

Mirage

Game Rules

A game by Nemo Rathwald

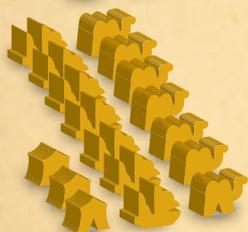
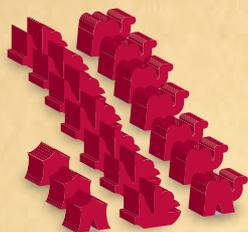
February 16, 2016 version

Players are leaders from an isolated coastal community which has just opened up to the outside world, rich in opportunity and hazard. They quickly agree to split up, and explore the surrounding desert and ocean, competing to establish the most far-flung network of trading encampments.

By laying tiles, you will seek to claim land with your camels, and water with your ships. When someone encounters an oasis in the desert or an island in the sea, the player with the most camels or ships in the regions attached to it will set it up as their own trading encampment (a tent).

Can you foresee uncertain spots in the geography, indeterminate in the distance? Will they resolve in your vision, to reveal your verdant destinations? Or evaporate into salt and sand?

Tents, Ships, & Camels:



Coast Tiles:



Equipment:

28 camels (7 per color)

28 ships (7 per color)

12 tents (3 per color)

10 Coast tiles (2 different patterns)

40 Survey tiles (8 different patterns)

1 bag

Setup:

Each player chooses a color: black, white, red, or yellow. Give every player a supply of all the seven camels and seven ships in their color, and the three tents of their color.

There are 10 small tiles called Coast tiles, depicting beaches.

In the middle of the table, place one Coast tile, chosen randomly with a random face up. At the start of the game, this is the only tile in play. The rest of the board will grow from it as new tiles are placed.

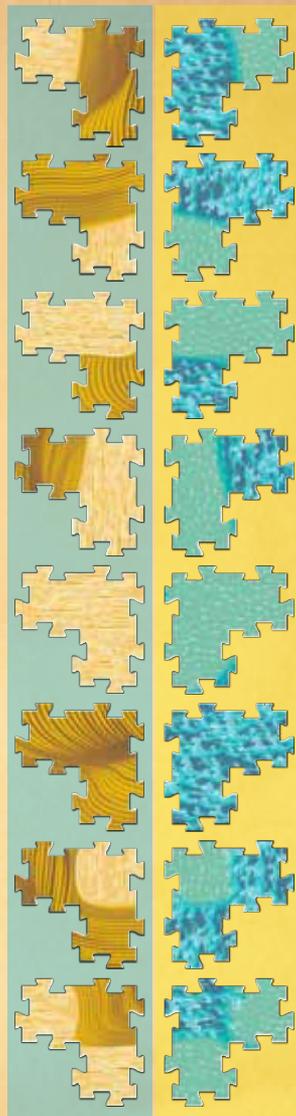
Off to the side, make a pile of all the remaining Coast tiles.

A Survey tile is three squares, arranged in an elbow shape like a capital letter L. On one side, each square is either light sand or dark sand. On the flip side, each square is either light water or dark water. There are eight types of Survey tiles, one for each possible arrangement of light and dark squares.

Put all the Survey tiles in the bag.

For a 3-player game, draw one Survey tile from the bag, look at it, and return it to the box. It will not be used.

Survey Tiles:



How To Play:

Choose a starting player. Players will take turns in clockwise order around the table.

Draw A Tile

To start your turn, draw a Survey tile from the bag.

If you draw a Survey tile that is all light squares or all dark squares, also take a Coast tile of your choice from the pile.

Grow The Board

Connect at least one edge of one of your Survey tile's squares to the edge of at least one square on a tile already in play.

If you play the Survey tile water-side-up, it may only connect to tiles that are water-side-up. If you play it land-side-up, it may only connect to tiles that are land-side-up. (It is legal for the two types to touch at a corner, but not along an edge.) Coast tiles are the only tiles which have edges for connecting both water and land.

If you received a Coast tile, add it to the board as well. Connect it by its jigsaw teeth to the Survey tile you played.

*Not just
a corner...*



*Match teeth
to teeth.*

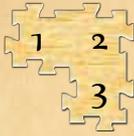
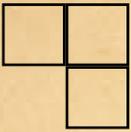


*It doesn't
matter
if light
meets dark.*

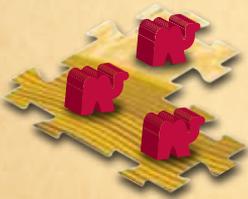


If the teeth fit together, it's legal.

Add Pawns



Each Survey tile has three positions, called "squares".



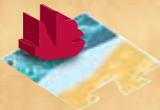
Add three explorers from your supply to the Survey tile you added, one in each square. If you played the tile water-side-up, you must add ships. If you played the tile land-side-up, you must add camels.

If you have fewer than three of the appropriate type of explorer in your supply, you may choose which squares to fill on the tile you placed.



If you also played a Coast tile this turn, either add a camel on its land edge, or a ship on its water edge.

or:



Resolve Gaps

A **gap** is:

...a bare area on the table

...which is surrounded by tiles,

...into which no Survey tile could ever fit.

If you form a **gap**, you have discovered an island (if it is surrounded by water), or an oasis (if it is surrounded by land), or a coast (if it is surrounded by land and water). In all three cases it is a **gap**.

A **gap** is not complete unless it is fully enclosed by tiles. Also, a **gap** is not complete if it is still possible to fit a Survey tile into it.

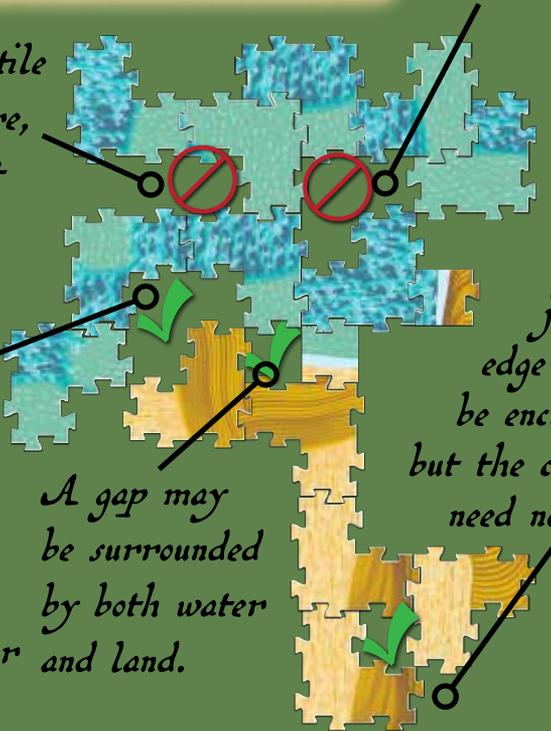
This is enclosed by tiles, but a Survey tile could fit.

No Survey tile could fit here, but it is not yet enclosed.

This is L-shaped, but Survey tiles do not have teeth that connect to both water & land.

A gap may be surrounded by both water and land.

Each jigsaw edge must be enclosed, but the corner need not be.



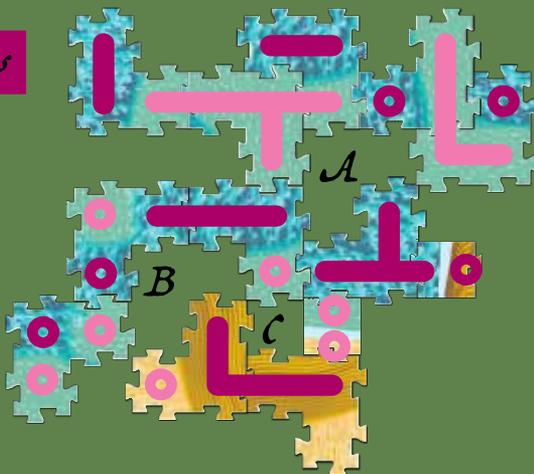
Now to resolve who will place their tent into the completed **gap**. (If you formed more than one **gap** at a time, the player who just placed a tile chooses which order they are resolved.)

A group of squares of the same color that connect through their edges (not corners) is called a "**region**". Look at the **regions** of contiguous light squares and **regions** of contiguous dark squares that share an edge with the **gap** which was just formed.

All the explorers (camels and ships) in those **regions** are involved in the competition to claim the **gap**. Whichever player has the highest total sum of explorers involved in the competition places a tent into the **gap**.

All of that player's explorers from those **regions** -- the explorers who claimed the **gap**-- leave the board and return to that player.

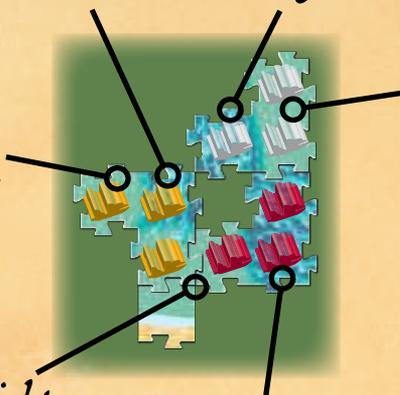
Regions



This light region does not touch the gap, so this yellow ship can not compete for the gap.

In this dark region, one yellow ship competes for the gap.

In this dark region, one white ship competes for the gap.



This region shares only a corner with the gap, not an edge. So these two white ships can not compete for the gap.

In this light region, one yellow ship and one red ship compete for the gap.

In this dark region, two red ships compete for the gap.

Totals:

White: 1

Yellow: 2

Red: 3



Red removes all 3 red ships and places a red tent in the gap.

Q: What if I don't want to put my tent in the **gap**?

A: If your camels or ships were in the majority in the **regions** connected to the **gap**, you do not get a choice. Your people are thirsty from their journey, and will seize that fresh water, so you must place a tent! In case of a tie, if you are the one who just placed a tile, you may choose which tied player places a tent. If your opponent placed the tile, and you are tied, your opponent may force you to place your tent in the **gap**.

End of Game:

At the end of the turn when there are no more Coast tiles in the pile, or no more Survey tiles in the bag, the game is over.

Your score comes from two sources: the **regions** controlled by your camels and ships, and the distance between your tents.

Scoring Regions:

Each **region** of contiguous light squares or contiguous dark squares is worth 2 points to whichever player has the most camels or tents in it.

A tie for a **region** is worth two points to each player tied in that **region**.

To simplify counting, determine the majority in each **region** one at a time, and remove all surplus camels and ships so that each **region** contains only one. Then, as you count up your **region** score, tip over each camel or ship as you count it, to make sure you don't accidentally double-count any.

Scoring Tents:

Tents score points by being far apart from each other. Your tent score is the distance you travel to visit all three tents and return to the one you started from.

Choose one of the tents you placed, and tip it on its side. Choose another one of your tents, and count the number of steps (each step is one square) to travel from one tent to the next by the shortest possible route. The simplest way is to count the number of rows, then the number of columns. This path does not need to remain on tiles at all times-- the path may go over the surface of the table in order to remain the shortest possible path.

Now repeat this process to add the number of steps from the second tent to the third tent.

Finally, repeat this process to count the number of steps from the third tent back to the tent you started from.

Clarification: You do not count the square you started on. That is to say, each "step" goes from one square to the next; therefore, effectively, each space you crossed is worth a point, and the square the destination tent is on is worth a point, but not the square the starting tent is sitting on.

If you have a tent in a **gap** which is larger than a single square, you may move it to whichever square you wish within its **gap**, before scoring it.

Advanced Mirage Variant Rules:

This variant takes longer, due to players taking their time making more decisions. Do not use the bag. Instead, at the start of the game, sort the Survey tiles into stacks. On your turn, you may choose which type of Survey tile to play.

Palm Tree Expansion:

This expansion introduces palm tree pieces which reward the creation of large **gaps**. Players attempt to occupy **gaps** that have differently-colored palm trees. Unlike camels, tents, and ships, trees do not always belong to the player associated with their color.

Objective

At the end of the game, your palm tree score is the number of different colors of palm trees in gaps you own, multiplied by itself.

If you have multiples of the same color of tree, use them to start new sets. For example, Ke-Yi has a set of 1 white, 1 black, 1 red, and 1 yellow tree, for 16 points (4×4). She also has a set of 1 white and 1 black tree worth 4 points (2×2). She adds these 20 points to her score from tent distance, and her score from owning regions.

How To Place Trees

When you place your tent into a **gap** which is more than one square in size, also place a tree into each space in the **gap** not occupied by your tent. You may select different colors of your choice, or you may collect multiples of the same color in an attempt to deny a color to your opponents.

When you move one of your tents out of a **gap** with a tree into a new **gap**, you may continue to own the trees by filling the vacated square in the old **gap** with one of your camels or ships from the board or your supply. You have permanently lost the use of the camel or ship. If the **gap** is an oasis in the desert, you must use a camel. If it is an island in the sea, you must use a ship. If it is a coastline between water and land, you may use either. If you cannot do so, or choose not to, the palm trees in the vacated **gap** belong to no one.

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Game illustrations and book design by Matt Arnold