

EMPIRE ENGINE™

A game by
**Chris Marling &
Matthew Dunstan**



Empire Engine

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For 2–4 players, ages 14 and up

Introduction

Once, the world of Mekannis was united and prospered under the guidance of the Great Engine—an enormous thinking machine built into the molten heart of the world. Over millennia, Mekannis was transformed until every piece of land was incorporated into the gears and levers of the Engine itself. An act of hubris by the world's rulers caused a series of devastating malfunctions that shattered the land and the death of the Great Engine.

Now four empires rise to dominance. The Kestrel Dominion, descending from ancient hereditary rulers and cherishing their ancestral tradition of honor; Nova Centralis, a plutocratic nation built upon exploiting wealth and greatly desirous of maintaining their economic edge; the Sylphian Commonwealth, a once-verdant land now poisoned by the aftereffects of the Engine's destruction; and the Grail Prelacy, a theocratic nation emboldened by prophecies of ultimate victory.

Each empire vies to fulfill the prophecy and restore the Great Engine, the source of ultimate power. As gears turn, empires are forged!

Game Overview

Each player takes on the role of a mighty empire, powered by rotating gears. During the game, players simultaneously choose actions to attack, defend, salvage, export, or collect resources (goods for export, soldiers to attack your opponents and inventions to score points). Players use their gears to rotate their engines, and in each round perform the actions on the top edges of their engines.

Goal

The player who scores the most points for the goods, soldiers and inventions in their score pile at the end of the game is the winner.

Components

The game contains everything you need to play including:

8 Engine cards
(marked 'L' & 'R' for left & right)



8 Gear cards
(with values '1'/'0' & '2'/'3')



1 Round Track card



1 Starting Player card



4 Reference cards



46 Wooden cubes in four different colors (15 red, 15 yellow, 15 blue, 1 black)



1 Rulebook (this book)

1 Empire bag

Setup

- 1. Set Up Stock:** Place all of the wooden cubes in the middle of the play area as a common stock.
- 2. Set Up Players:** Each player takes 2 engines ('L' and 'R'), 2 gears ('1' and '2'), 1 reference card, 1 soldier (red cube), and 1 good (yellow cube).
- 3. Set Up Round Track:** Place the round track in the middle of the play area. Then place the round marker (black cube) on the '1' space. Select a player at random to receive the starting player card.

Each player should place their soldier and good into their **ready pile** on the left of their play area. Players must be careful to keep their resources in their ready pile separate from those in their **score pile**.

We recommend playing with hidden score piles. Use any suitable method to hide the resources in your score pile from the other players.

Note: The “Empire Powers” on reference cards are an optional variant, explained on page 26. They are not suggested for new players.

How to Play

A game of **Empire Engine** is played over 8 or 9 rounds, depending on the number of players. Players compete to collect resources, and will score points at the end of the game for the goods, soldiers and inventions in their score pile. Resources in a player’s ready pile will only be counted in the case of a tie.

Engines & Actions

Engine cards are marked ‘L’ for left, and ‘R’ for right. Each player must keep their left engine on their left and right engine on their right. Each engine features four actions. Players will use their gears to rotate their engines, and in each round will perform the actions on the **top** edges of their engines.



Playing a Round

Each round consists of two phases, performed in order: Plan and Execute.

- **Plan:** Use gears to plan actions, then reveal them and rotate engines.
- **Execute:** Perform engine actions.

The Plan phase in the first round is performed differently than in later rounds.

At the end of each round, pass the starting player card clockwise to the next player and move the round marker along the round track, then start a new round.

Running Out of Resources

The stock is not intended to be limited. If any type of resource runs out during the game, all players should return an equal number of that type from their score piles to the stock. This will not affect the relative scores of the players.

Plan: First Round

In the first round, players do not use gears to control engines. Instead, players initiate their engines and freely choose two actions to perform in the Execute phase.

All players take their engine cards in hand. Beginning with the starting player and proceeding clockwise, each player chooses an engine and then chooses the action on that

engine to perform in the Execute phase. Place the engine **face down** in your play area, with the chosen action on the top edge. Note that you can play either your left or right engine first each round.

Then, beginning with the last player and proceeding counter-clockwise, each player places their other engine and then chooses a second action. When all players have placed both of their engines, reveal the engines by flipping them over but be sure to keep the chosen actions along the top edges.

Remember: Your left engine must be on the left and your right engine on the right!

Plan: Later Rounds

After players initiate their engines in the first round, players leave the engines face up for the remainder of the game and use their gears to control them.

All players take their gear cards in hand. Beginning with the starting player and proceeding clockwise, each player chooses a gear and places it **face down** below one of their engines. Then, beginning with the last player and proceeding counter-clockwise, each player places their other gear below their other engine.

Each gear's large value (1 or 2) indicates how many clockwise quarter-turns it will rotate the engine when the gear is revealed.

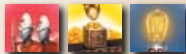
When you play a gear face down, you may put 1 soldier or 1 good from your ready pile onto the back of the card. This indicates that you will use the alternate value of the card when you rotate the engine, changing the '1' gear to '0', or changing the '2' gear to '3'. If you wish to change both gears, you must use 1 resource for each card.

When all players have placed both gears, everyone reveals their gears by flipping them over, then turns their engines the appropriate number of clockwise quarter-turns (see "Play Example" on page 30).

If you put a resource on the gear, you must return the resource to the stock and turn the engine the alternate number of quarter-turns; you cannot change your mind.

Execute

The engine actions always resolve in the order shown on the reference card. Every action chosen **must** be fully resolved, if possible. There are three groups of actions. Actions in each group can be performed simultaneously by all players.



1. Arm, Produce & Invent:

Use your engines to gain resources for your empire.



2. Attack & Defend:

Use soldiers to attack neighboring empires. You may also defend your empire from possible attacks by your neighbors.



3. Export & Salvage:

Export all your goods, or salvage a soldier, good or invention to your score pile. These actions are risky and will fail if you were successfully attacked by at least one of your neighbors.

1. Arm, Produce & Invent



- **Arm:** Take 2 soldiers from the stock and add them to your ready pile.



- **Produce:** Take 2 goods from the stock and add them to your ready pile.



- **Invent:** Take 1 invention from the stock and add it directly to your score pile.

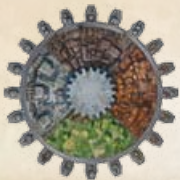
2. Attack & Defend



- **Attack:** Return 1 soldier from your ready pile to the stock to support the attack on your neighbor. Do this immediately, before any attacks against you are resolved.

If you choose to attack and have a soldier, you must attack; you cannot change your mind. Your attack action is successful only if you have a soldier to support the attack and the targeted opponent did not block your attack with the defend action, otherwise the action is wasted.

The attack action on your left engine attacks the player to your left. The attack action on your right engine attacks the player to your right. In a two-player game, both of your attack actions target your single opponent.



- **Defend:** Block 1 attack. The defend action is on your right engine but can block a single attack from either the player to your left or right. Your defend action is successful only if you are attacked, otherwise the action is wasted. If you are attacked by two opponents at once, you choose which attack to block.

There are four different combinations of possible attack and defend actions.

- **Attack:** undefended
- **Attack:** defended
- **Double attack:** undefended
- **Double attack:** defended

The resolution of each combination is described in the following section.

• ***Attack: Undefended***

If a player successfully attacks an opponent, the attacking player takes any 1 resource from the targeted player's ready pile and adds it to their score pile. If the opponent's ready pile is empty, the attacking player takes 1 soldier from the stock and adds it to their score pile.

• ***Attack: Defended***

If a player successfully blocks an attack, the attack fails and the attacking player receives nothing. Instead, the defending player takes 1 soldier from the stock and adds it to their score pile.

• ***Double attack: Undefended***

If a player is attacked by both neighbors in the same round and did not defend, the attacked player loses 1 resource to each attacking player.

If the attacked player only has one resource in their ready pile, it goes to the attacking player who is first in the turn order, and the other attacker takes a soldier from the stock.

If you are undefended during a double attack in a two-player game, your opponent will receive 2 resources from your ready pile.



- ***Double attack: Defended***

If a player is attacked by both opponents to their left and right in the same round and chose to defend, only one of the attacks is blocked. The other attack still succeeds. The attacked player chooses which attack is blocked.

It is possible to use the attack actions on both of your engines during the same round, but you must use 2 soldiers — one for each attack — to do so, otherwise both actions are wasted. If you try to use both attacks but have only 1 soldier, both attacks fail, and you must return the soldier to the stock.

3. Export & Salvage

You may only export or salvage if you were either not attacked, or were attacked once but successfully defended the attack. If at least one of your opponents successfully attacked you, these actions are wasted.



- **Export:** Move all of the goods in your ready pile to your score pile. You must export all your goods.



- **Salvage:** Take any 1 good, 1 soldier or 1 invention from the stock and add it directly to your score pile.

End of Round

At the end of each round, pass the starting player card clockwise and move the round marker one space on the round track. The game ends after the following number of rounds:

- **2 or 4 players: 8 rounds**
- **3 players: 9 rounds**

End of Game

The game ends after the appropriate number of rounds have been played.

Each player scores 1 point for each resource in their score pile. In addition, the player with the most resources of each type scores an additional 3 points. If two or more players tie for the most resources, each tied player receives 3 points.

The player with the most total points wins! If two or more players tie for the most points, the tied player with the most resources in their ready pile wins. If still tied, the tied players share victory.

Optional Rules

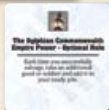
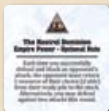
To create more variety in your games, there are a number of optional rules you can use. Players should agree upon which optional rules to use at the start of the game.

Longer Games

You can play a longer game of 12 rounds with 2, 3 or 4 players. Extending the game allows players to develop greater long-term strategies and alliances.

Empire Powers

The back of each reference card lists a unique power that the player can use during the game. During setup at the start of the game, each player is randomly dealt an empire (unless they can agree on an alternative method of selection). We suggest a good number of games are played using the standard rules before using this variant, so that all players become accustomed to the standard methods of play.



Playing With More Than 4 Players

By using additional copies of **Empire Engine**, you can play the game with as many players as you wish (you need one additional copy per four additional players).

You should decide on how many rounds you want to play — we suggest you choose an appropriate number of rounds so that each player is the starting player an equal number of times. Other than this, there are no changes to the rules.

Team Play (requires 4 players)

In a four-player game, you are teamed with the player who is seated opposite of you. The game plays the same using the normal rules except that at the end of the game teams combine their scored resources and score them together (so the team with the majority in each resource gets the bonus). If players want more interactions during team play, they can add any or all of the following variant rules:

- If both teammates take the invent action, the team takes one extra invention.

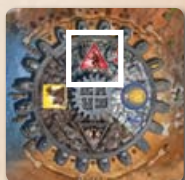
- If both teammates attack the same player during the same round, take 1 extra resource from the opponent; this can only be blocked by a double defend from both opposing players.
- If one teammate takes the produce action during the same round the other teammate successfully exports, both players may export.
- A player who takes the defend action can use a resource in their ready pile to instead defend their teammate. In other words, when you take the defend action you can choose to defend your teammate if they are attacked.

Play Example

The player played the '2' gear below their left engine, and the '1' gear below their right engine.



After the gears are revealed, the left engine is rotated two quarter-turns clockwise, bringing the salvage action to the top edge, and the right engine is rotated 1 quarter-turn clockwise, bringing its attack action to the top edge.

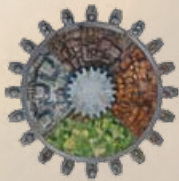


Hints From the Designers

Empire Engine is a game of limited resources. Carefully choosing actions to balance the production of resources and their effective use is the key to success. The following hints may be useful to explain to new players as they are getting a feel for the game.

- Try not to run out of resources in your ready pile at the end of a round. This will not only limit the actions available to you in the next round, but will tell your opponents what you can and cannot do. With no resources in your ready pile, only four of the eight actions on your engines are available.

- Resources in your score pile are safe and cannot be stolen, but cannot be used to change your actions or attack other players.
- The game can seem harsh at times, especially in your first few games. However, you are only directly punished by the game if you do not have the resources needed to complete particular actions. Try and think one round ahead, so that you're not forced to take actions that don't benefit you.



EMPIRE ENGINE™

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Questions?

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Quick Reference

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