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.

CREDITS

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Testing, Evaluation, & Thanks

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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
**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.

**Game Pieces**

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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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 the players’ Trains on the Middleton Hex.

- 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*.

*Legal placement* of placing new rail hexes

*Illegal placement* of placing new rail hexes

A player must spend one Steel to build a single track

A player must spend two Steel to build a switch track

Placing New Rail Hexes
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.
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)