

Black Market



„Black Market“ is a trading game, set in bad times, which are good times for black markets. Money is worthless, there's nothing to buy in the shops and everybody tries to exchange goods against other goods which he thinks he needs.

„Black Market“ is a trading game. The players „produce“ (or simply fetch) their goods in their basements, then go to the black market where they try to exchange their goods with the other players. The value of the goods is constantly changing, depending on supply and demand. If everybody has Granny's crystal mirror on offer they will hardly get a pack of cigarettes for it, if only one player is offering cigarettes he can demand quite a lot for it.

„Black Market“ is for 3 - 6 players, 12 years or older, and takes about 90 minutes to play.

Overview

The game is played in rounds, each round the players „produce“* goods which they try to exchange for goods produced by the other players. Only goods which have been exchanged this way can then be sold for victory points. Only the wildest monger will be the winner!

Game Components

156 Wooden Cubes, 26 each of 6 different colors (each color stands for one specific good, which can be produced and traded by the players)



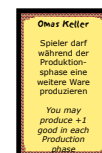
36 Wooden Discs, 6 each of 6 different colors (same colors as goods cubes). The players use these discs to indicate which goods they want to produce.



12 Wooden Discs, white color

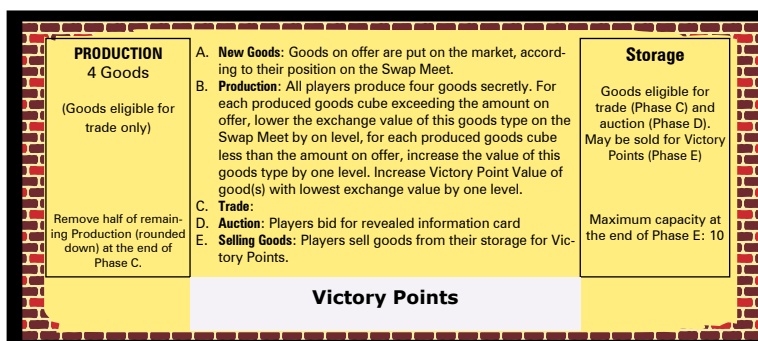


The Swap Meet Table - the left side displays the exchange value of each good. The first column is numbered from L1 to L11 in order to make replacements easier. The right side displays the additional Victory Points each good is worth at the end of the game.



10 Information cards

6 Player mats – the players place their produced and stored goods on their player mats as well as their Victory Points



* The term „Produce“ is used in a widely general meaning. You may go down to the basement and fetch some old valuables, or manufacture yourself some crockery or boil down your own jam or just get hold some way of anything you think that may be exchangeable on the black market.

Starting the game

First, each player takes six goods, one cube of each color. The players put these starting goods on their STORAGE facility on their player mat.

Next the exchange value of all sorts of goods is to be determined.

Randomly draw one cube of each color, the first cube drawn is placed on space "6" (L2 - second row from bottom) on the swap meet table, the second cube on "5" (row L3) and so on (see diagram 1). Depending on the ROW in which a good is placed the amount of new goods is shown (second column) and how many goods of this type a player must discard in order to get Victory Points, ranging from 1 to 4 (columns three to six).

Additionally one cube of each color is placed on the right side of the swap meet table ("Start" space), in order to show the additional Victory Point Value of this goods type at the end of the game. Three of these cubes, drawn randomly, are placed on the topmost row (1/0 Victory Points), two random goods cubes on the row beneath (2/0 Victory Points) and the remaining goods cube on the third row (2/1 Victory Points).







	Amount of goods on offer	Number of goods in exchange for 1-4 Victory Points				Additional Victory Points for 1st/2nd
		1 VP	2 VP	3 VP	4 VP	
L11	1	1	2	3	4	7 / 4
L10	2	2	3	4	5	6 / 3
L9	2	2	4	5	6	5 / 2
L8	3	3	5	6	7	4 / 2
L7	3 	3	6	7	8	3 / 2
L6	4 	3	6	8	9	2 / 1
L5	4 	4	6	8	10	2 / 0
L4	5 	4	7	9	11	1 / 0
L3	5 	4	7	10	12	+ 1 good(s) with lowest
L2	6 	5	8	11	13	
L1	7	5	9	12	14	

Diagram 1
Example for the set up

The following goods are placed on the table as common supply:

- 3 or 4 players 14 goods cubes of each color
- 5 players 15 goods cubes of each color
- 6 players 18 goods cubes of each color

Any remaining goods are not used in this game and are put back in the game box (0 in a 6 player game, 3 of each color in a 5 player game, 6 of each color in a 4 player game and 7 of each color in a 3 player game).

The most experienced player will become the administrator, who is responsible for executing all changes and adjustments on the swap meet table and for distributing goods after production.

One (1) information card is revealed.

Note: Victory Point(s) hereafter commonly are referred to as VP (VP's).

The Game round

The game is played in rounds; each round consists of various phases. Each phase is completed simultaneously by all players, then the next phase is completed etc.

- A. New goods
- B. Production
- C. Trade
- D. Auction of the information card
- E. Selling Goods for Victory Points

A. New goods

Each round a certain number of goods is put on the market. The exact number and composition of goods types on the market varies from round to round - depending on the „production“ of goods by the players. The second column of the swap meet table indicates how many cubes of each goods type are "on offer" this round.

In order to show this clearly for everybody, the appropriate number of cubes from the general supply is placed in the middle of the game area. This is the number of goods on offer, and this procedure is done for all six different types of goods.

Example (Diagram 2): The red goods cube is on row „L5“, so four red goods are on offer this round and therefore four red goods cubes are placed in the middle of the game area. The green goods cube is on row “L3”, so five green goods cubes are placed in the middle of the game area etc.

	Amount of goods on offer	Points			
		1 VP	2 VP	3 VP	4 VP
L11	1	1	2	3	4
L10	2	2	3	4	5
L9	2	2	4	5	6
L8	3	3	5	6	7
L7	3	3	6	7	8
L6	4	3	6	8	9
L5	4	4	6	8	10
L4	5	4	7	9	11
L3	5	4	7	10	12
L2	6	5	8	11	13
L1	7	5	9	12	14

Diagram 2

B. Production

During this game phase all players „produce“ goods simultaneously and secretly. The players use their wooden discs in order to indicate which and how many goods they want to produce.

All players have one wooden disc of each color and two white discs as wildcards. Each player chooses the colored discs of those goods they want to produce and places them on the table, hidden by their hand. The white discs can be added to any color if a player wants to produce more than one good of a specific color. The maximum production per round for every player is FOUR goods in total.

Example: Player A wants to produce one green, two red and one blue good - she takes one green, one red in combination with a white disc and one blue disc and places those discs on the table behind his hand, hidden from the view of the other players.



Player B wants to produce two yellow and two green goods - she takes one yellow and one green disc, each one combined with a white disc.



Note: As there are only two white discs for each player, the maximum production of a specific good for a player is three units.

After all players have taken their choice on which and how many goods they want to produce, they reveal their chosen discs simultaneously. Then the complete production is distributed among the players by the administrator. All players get their individual complete production, even if there aren't enough cubes “on offer”, i. e. laid out in the middle of the table.

The administrator distributes the goods cubes one color after the next, the players place their produced goods cubes in their storage facilities. The administrator first hands out those goods cubes of a specific color which were “planned” for production; these are the goods cubes which had been placed in the middle of the table before. If the total player production exceeds the amount „on offer“, the administrator hands out further goods cubes from the general supply. BUT for each good which has to be taken from the general supply, the exchange value of that good on the stock exchange table is lowered by one level. TO LOWER THE EXCHANGE LEVEL of a good means to move the corresponding goods cube one row further down on the stock exchange table. For example, if a certain good is on Level 7 (L7) and has to be lowered two levels (because two more goods were produced than offered) it is moved down to Level 5 (L5). If the production demand for a good is greater than can be met from the general supply, the game ends immediately (see below).

On the other hand, if all players have received the goods they had wanted to produce and if there still are goods on the market (in the middle of the table), the exchange value of those goods still on the market is increased by one level for each good remaining. TO INCREASE THE EXCHANGE LEVEL of a good means to move the corresponding goods cube one row further up on the stock exchange table. Any goods left on the table are put back into the general supply.

Example (diagram 3): Continuing the example as shown in diagram 2. Four red goods and five green goods had been „on offer“, but the players want to produce three red goods only and seven green goods in total. That means,

	Amount of goods on offer	Points			
		1 VP	2 VP	3 VP	4 VP
L11	1	1	2	3	4
L10	2	2	3	4	5
L9	2	2	4	5	6
L8	3	3	5	6	7
L7	3	3	6	7	8
L6	4	3	6	8	9
L5	4	4	6	8	10
L4	5	4	7	9	11
L3	5	4	7	10	12
L2	6	5	8	11	13
L1	7	5	9	12	14

Diagram 3

the exchange value of green is lowered by two levels (as two more goods were produced than on offer), the exchange value of red is increased by one level (as one more red good was on offer than actually produced, so one remains on the market). After the necessary adjustments have been applied, the stock exchange table looks as shown in diagram 4. (The other four colors have been omitted in this example).

Additional Victory Points for 1st/2nd
7 / 4
End of Game
6 / 3
5 / 2
4 / 2
3 / 2
2 / 1
2 / 0

The exchange value of a specific good can never be lower than L1 and never higher than L11. More than one type (color) of goods can be on the same level at the same time.

After all goods have been distributed amongst the players according to their production, the Victory Point Value of the good(s) with the lowest exchange value is increased by one level (the most available good(s) on the market the following round). If more than one goods type is on the lowest position, then the Victory Point Value of all these goods is increased by one level

The Victory Point Value of a specific good is important only at the end of the game. In the example above, the Victory Point Value of green would be increased by one level (shown on the right side of the swap meet table).

Note: The Victory Point Value of a good may also be increased during the Auction, Phase D.

Diagram 4

C. Trade

There are two different rules for this game phase. When testing the game we found out that some players couldn't cope with the original rule of „wild trade“ – they thought it to be too loud, too hectic, too wild and not strategic enough. So a second rule for this phase was designed: the „regulated trade“. The game works with both versions, of course, but we suggest the following: Regulated trade works better if there are only few players and wild trade should be used only, if all players agree.

Unfortunately, the goods which the players have produced so far are of no value unless they will be traded. That means that only goods which a player gets from other players are useful and can in turn be exchanged for Victory Points or used for buying an information card.

During the trading phase all players can make deals with all other players. Players can deal with all goods in their own production and their storage places. All players can make numerous deals, each single deal involves two players.

Wild trade

Using „wild trade“ all players are dealing with all other players simultaneously.

The players are free to deal goods with each other any way they want, there is only one restriction: Both players involved in a single deal must receive at least one goods cube from their trading partner; it's strictly forbidden to give away goods absolutely for free, i. e. as a donation. But, for example, players may exchange three goods of a certain color for just one good of another color, etc. If, just one more example, a player offers two goods for exchange, they may take one from their production and the other one from their storage facility!

Each goods cube can be traded only once during this phase. The players place all goods which they are receiving to the side of their player mat, these goods cannot be traded again during this game round. Only goods from the production and/or storage facilities can be traded, but NEVER those at the side of a player's mat.

It is allowed to exchange goods for the same kind of goods (e. g. two red goods against two red goods), but it is not possible to trade Victory Points.

After all players have concluded all deals they wanted to do and nobody or only one player wants to continue trading, the trading phase is finished. All players move the goods at the side of their player mat to their storage facilities.

Regulated Trade

Using this rule there are three trading rounds.

Each player may propose a deal three times. The player who bought the information card of the previous round is the starting player. Starting player of this game phase during the first game round is the player who was the last to visit a real swap meet (or use any random method you prefer).

The starting player now offers any deal she likes (e. g. „I’m offering two green and one yellow goods against three red ones.“). Of course she may offer only goods from her production and storage facilities, and the offer should be acceptable by one other player at least. The active player (that is the player suggesting the deal) asks if anybody wants to accept the deal and do the trade with her. If all players refuse the deal, because don’t want to deal or cannot comply with it, the next player to the left of the active player now makes her offer etc. If a player accepts the deal, the active player must to the deal, if more than one player accept the deal, the active player selects with whom she wants to exchange the goods. No haggling is allowed during regulated trade – the active player suggests a deal, the other players can accept or refuse it. No further comments or suggestions are allowed (like „ok, I’d do the deal, if you’ll add one more green“).

The players put the goods they receive in their storage facility of their player mat (this is a crucial difference compared with „Wild Trade“ – the same goods can be traded several times during this phase).

This way all players have the chance of offering three deals, the active player is not forced to make an offer.

At the beginning of this phase the starting player places one of her production cubes on the Trading Phase turn track at the lower edge of the game board in order to count the trading turns – which of course she retrieves as soon as this phase is finished.

End of Trade phase (no matter which kind of trade was used)

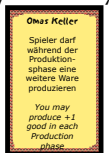
Half of the goods still remaining in production facilities are now put back to the general supply, there’s no refund for goods lost this way; (rounded down; thus if one good is in the production facilities it is not lost, it just remains there, two or three goods - remove one good, players choice). Any remaining good(s) may be used during the next turn the same way as the newly produced goods - then there will be more than four goods in the production facilities. The remaining goods may not be used this round to buy an information card or Victory Points.

D. Auction of the information card

Knowledge is power, this is true for the black market as well, but some information is costly to obtain and will be available only for the player willing to pay the most.

Each game round one information card is auctioned off, that is the card which had been revealed in phase A. All players may take part in this auction; the bidding is done only with the goods in the storage facility. Each player can make their bid with goods of one color only (but of course players may choose different colors). All players take their bid in their hand secretly; a bid of zero (no goods at all) is possible. Simultaneously all players open their hands and the player with the highest bid (most cubes) buys the information card and may increase the Victory Point Value of any one goods type of their choice by one level. The winning bid is added to the general supply, all other players put their bid back into their storage facilities.

In case of a tie for highest bid the winner of the auction is that one of the tied players whose bid goods have the higher exchange value (higher “L” number) according to the swap meet table. If there is still a tie, nobody wins the auction, the information card is put aside out of the game and no increase on the Victory Point Value table is made.



Immediately after the auction has ended the information card for the next game round is revealed. Each information card shows its special ability. "Granny's basement", for example, increases the production of a player by one good per production phase (so their maximum production is five goods). Additionally players receive victory points at the end of the game depending on how many information cards they own.

Example: The information card „Granny's Basement“ is up for auction. Kim bids three red goods, but Ken's bid of four green goods is highest. Ken pays his green cubes into the general supply and takes the card, Kim keeps his red goods. Ken may change the victory point value of any one goods type of his choice by one level. If Kim's bid had been four red goods, he would have won the auction (according to the values shown in diagram 4).

E. Selling Goods for Victory Points

During this phase of the game round all players can exchange (sell) goods in their storage facilities for Victory Points.

The players decide, simultaneously and secretly, which and how many goods they want to exchange for Victory Points. How many Victory Points a player gets for their goods depends on the exchange value of the goods. The higher the exchange value (higher "L" number) of a good the fewer goods cubes a player must sell in order to get Victory Points. The more goods of one color a player sells, the more Victory Points they get, but the exchange ratio is not evenly spread.

Example (using diagram 4): Red is on row "L6", so a player must sell three red goods cubes in order to get one VP, but for SIX red goods cubes they will get two VP's, for EIGHT goods they will get three VP's and for NINE even as much as four VP's. Green is in row "L11", so a player would have to exchange four goods in order to get only one VP.

A player keeps as many of the sold goods as they receive VP's for them and places these goods cubes on the Victory Point space of their player mat, the remainder of the goods sold is put back in the general supply.

In the example above, if a player sells six red goods cubes, they would keep two red goods cubes and place them on their VP space, the other four red goods will go back to the general supply. At the end of the game players score additional VP's for holding the majority of a color, as explained below.

A player may sell goods only if they receive at least one VP for it. The maximum VP's a player can get for each color in one round is four. It is up to the players how many goods of one or more colors from their storage facility they actually sell, they don't have to sell any at all, and they can sell only some or all, if possible.

At the end of the sales phase no player may have more than TEN goods cubes in their storage facility, any surplus goods (by choice of player) must go back to the general supply, without any refund.

End of the game and Victory Points

The end of the game is triggered by three different events:

The game ends immediately during the production phase if the total production of one (or more) goods exceeds the general supply (i. e. all goods cubes of that color are in storage facilities and/or on VP spaces of the players).

The game ends immediately any time, as soon as the Victory Point Value of one or more goods goes up to seven.

The game ends at the end of the round in which the last information card has been auctioned – so there are 10 game rounds at the most.

Final scoring

At the end of the game all players may still sell any goods in their storage facility for VP's, using the same rules as during the game (see above, Phase E).

Now all players count their Victory Points.

Each goods cube on the Victory Points space scores 1 VP.

Additionally the player with a majority of goods cubes on their VP tile for one color scores the Victory Point Value of that color, the player with the second most goods cubes of that color scores the runner-up points for that color. Majority and runner-up points are awarded for all six colors.

Example for one color: Kim has 3 red cubes on his VP space, Ken has 4 red cubes and Rey has seven red cubes. The Victory Point Value of red is "6/3".

As Rey has the majority of red goods, he scores additionally 6 VP for red (adding to his 7 VP for his red cubes), so Rey's total score for red is 13.

Ken has the second most red goods, scoring 3 VP's additionally, so his total VP score for red is seven.

Kim only gets three VP's for his three red goods cubes.

In case of a tie for majority of a certain color, the victory points for first and second position are added and divided equally among the tied players, rounded down; there is no runner-up in this case. If there's a tie for the runner-up position, these points are divided equally among the tied players, rounded down.

Players gain further Victory Points depending on the number of information cards in their possession:

Number of cards:	1	2	3	4	5+
Victory Points:	1	3	6	10	15

The player with the highest Victory Point total is the winner of the game. In case of a tie, the tied player who gained more VP's with the color of the highest exchange value (highest "L" number) wins. If there's still a tie the tied players compare their VP's gained with the color of the second highest exchange value etc.

Credits:

Design: Andreas Steding

The Game has won the third place of the Hippodice Game Designer Contest 2003.

Testplayers:

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English rules: Ferdinand Köther (with a little help from and big thanks to his friend John Bohrer).

N.B. This second and final version of the rules contains many changes compared to the first one and was not checked by JB. So blame all language impediments on me. FK

