RIDE THE RAIL

30 MINS
FAMILY 8+
2 PLAYERS COOPERATIVE

A COOPERATIVE FAMILY GAME FOR 2 PLAYERS

Created by
David Thompson
A cooperative family game for 2 players ages 8+

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This is the first edition of Ride the Rail. Fonts used in this manual include Baskerville and Bodoni SvtyTwo. Game components also make use of the Mesquite Std and Hoefler Text fonts. This game was carefully crafted to ensure its color-blind friendliness through the unique design appearance of each game component.

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CREDITS

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Testing, Evaluation, & Thanks
In *Ride the Rail*, two players take the role of a fledgeling railway partnership that is desperate to help the people of Middleton by building a railroad line to the towns of Eastport and Westgate. The players are in a frantic race against the Rail Baron, who has been hired by the rich and powerful aristocrats of Middleton to build a railway first. The players must navigate difficult terrain, manage precious resources, and build trading posts to trade goods and hire workers. Meanwhile, the Rail Baron will use his cronies and seemingly limitless resources to try his best to derail the players’ plans. Will this new partnership succeed or will the Rail Baron emerge victorious?

**Game Summary**

- **Setup the game** [p. 6]
- **Start the first turn** [p. 7]
  - **Rail Baron Phase** [p. 7]: In the Rail Baron Phase, flip one card over from the Rail Baron card deck and follow the directions.
  - **Player Phase** [p. 7]: During the Player Phase, players can place new Rail Hexes, change existing Rail Hexes; build Bridges and Tunnels, move Trains, explore Rail Hexes, place Workers on Resource Tiles, remove Workers from Resource Tiles, build Trading Posts, trade with the Bank, and redistribute Resources between players.
  - **Resource Phase** [p. 11]: Players are awarded Resource Tokens according to the placement of Workers on Resource Tiles.
- **Start the next turn and repeat until the game ends**
- **Game ends** [p. 12] when:
  - The players’ Trains reach Eastport and Westgate.
**30 Resource Tokens**
- 10 Coal
- 10 Steel
- 10 Wood

**18 Game Pieces**
- 10 Workers (5 Blue, 5 Red)
- 6 Trading Posts
- 2 Trains (1 Blue, 1 Red)

**31 Rail Hexes**
- 1 Eastport Hex
- 1 Middleton Hex
- 1 Westgate Hex
- 16 Single Track Hexes
- 12 Switch Track Hexes

**24 Resource Tiles**
- 8 Coal Mine Tiles
- 8 Forest Tiles
- 8 Steel Mill Tiles

**18 Obstacle Tiles**
- 9 Lake Tiles
- 9 Mountain Tiles

**6 Construction Tiles**
- 3 Bridge Tiles
- 3 Tunnel Tiles

**34 Cards**
- 30 Rail Baron Cards
- 4 Occupation Cards
At the beginning of the game, the players randomly select one of the four Occupation Cards. Each occupation grants a special trait.

**Resource Tokens**

There are three types of Resource Tokens in Ride the Rail: Coal, Steel, and Wood.

**Coal (10)**

Coal is produced by placing Workers on Coal Mines. Coal is used to move Trains from one Rail Hex to another. Each player starts with three Coal.

**Steel (10)**

Steel is produced by placing Workers on Steel Mills. Steel is used to place new Rail Hexes, change the configuration of an existing Rail Hex, and to construct Bridges and Tunnels. Each player starts with 3 Steel.

**Wood (10)**

Wood is produced by placing Workers on Forests. Wood is used to build Bridges, Trading Posts, and Tunnels. Players do not start with any Wood.

There are three types of game pieces in Ride the Rail: Trains, Workers, and Trading Posts.

**Player Trains (2: 1 Red, 1 Blue)**

Red and blue Trains are used by the players to move from one Rail Hex to another and transport Workers.

**Workers (10: 5 Red, 5 Blue)**

Red and blue Workers can be placed on Resource Tiles to accrue Resource Tokens each turn. Each player begins with 2 Workers (one of each color). More Workers are gained by building Trading Posts. Either player can place, remove, or gain new Workers regardless of color. However, blue Workers only accrue Resource Tokens for the blue player, and red Workers only accrue Resource Tokens for the red player.

**Trading Posts (6)**

Players can spend four Wood Resource Tokens to build a Trading Post. Building a Trading Post gives a player one new Worker. The player can choose the color of the Worker. Players can trade with the Bank when they are on a Rail Hex with a Trading Post. If both players are on Rail Hexes with Trading Posts, they can redistribute their Resource Tokens freely with each other.
**Rail Hexes**

*Ride the Rail* consists of 31 Rail Hexes that are used to form the game board. There are three special Rail Hexes, 16 single track Rail Hexes, and 12 switch Rail Hexes.

**Middleton (1)**

Middleton is where the players begin the game. Place both Train game pieces on Middleton at the beginning of the game. This hex is placed during setup and cannot be modified during gameplay.

**Eastport (1)**

Eastport is one of the two destinations players must reach in order to win the game. This hex is placed during setup and cannot be modified during gameplay.

**Westgate (1)**

Westgate is one of the two destinations players must reach in order to win the game. This hex is placed during setup and cannot be modified during gameplay.

**Single Track Rail Hexes (16)**

Single track Rail Hexes cost one Steel to construct. There are two varieties of single track Rail Hexes.

**Switch Track Rail Hexes (12)**

Switch track Rail Hexes cost two Steel to construct, or single track Rail Hexes can be changed to switch track Rail Hexes for one Steel. There are three varieties of switch track Rail Hexes.

**Resource Tiles**

There are three types of Resource Tiles: Coal Mines, Forests, and Steel Mills. Players claim Resource Tiles by placing Workers on them. Each Resource Tile produces corresponding Resource Tokens. The number of Resource Tokens produced by each tile ranges from one to three per turn as indicated on the Resource Tile.

**Coal Mines (10)**

Coal Mines produce Coal.

**Forests (10)**

Forests produce Wood.

**Steel Mills (10)**

Steel Mills produce Steel.

**Obstacle Tiles**

There are two types of Obstacle Tiles: Lakes and Mountains.

**Lakes (9)**

A Lake prevents a Train from placing a Rail Hex until a Bridge replaces the Lake.

**Mountains (9)**

A Mountain prevents a Train from placing a Rail Hex until a Tunnel replaces the Mountain.

**Construction Tiles**

There are two types of Construction Tiles: Bridges and Tunnels.

**Bridges (3)**

Bridges take the place of Lakes. Bridges cost four Wood and one Steel to build.

**Tunnels (3)**

Tunnels take the place of Mountains. Tunnels cost four Steel and one Wood to build.
Setting up the Game

Each player receives:

- 1 Train
- 2 Workers (one blue, one red)
- 3 Coal Resource Tokens
- 3 Steel Resource Tokens

Each player randomly draws one Occupation card.

Place the Eastport, Middleton, and Westgate Rail Hexes on the play area. Allow enough room for seven rail hexes between the Middleton Hex and the Eastport and Westgate Hexes.

Take two 2 value Coal Mines, Forests, and Steel Mills from the Resource Tiles and arrange them around the Middleton Hex as shown in the Starting Play Area illustration.

Place two 2 value Coal Mines, Forests, and Steel Mills adjacent to the Middleton Rail Hex as shown.

Mix the remaining 18 Resource Tiles with the 18 Obstacle Tiles and place them face down. This is the Game Tile draw pile.

Sort the 28 Rail Hexes and place them face up.

Shuffle the 30 Rail Baron cards and place them face down.

All other items are placed in the Bank:

- 6 Workers (3 Blue, 3 Red)
- 6 Trading Posts
- 4 Coal Resource Tokens
- 4 Steel Resource Tokens
- 10 Wood Resource Tokens
- 6 Construction Tiles (3 Bridge Tiles, 3 Tunnel Tiles)
**Turns and Phases**

*Ride the Rail* begins with the first turn of play. Game turns are divided into three phases in this order:
- Rail Baron Phase;
- Player Phase;
- Resource Phase.

After the first turn ends, begin the next turn with the Rail Baron Phase and continue on in this manner until the end of the game [p. 11]

**Rail Baron Phase**

In the Rail Baron Phase, flip one card over from the Rail Baron card deck and follow the directions. Rail Baron cards take effect immediately unless otherwise stated on the card.

**Player Phase**

In the Player Phase, players can take actions in any order, and they can take any number of actions as long as they have the resources to support the actions. Player actions include:

- Place new Rail Hex;
- Change existing Rail Hex;
- Build Construction Tile (Bridge or Tunnel);
- Move Train;
- Explore Rail Hex;
- Place Worker on Resource Tile;
- Remove Workers from Resource Tile;
- Build a Trading Post;
- Trading with the Bank; and
- Redistribute Resources between players.

**Place New Rail Hex (1 or 2 Steel)**

Players can place a new Rail Hex adjacent to the Rail Hex their Train occupies. When a new hex is placed on the board, the player can choose to rotate the hex to any orientation as long as the track on the new hex intersects with tracks in all adjacent hexes. Single track Rail Hexes can be placed by paying one Steel to the Bank. Switch track Rail Hexes can be placed by paying two Steel to the Bank.
Change Existing Rail Hexes (1 Steel)
If a player’s Train is on a single track Rail Hex, the player can change the Rail Hex to a switch track by paying one Steel to the Bank. The layout of the switch track must build upon the existing layout of the single track. The single track Rail Hex is discarded and cannot be used again.

Build Bridge (4 Wood, 1 Steel)
A Lake prevents a Train from placing a Rail Hex until a Bridge replaces the Lake. Players can build a Bridge by paying four Wood and one Steel to the Bank. The player’s Train must be in the Rail Hex adjacent to the Lake to replace it with a Bridge. When a Bridge replaces a Lake, discard the Lake from the game.

Build Tunnel (4 Steel, 1 Wood)
A Mountain prevents a Train from placing a Rail Hex until a Tunnel replaces the Mountain. Players can build a Tunnel by paying four Steel and one Wood to the Bank. The player’s Train must be in the Rail Hex adjacent to the Mountain to replace it with a Tunnel. When a Tunnel replaces a Mountain, discard the Mountain from the game.

Move Train (1 Coal per Rail Hex)
Players can move their Trains to an adjacent Rail Hex by paying one Coal to the Bank.
Explore Rail Hex (Free)
When a *Train* moves to a *Rail Hex* for the first time, they explore the *Rail Hex*. Draw one tile from Game Tile draw pile for each edge of the *Rail Hex* with an open track. If the explored *Rail Hex* is a switch track, the player must announce which of the two open tracks the tile is being drawn for before drawing from the Game Tile draw pile.

Place Worker on Resource Tile (1 Worker)
Players can place a *Worker* on a *Coal Mine*, *Forest*, or *Steel Mill* to accrue *Resource Tokens*. A *Train* must be on the *Rail Hex* with the *Resource Tile* to place the *Worker*. Only one *Worker* can be on a *Resource Tile*.

Remove Workers
Players can remove a *Worker* from a *Coal Mine*, *Forest*, or *Steel Mill* if they have a *Train* on the *Rail Hex* with the *Resource Tile*. Players can remove red or blue *Workers*, and the *Worker* does not have to have been originally placed by the player. Regardless of the *Worker*'s color, the player that removes the *Worker* takes possession of the *Worker*.

Build a Trading Post (4 Wood)
Players can pay four *Wood* to the *Bank* to build a *Trading Post*. A *Train* must be on the *Rail Hex* where the *Trading Post* is built. A *Trading Post* can be added to any *Rail Hex* with a *Resource Tile*. Building a *Trading Post* gives a player one new *Worker*. The player can choose the color of the *Worker*. Players can trade with the *Bank* when they are on a *Rail Hex* with a *Trading Post*. If both players are on *Rail Hexes* with *Trading Posts*, they can redistribute their *Resource Tokens* freely with each other.

Trading With the Bank (2:1 Ratio)
Players can trade their *Coal*, *Steel*, and *Wood* with the *Bank* if their *Train* is on *Rail Hex* with a *Trading Post*. Any combination of two *Resource Tokens* can be traded to the *Bank* for one *Resource Token*.

Redistribute Resources Between Players
Players can redistribute their *Coal*, *Steel*, and *Wood* in any way they like if their *Trains* are on the same *Rail Hex* or if they are both on a *Rail Hex* with a *Trading Post*.

**When the blue Train moves to the new single track Rail Hex, explore the open edge**

**When the red Train moves to the new switch track Rail Hex, declare which edge is explored first**

**Exploring Rail Hexes**
**Obstacle Tiles**
These Obstacle Tiles block Train movement. Before Rail Hexes can be built, Bridges and Tunnels must replace the obstacles.

**Remove Worker**
The blue player can remove the Worker because the blue Train is on the Rail Hex with the Worker.

**Trading Post**
The red Train builds a Trading Post, so the player receives a Worker and can trade with the Bank.
Resource Phase

In the Resource Phase, players extract Coal from Coal Mines, produce Steel from Steel Mills, and log Forests for Wood.

Award Resources

Each player is awarded Resource Tokens based on the value of each Resource Tile occupied by a Worker. Red Workers produce Resource Tokens for the player with the red Train, and blue Workers produce Resource Tokens for the player with the blue Train. For example, if the player with the blue Train has blue Workers on a Forest with a 2 value, a Forest with a 3 value, a Steel Mill with a 1 value, and a Coal Mine with a 2 value, the player receives 5 Wood, 1 Steel, and 2 Coal.
Ending the Game

The game ends when the players’ Trains reach Eastport and Westgate.

Winning the Game

At the end of the game, add the value of all the Resource Tiles occupied by the players’ Workers. Compare this to the total value of all the Rail Baron cards that were played during the game. If the players’ total is equal to or greater than the Rail Baron’s total, the players win. If the Rail Baron’s total is higher the players lose.

Losing the Game

Ride the Rail ends immediately and the players lose if:
- The last Rail Hex has been placed and the players have not reached Eastport and Westgate; or
- The last Game Tile has been placed and the players have not reached Eastport and Westgate.
Increased Difficulty

Once you have mastered Ride the Rail, you can increase the difficulty as follows:

Specific Resource Type
At the end of the game, determine which resource type had the highest value from the Rail Baron cards and compare it to the total value of the Resource Tiles occupied by the players’ Workers for the same resource type. If the players’ total is equal to or greater than the Rail Baron’s total, the players win. If the Rail Baron’s total is higher the players lose. For example, if at the end of the game the value of the Rail Baron’s cards is 9 Steel, 7 Wood, and 6 Coal, the players must have equal to or greater than 9 Steel of Resource Tiles occupied by Workers to win the game.

Master of the Rail
This is a combination of the normal victory condition and the specific resource type victory condition. The players must have equal to or greater than the Rail Baron for both the overall resource value as well as equal to or greater than the highest single resource type value from the Rail Baron cards. For example, if at the end of the game the value of the Rail Baron’s cards is 9 Steel, 7 Wood, and 6 Coal, the players must have equal to or greater than an overall total value of 22 for their Resource Tiles occupied by Workers and equal to or greater than 9 Steel of Resource Tiles occupied by Workers to win the game.

Solitaire
Though intended as a cooperative 2-player experience, Ride the Rail can be played as a solitaire game in one of two ways. The first option is for the solitaire player to control both player actions and otherwise play the game as written. Because Ride the Rail has a seamlessly integrated player turn mechanism, this solution is easily implemented and introduces no mechanical or balance issues. However, if the solitaire player is looking for a customized experience, the player can alter the game as follows:

- The goal is to reach only Eastport - the Westgate Rail Hex is not used;
- The player has a pool of 1/2 the normal Rail Hex allotment: 8 single track (4 of each type) and 6 switch track (2 of each type);
- The initial Resource Tiles are only placed on the Eastport Rail Hex side of the Middleton Rail Hex - the extra starting Resource Tiles (one 2 value Coal Mine, Forest, and Steel Mill) are removed from the game;
- Shuffled the full complement of 36 Game Tiles and then randomly select 18 for the draw pile. The other 18 Game Tiles are not used;
- Only draw Rail Baron cards during the Rail Baron Phase on turn 1 and every other turn after that (turns 3, 5, ...);
- The player only uses one color of Workers (the color that matches the player’s Train);
- The player begins with two Workers, three Coal, and three Steel;
- The Bank is stocked with:
  - 3 Workers (of the same color as the player)
  - 3 Trading Posts
  - 2 Coal Resource Tokens
  - 2 Steel Resource Tokens
  - 5 Wood Resource Tokens
  - 4 Construction Tiles (2 Bridge Tiles, 2 Tunnel Tiles)