards, guide cards, and defender cards)
- 1 set of chance cards (things that happen to you on the Road). These cards are larger than the others.

Set-up

- The Traveler cards and City cards are distributed.
- Each city does the following:
 - Appoints 1 person in the group as banker. The banker does the following:
 - Gets the money cards and the water jug cards and places them in the correct spots on the placemat.
 - Distributes the merchant cards to everyone else in the city as evenly as possible. The players are in charge of the goods they have and make deals with them. The cards are placed face up in front of each player.

- Places the chance cards face down in the center of the table.

Play

- It is decided before the game starts how many cities each of the travelers will visit. For a full game, each traveler visits each city. (There are enough cards provided to have five travelers and five cities.) If time is limited, it may be decided that each travel only visits 2, 3, or 4 cities.
- To begin, each traveler stands at one of the cities. Each city should have no more than one traveler at a time.
- As each traveler arrives at a city, the following must happen:
 - The traveler pays 5 gold coins to the banker for food and lodging (humans and camels).
 - The traveler pays an extra 5 gold coins to the banker for food for any elephants or giraffes owned.
 - The traveler buys more water (25 gold coins) from the banker.
 - The traveler picks 1 chance card from the cards held by the city and follows the instructions.
 - While in the city and as time allows, the traveler can do any extra buying or selling desired with the city people.
- Once all deals are done at that city, all of the travelers rotate to the next city in the journey.

Note 1: The bank holds the money of all of the people in the city. It is assumed that everyone in the city has lots of money and can pay for anything they want to buy. There are no separate accounts at the bank for each city person; the money is held as one big bundle. When a deal has been made, the city person making the deal asks the bank to pay the traveler any monies owed to the traveler. The traveler pays the bank for money owed to a city person, knowing the money can be used for something else the city person wants to buy later.

Note 2: If more than one city person has something to sell that the traveler wants, the traveler is welcome to start a bidding auction to see who will sell to him/her for the least amount.

Note 3: Buying and selling can be done by both barter and cash.

Note 4: If only one person holds a card for a good or a person for hire that a traveler wants, that person can charge more than face value, if the traveler is willing to spend the money.

Note 5: Travelers keep old water jug cards even after they buy new ones at new cities. All water jugs are counted for the full value stated on the card when value is computed at the end of the game.

Winning the game

The traveler with the most value in his/her caravan (this includes money, goods, personnel, water jugs, etc.) at the end of the trip is the winner.