

Matthew Dunstan &
Brett J. Gilbert's

GUILD

THE

OF

MERCHANT

EXPLORERS

™



THE GUILD OF MERCHANT EXPLORERS™

Designed by Matthew Dunstan & Brett J. Gilbert

1-4 | **45** | **14+**
PLAYERS | MINUTES | AGES

The Queen has sent out a call to the Guild of Merchant Explorers, asking brave adventurers to voyage to all corners of the kingdom of Tigomé.

While the kingdom is flourishing, its maps have not been updated in some time and its great cities have lost contact with one another. With your team of explorers, you will journey over rough seas, majestic mountains, vast deserts, and lush grasslands to establish trade routes between cities, visit far-seeing discovery towers, and discover new villages that have emerged.

The player with the most coins at the end of the game wins.

COMPONENTS



8 double-sided maps
(4 Avenia/Aghon, 4 Cnidaria/Kazan)



1 Exploration Board



24 goal cards
(6 for each map)



4 sets of player tokens
(13 village tokens and 36 explorer cubes)

16 discovery towers



32 trading post tokens



75 coin tokens



40 treasure tokens



16 crystal tokens



5 solo mode era tokens



9 explore cards
(5 basic cards, 4 era cards)



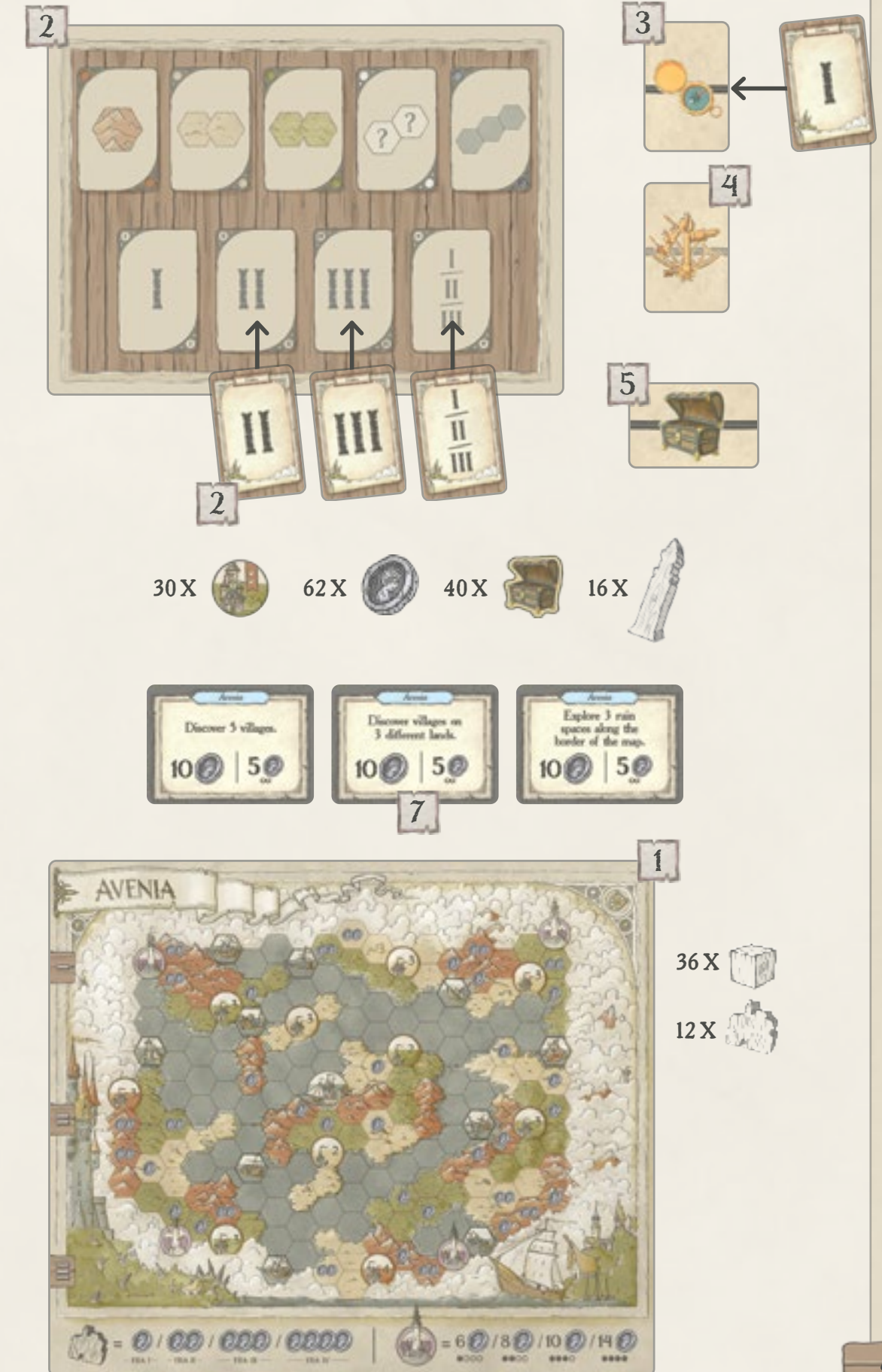
28 investigate cards



40 treasure cards

SETUP

1. Give each player a matching map. For your first game, we recommend Avenia. Then, give each player a set of 12 village tokens and 36 explorer cubes in one color. Return any unused maps and player token sets to the box.
2. Place the Exploration Board in the middle of the table and place the "II," "III," and "I/II/III" era cards on their matching spots.
3. Shuffle the "I" era card and the 5 basic explore cards to form the Exploration Deck. Place this deck face down beside the Exploration Board.
4. Shuffle the 24 investigate cards to form the Investigate Deck. Place this deck face down beside the Exploration Board.
5. Shuffle the 40 treasure cards to form the Treasure Deck. Place this deck face down beside the Exploration Board.
6. Place the 16 discovery towers, 30 trading posts, 40 treasure tokens, and all the coins () in a supply reachable by all players.
7. Find the 6 goal cards that match the map you are using. Shuffle them together and deal 3 face-up below the Exploration Board, returning the rest of the cards to the box.



GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

Goal

Each player aims to earn coins () by exploring their map to discover villages, complete trade routes, uncover ruins, and visit discovery towers over the course of 4 eras. Any time you earn , take them from the supply and keep them value side down beside your board until the end of the game. Players may make change with the supply at any time. After 4 eras, the game ends and the player with the most is the winner.

About the Maps

- 1 There are 4 types of terrain: grassland , desert , mountain , and sea .
- 2 The capital space on each map is where you explore from at the start of the game. You cannot explore the capital space.
- 3 A contiguous group of spaces of the same terrain type form a region.
- 4 There are 5 main types of spaces:

- Blank spaces.**
You can discover new villages on these spaces when you have fully explored a region. Villages earn you as shown in the score area on the map.
- Coin spaces.**
These earn you according to the number of coins shown.
- Ruin spaces.**
These earn you treasure cards.
- City spaces with values (2, 3, 4, or 5).**
These earn you when 2 cities are connected by your explorers, villages, and/or your capital space.
- Discovery spaces.**
These earn you as shown in the score area on the map.

Some maps have additional types of spaces and terrain, which are detailed in the Explorer's Almanac.

- 5 The score area at the bottom of the map shows you the value of discovered villages and discovery towers.

Flow of Play

Each era takes place over several turns equal to the number of cards in the Exploration Deck. Players take turns simultaneously, placing explorers on spaces on their map according to the revealed explore card. Explorers must be placed adjacent to villages, the capital space, or previously placed explorers, and as players discover more villages, they can begin their journey each era from any of these new villages.



Revealing Cards from the Exploration Deck

Each turn, one player reveals the top card of the Exploration Deck and places it on its matching space on the Exploration Board. All players now place explorers from their supply onto their own map according to the action on the card. Once everyone has completed the explore action and resolved any explored map features, reveal the next card in the Exploration Deck and place it on its matching space. Keep taking turns in this way until the Exploration Deck is empty, marking the end of the era.

End of an Era

When the final turn of Era I, II, or III has been completed, each player gets ready for the next era.

Remove all of your explorers from your map and place them back in your personal supply. Leave any villages, trading posts, treasure tokens, and discovery towers where they are. Once you place a village, trading post, treasure token, or discovery tower, it remains there for the rest of the game.

At the start of each era, one player takes the appropriate explore cards and shuffles them to create the Exploration Deck. Place this deck face down beside the Exploration board. At the start of Era II, shuffle the 5 basic explore cards plus the "I" and "II" era cards. At the start of Era III, shuffle the 5 basic explore cards plus the "I", "II," and "III" era cards. At the start of Era IV, shuffle all 9 explore cards (the 5 basic explore cards plus all 4 era cards).

Exploring Your Map

To explore your map, place your explorers according to the revealed explore card. At the start of the game, you can only explore spaces adjacent to your capital space, but on future turns you can also explore spaces adjacent to your previously placed explorers or discovered villages. These are the only pieces on your map in your player color. Any village or your capital space can act as a starting space at the beginning of an era, and you can explore from any of your villages at any point—they do not need to be connected by your explorers.

You can always explore from your capital space, which behaves as a village for explore actions but does not count as a village for goals.



With the EXPLORE 2 DESERT SPACES action, these spaces could be explored.

GOLDEN RULES OF EXPLORATION

None of the following rules can be broken with any explore actions.

1. You must place each explorer adjacent to one of your villages or one of your explorers. These spaces must be without explorers, villages, or discovery towers.
2. Always place explorers one at a time.
3. Explore and resolve map features as soon as their requirements are met, even if you have not fully completed the explore action. Then, complete the explore action.
4. Unless an explore action explicitly requires you to place a number of explorers adjacent to each other or in a specific arrangement, you may place each new explorer anywhere on your map adjacent to one of your villages or explorers.
5. You may always choose to place fewer explorers than an explore card shows, provided you follow the rules of adjacency or connection on the card. However, you cannot "save" any part of an explore action for a later turn.

Explore Cards

Each of the basic explore cards has a different explore action.



EXPLORE 2 GRASSLAND SPACES

Place up to 2 explorers one at a time on grassland spaces. The 2 grassland spaces do not have to be adjacent to each other or within the same grassland region.



EXPLORE 2 DESERT SPACES

Place up to 2 explorers one at a time on desert spaces. The 2 desert spaces do not have to be adjacent to each other or within the same desert region.



EXPLORE 1 MOUNTAIN SPACE

Place 1 explorer on a mountain space.



EXPLORE 3 SEA SPACES (IN A STRAIGHT LINE)

Place up to 3 explorers on adjacent sea spaces that form a straight line. The first explorer must be adjacent to a village or explorer. The second must be adjacent to the first. The third must be adjacent to either the first or the second and must be placed on a space so that these 3 new explorers are arranged in a straight line.



EXPLORE ANY 2 ADJACENT SPACES

Place 2 explorers one at a time on 2 adjacent spaces. The first explorer must be adjacent to a village or explorer. The second explorer must be adjacent to the first explorer. Each explorer can be placed on any terrain. These can be the same terrain types or different terrain types.

Era Cards and Investigate Cards

Investigate cards give players special explore actions and are used when era cards are revealed from the Exploration Deck.

When each era card is revealed for the first time, each player simultaneously does as follows:


1. Draw 2 investigate cards from the Investigate Deck and choose 1 of the 2 cards.
2. Place the card you chose in the position on the left side of your map matching the current era. Discard the other card face down on the bottom of the Investigate Deck.
3. Take the explore action on the investigate card you chose.

In later eras, when an era card is revealed for which you already have an investigate card, take the corresponding action. In Era IV, you will not choose a new investigate card. Instead, when the “I/II/III” era card is revealed, use any of your investigate cards. This means you will use one of your investigate cards twice during Era IV.

Each of the 30 investigate cards has a different explore action. These actions are explained in more detail in the Explorer’s Almanac.

Remember: Investigate cards never allow you to break the Golden Rules of Exploration.


Map Features & Villages


There are several map features you will explore, earning you , treasure cards, and new villages to explore from.



Villages

Villages serve as points from which you can explore and are discovered on blank spaces.


You discover new villages by fully exploring regions in a single era. When you explore every space in a region, including any cities, so that all of the spaces within the region have explorers on them, you must immediately replace one of the explorers on a blank space with a village from your supply. When you discover a village, earn  equal to the value shown in the score area of your map based on the current era.

Each region may only have 1 village. If you fully explore a region for a second time, nothing happens. Villages may only be discovered on blank spaces: that is, spaces that are not city or  spaces.

Some regions only have 1 blank space (the Kazan map features some regions that cannot have villages as they have no blank spaces). Sea, ruin, and discovery spaces do not fall within regions (the Kazan and Cnidaria feature some ruin spaces that fall within regions, but you cannot discover villages on these spaces).







Discovery spaces and discovery towers

Discovery spaces are “wild” terrain spaces which you can explore using any explore action. When you explore a discovery space, return the explorer to your supply and place a discovery tower on the space. Each time you place a discovery tower, earn  equal to the value shown in the score area of your map based on how many discovery spaces you have explored.

Once you have placed a discovery tower, you cannot explore the space again in later eras. If you explore 2 discovery spaces in a single turn, resolve them one at a time.




Coin spaces

When you explore a  space, immediately earn the number of  shown on the space. Each  space may be explored in later eras to earn additional .




Ruin spaces

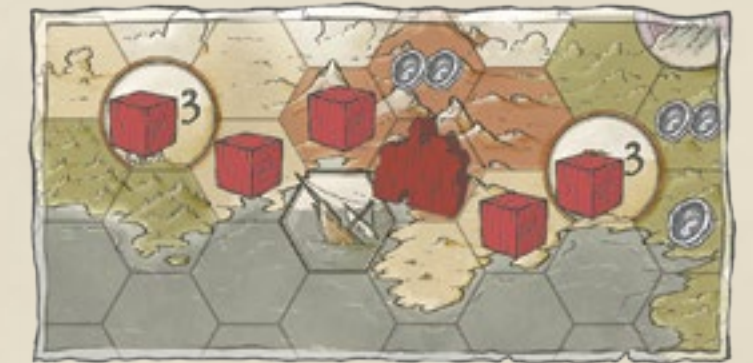
Ruin spaces are usually on sea terrain, but some ruin spaces are on grassland, desert, and mountain spaces and are considered be a part of these regions. When you explore a ruin space for the first time, place a treasure token under your explorer on that space. Immediately draw a treasure card from the Treasure Deck and resolve any immediate effects on the card, placing it face down on the bottom of the deck. If the treasure card does not have an immediate effect, it earns  at the end of the game and should be kept face down beside your map. See the Explorer’s Almanac for detailed information on each type of treasure card.


While you can explore a ruin space with a treasure token again in later eras, doing so does not allow you to draw another treasure card.



Cities and trading posts

When you connect 2 city spaces with explorers and no trading posts with an unbroken chain of explorers, villages, and/or your capital space, you must complete a “trade route” between the 2 cities. Immediately multiply the values of the cities and earn  equal to the result. Then, place a trading post of the matching terrain type on 1 of the 2 cities, placing the token underneath your explorer on that space.



This trade route would earn you 9 . Then, you could place a trading post on either of the 2 cities.

A city with a trading post can never be used to score another trade route, but you can explore a city with a trading post again. In the rare case that you place a single explorer that simultaneously connects 3 explored cities without trading posts (none of which were connected to each other immediately before placing this explorer), resolve the trade routes one at a time so that you will score 2 trade routes total.

Completing Goals

As soon as you take an explore action and meet the requirements of a goal, place an explorer from your supply on the card. If you are the first player to complete this goal, earn 2 equal to the larger amount on the card. If 2 or more players complete the same goal for the first time during the same turn, all these players earn the higher 2 amount. If you are not the first player to complete the goal, earn 2 equal to the lower amount. After a goal has been completed, any number of players can still complete this goal to earn the lower 2 amount. Once you have completed a goal, you cannot complete the same goal again.



End of the Game

- The game ends at the end of Era IV.
- The player with the most 2 wins.

TIES

In the case of a tie, the tied player with the most discovery towers wins. If players are still tied, the tied player with the most villages wins. If players are still tied, they celebrate victory together.

Solo Mode

In this mode, you win by reaching a 2 threshold while completing all 3 goals. Set up the game as normal, making sure that the 3 goal cards are arranged in a row. Then, arrange the 5 solo mode era tokens in this order below the goals:



Gameplay works as normal, except for the goal cards. Starting from left to right, fill the 2 spots on each goal card with the tokens when the matching era cards are first revealed. When you first reveal the “II” era card, place the “II” token on the left 2 spot of the first goal card. When you first reveal the “III” era card, place 1 “III” token on the right 2 spot of the first goal card and the other “III” token on the left 2 spot of the second goal card. When you first reveal the “I/II/III” era card, place 1 “I/II/III” token on the right 2 spot of the middle goal and the other “I/II/III” token on the left 2 spot of the last goal.

Once a 2 space on a goal is covered by a token, you cannot complete it for that value. When both spaces on a goal are covered by tokens, you will earn 0 2 when you complete that goal. You still must complete all 3 goals to win.

SET YOUR DIFFICULTY

To win, you must complete all 3 goals while reaching a 2 threshold, which varies depending on difficulty:

EASY	NORMAL	HARD
90 2	120 2	150 2

EXPLORER’S ALMANAC

Maps

Each map represents a province of Tigomé. While the basic rules of play remain the same, some provinces have additional ways to explore and earn 2.

Avenia

Home to the capital city of Tigomé, this province is known for its many villages and cities filled with friendly people. The large central island features rolling hills dotted with spires of stone, and the surrounding lands have many bays and narrow straits.

SPECIAL RULES:

- A “land” is an area of terrain spaces isolated by sea, the border of the map, or both. Some goals refer to lands.

Aghon

This province is a collection of small islands, blazing deserts, and mushroom-covered forests. Most cities are perched on the ocean, making this area highly navigable by sea and rich in commerce.

SPECIAL RULES:

No additional rules.

Kazan

Perennially active volcanoes darken the skies of Kazan, and their lava produces unusual stones and metals. The tall mountain ranges of Kazan are too treacherous to live in, but daring merchants will find riches among their crags.

SPECIAL RULES:

- You cannot explore volcanoes.
- Some mountain regions have no blank spaces and therefore cannot have villages.
- Ruin spaces are lettered for completing certain goals.

Cnidaria

Cnidaria is the home of valuable sonulux crystals, which send sound and light over long distances. This magical tool is used for communicating and has made the cities of Cnidaria major hubs of trade, culture, and innovation. However, the oceans are prowled by massive jellyfish reaching over 100 feet in length, and spires of jagged reefs make some areas impassable.

SPECIAL RULES:

- You cannot explore spaces with jagged reefs.
- Each ruin space has a symbol (Δ, ○, or ⊠). Some goals require you to explore ruin spaces with specific shapes.
- Sonulux crystal spaces are wild terrain spaces and can be explored to earn 2. When you explore a crystal space, place a crystal token on the space with your explorer and earn 2 equal to the value of this space plus all other crystal spaces you have explored in this era or previous eras. When you prepare for the next era, leave any crystal tokens on crystal spaces. While you can explore a crystal space with a crystal token again in later eras, doing so will not earn additional 2. Crystal spaces are not a part of any region.

Goals

With each map, the Queen has issued a handful of missions for exploring particular areas. Naturally, a completed mission comes with a reward.

The capital space is not treated as a village for any goals.

AGHON

- Explore ruin spaces adjacent to grassland, desert, and mountain spaces. A ruin space adjacent to multiple terrain types could be used to complete some or all of this goal.
- Discover a village adjacent to a discovery tower. The discovery space must have a discovery tower.

KAZAN

- Discover a village adjacent to a ruin space. The ruin space does not need to be explored.

CNIDARIA

- Discover 2 villages adjacent to crystal spaces. The villages could be adjacent to the same crystal space or 2 different crystal spaces.



Treasure Cards

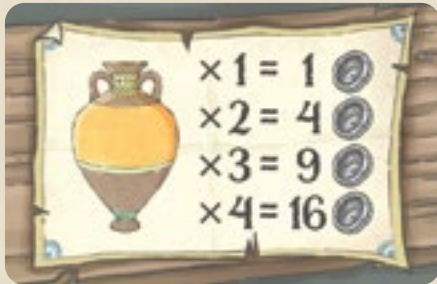
The ruins of Tigomé hold ancient treasures that will aid you in your adventure or earn you . Except for treasure cards with an immediate effect, treasure cards are scored at the end of the game.



Immediately place 1 explorer on any space adjacent to your previously placed explorers or villages, following the Golden Rules of Exploration.



Immediately earn 2 .



Vase cards are scored as a set at the end of the game. A full set of vase cards is worth 16 . Additional vase cards score 4 each.



Earn 1 for each of your villages on grassland (card pictured above), desert, or mountain spaces at the end of the game.



Earn 1 for every 2 of your settlements at the end of the game, rounded down.



Earn 1 for each of your discovery towers at the end of the game.

Investigate Cards

As you explore, you will learn powerful actions that give you new ways to cover terrain quickly.



CONTINUOUS PATH
These spaces could be any combination of the 2 terrain types, including all spaces of 1 type.



EXPLORE UP TO 4 SEA SPACES
Only gain additional treasure cards for ruin spaces you explore that did not already have treasure tokens.



EXPLORE SPACES IN A STRAIGHT LINE
All spaces you explore with this action must form a straight line.

With the "Explore up to 3 spaces in a straight line adjacent to 2 different villages" card, you could explore from a village that you discovered as a part of this explore action.



DOUBLE OR TRIPLE THE VALUE OF ANY COINS YOU EARN
Only multiply the value of you earn from coin spaces.

Special Thanks

Matthew would like to especially thank Terezie Křížková for her unending support of all his ludological pursuits!

Playtesters

Dave Neale, Rasmus Hervig, Federico Garza de Leon, Antony Proietti and the rest of the Cambridge Playtest group; Charlie Paull, Vicki Dalton, Dave Mortimer, Tara Westover, Doug Kaufman and Filip Kevély, Alan Paull, Trevor Benjamin, Nik Newark, Neil Kimball, Vladimir Orellana, Kyle Nunn, Luke Peterschmidt, John Zinser, Kaz Nyborg-Anderson, Ian Rickett, Mitchell Golden, Steve #3 Ehrensperger, and Chris Lawrence.

Copyright & Contact

© 2022 Alderac Entertainment Group. The Guild of Merchant Explorers and all related marks are [™], ®, and © Alderac Entertainment Group, Inc. 2505 Anthem Village Dr., Suite E-521 Henderson, NV 89052 USA

All rights reserved. Printed in China. Warning: Choking hazard! Small parts. Not for use by children under 3 years of age.

Questions?

<https://alderac.com/customer-service> or
Visit www.alderac.com/the-guild-of-merchant-explorers

Credits

GAME DESIGN
Matthew Dunstan & Brett J. Gilbert

DIRECTOR OF PROJECTS
Nicolas Bongiu

PRODUCTION
David Lepore

DEVELOPMENT
Josh Wood

ART DIRECTION
Josh Wood

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Matt Paquette Co.

ILLUSTRATION & CARTOGRAPHY
Gerralt Landman

EDITING
Peter McPherson

PROOFREADING
Peter McPherson
Luke Peterschmidt
Neil Kimball



LEGENDARY EXPLORERS

The most accomplished explorers may record their achievements here.

NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE
NAME	MAP	SCORE

