Terra Mystica Big Box

BASE GAME ONLY / 2–5 PLAYERS / SETUP AND ROUND FLOW

Build on your home terrain, turn small settlements into towns, and race for victory points (VP). The map is tight: building near rivals can help both of you, while building far away can give you room to grow.

1 Set up the base game

Use the original map and base-game pieces.

Leave out Fire & Ice, Merchants of the Seas, and optional add-ons. For a first game, use the publisher's introductory diagram for your player count. It preselects factions, starting hexes, bonus cards, and scoring tiles.

Standard setup: choose the scoring tiles and bonus cards first.

Fill round slots starting at 6. Redraw if the Spade-scoring tile lands in round 5 or 6; return it before filling the earlier slots. Cover the right side of round 6 with the end marker. Set out player count + 3 bonus cards, face up.

Set up your faction, then place starting dwellings.

Read your faction board and the rulebook's faction appendix for starting VP, resources, cult positions, and abilities. In standard setup, put one dwelling each on a vacant home hex clockwise, then a second in reverse order. Nomads place a third last; Chaos Magicians place their only dwelling after everyone else.

Choose the first bonus cards.

Starting with the last player and moving counterclockwise, take one each. Add 1 coin to each unclaimed card. Keep workers, coins, terrain, favor and town tiles, and action markers within reach.

2 Play six rounds

INCOME

Take the income shown by visible hand symbols, your bonus card, and any favor tiles. Collect it in round 1, too.

ACTIONS

Take one action each turn, clockwise from the starting player. Keep going until everyone passes.

CLEANUP

Pay the current cult rewards, clear action markers, add coins to unused bonus cards, and flip the scoring tile. No cult reward in round 6.

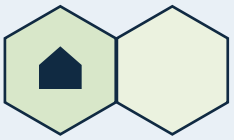
Take your turn

THREE QUESTIONS: CAN I REACH IT, AFFORD IT, AND SCORE IT?

Grow on the map

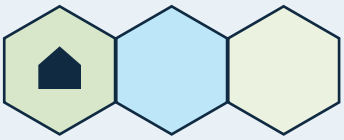
To terraform or build, pick an empty hex your faction can reach. Use the shorter route around your faction's terrain wheel: each step costs a spade. The usual starting rate is 3 workers per spade. Once the hex matches your home terrain, you may pay for a dwelling as part of the action. You can also build on empty, reachable home terrain without digging.

DIRECT



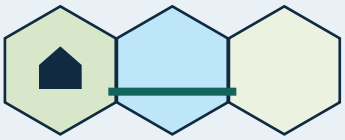
Shared edge

INDIRECT



Shipping 1 crosses this river

DIRECT AGAIN



A legal bridge counts

Upgrade rather than spread

Dwelling › **Trading house** › **Temple** › **Sanctuary**

Trading house can instead branch to Stronghold.

Pay the price on your faction board and replace the structure in place. A nearby opponent (direct adjacency) gives you the lower trading-house price. Temples and sanctuaries grant favor tiles; strongholds unlock a faction-specific benefit. Take new pieces from left to right; return upgraded pieces to the rightmost open spot on their tracks.

Other turn choices

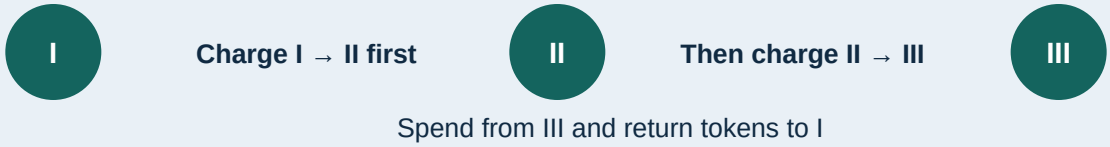
Improve shipping to cross more river spaces, or **improve digging** to buy cheaper spades; use the track costs and score the printed VP. **Send a priest** to an open cult slot for 2 or 3 steps; it stays there. Or return one priest to your personal supply for 1 step. Each cult's top spot can hold one player and requires a town key.

Claim a shared power action by paying from Bowl III and covering its space for the round. **Use an unlocked special action** only as allowed by its tile, card, or faction board. **Pass** to leave the round: score any applicable pass bonuses and exchange your card (no new card in round 6). First to pass starts next round.

Score what you build

POWER, TOWNS, AND TWO WORKED EXAMPLES

Power is a cycle, not a pile of new tokens



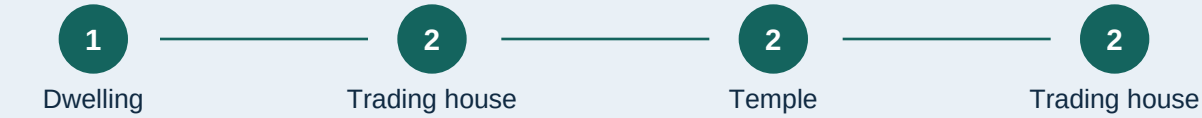
Spend from III and return tokens to I

When a rival builds or upgrades beside you, add the power values of **your** directly adjacent buildings. Accepting normally costs 1 fewer VP than the power you actually gain. You usually take it all or decline; you cannot go below 0 VP or charge past capacity. Income and cult power don't cost VP.

Worked turn: An opponent builds beside your dwelling (1) and temple (2). If you can charge 3 and accept, pay 2 VP. With bowls at (2, 4, 6), charge to (0, 5, 7). Spending 4 on a shared action later leaves (4, 5, 3).

Towns: count buildings and power separately

A directly connected group normally becomes a town at **4 buildings and 7 combined power**. A sanctuary lowers the building minimum to 3. Take a town tile immediately for its reward, VP, and a cult key. Shipping alone does not join towns; bridges count as direct links.



Worked town: 4 buildings; 1 + 2 + 2 + 2 = 7 power.

Final scoring

Score each of the four cult tracks at **8 / 4 / 2 VP** (zero progress scores nothing). Score the largest connected networks at **18 / 12 / 6 VP**; shipping can connect buildings here. Split tied place awards, rounding down. Convert remaining resources to coins as allowed: normally **1 VP per 3 coins**. Highest total wins; tied leaders share the win.

Official English rulebook **TAP Pass or Play quick take (not a teach)**