WHALE RIDERS

By Reiner Knizia
Illustrated by Vincent Dutrait

2-6 players / 45 minutes / Ages 8+

You are a Whale Rider. For generations your people have known and lived with the ice whales and together, have bought and traded at the busy ports along the fabled Ice Coast. You are honoured to be the latest in your family to sail with the whales. But the ice is thickening and the glaciers are moving. A deep winter is coming - the fiercest for centuries. You decide to ride your mount one final time before the snows come, to buy and sell as much as you can... and maybe even collect some precious pearls along the way.

Game Contents:

- 137 tiles
  - 92 resources (meat, kelp, pottery, seashells, crystals, pearls)
  - 24 snow storms
  - 7 starting pearls (with purple backgrounds)
  - 8 extra tiles to be used with *The Magic of the Whales* variant (see p.4 of these rules)
  - 6 extra tiles to be used with *The Clan's Decree* variant (see p.4 of these rules)
- 52 contract cards
- 37 coins (30x 1, 7x 5)
- 6 whale riders (insert each rider into a plastic stand before your first play)
- 1 Game Board
- 1 goods bag

Reiner Knizia thanks all the playtesters who have contributed to the development of the game, in particular Iain Adams, Sebastian Bleasdale, Drak, Gavin Hamilton, Ross Inglis, Kevin Jacklin, and Dave Spring.

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Warning: Choking hazard! Keep away from children under the age of 3. Please keep this information for future reference.

Setting up the game

1. Lay out the board in the middle of the table. It shows the Ice Coast and its eight ports. Each player chooses a whale rider and places it on or below the Sun Port.
2. Take the seven starting pearl tiles (with the purple coloured backgrounds) and place them face up onto the seven spaces in the starting settlement. Starting at the spaces nearest the sun icon, first place the four tiles with 1 pearl, then the two tiles with 2 pearls, and finally the tile with 3 pearls.
3. Depending on the number of players, remove some snow storm tiles from the game and discard them into the box:

Players:	2	3	4	5	6
Remove:	0	2	4	6	8

4. Place the goods tiles into the goods bag. Randomly draw tiles from the bag and place them face up onto each of the spaces at the ports along the Ice Coast. When setting up the game, if tiles with 2 pearls, 2 crystals or 3 goods of any type are placed at the three ports after the Sun Port (Swordfish Port, Ray Port and Urchin Port), place them back into the bag and draw replacements. Once the board is filled with tiles, place the snow storm tiles you did not remove from the game into the bag with the remaining goods tiles.
5. Shuffle the contract cards and deal each player 3 of them. These are to remain hidden from the other players until they are fulfilled during the game. Place the remaining cards in a face down deck near the board.





6. Finally, each player receives three small coins (value 1) and places them in front of themselves. Keep all remaining small coins and all the large coins (value 5) within reach of all players in piles.
7. Randomly select the starting player. Players will take turns clockwise around the table.

Goal of the game

Players will be sailing along the Ice Coast, buying goods to fulfil contract cards. Fulfilling contracts will earn players money to buy even more items. Once players reach the end of the coast, they must return to the starting port (the Sun Port). The game ends when all the pearls at the Sun Port have been purchased. The player with the most pearls will win, having made their family the most prosperous!

Playing the game

On a turn, a player must perform two actions from the following list of 5. *You may do the same action twice on your turn!*

Actions:

- **Advance your whale rider:** Advance your whale rider along the Ice Coast by one location in the direction of the far end of the board (Lobster Port). When your whale rider reaches the final port, turn the whale rider around. From now on, your whale rider always advances by one location in the direction of the starting location (Sun Port). Once your whale rider has returned to the Sun Port, you can no longer choose this action.
- **Buy one tile:** Buy one tile from the port where your whale rider is currently located. The cost of each tile is printed on the board. The first tile costs nothing, the next tile costs 1 gold coin, the next tile costs 2 gold coins, and so on. Place any tile you buy face up in front of you, and any coins you pay for the tile back in the general supply. (You may make change at any time.)
- **Take one gold coin:** Simply take one small coin (value 1) from the supply and place it in front of you.
- **Discard contracts:** You may discard from your hand one or more cards which you no longer want onto a face up discard pile next to the face down deck.
- **Fulfil contracts:** As a single action you may fulfil as many of your contract cards as you like. To do this, place the contracts you will be fulfilling face up on the table and, one card at a time, discard the requested goods or tiles (as depicted on the cards) from in front of you, placing them back into the box (not back into the goods bag).
  - For each contract card you fulfil, you immediatley receive the number of coins depicted on the card.
  - The pearls depicted on the cards will be scored at the end of the game. (Keep all your fulfilled cards in one face up stack in front of you.)
  - *Note: Each card must be fulfilled separately; any goods you may have overpaid are lost.*
  - *Also note: rainbow crystals are wild and may stand for any good, however a tile showing two crystals must be used for the same type of good.*



Tile cost example: Currently at this port, the tile with 2 meat icons is free to take as an action. To take the pottery tile you would need to pay 1 coin. The single wild crystal costs 2 coins and the single kelp tile costs 3.



To fulfil this contract you need to turn in at least 1 of each type of good pictured.



To fulfil this contract you need to turn in at least 6 of any type of goods. They could be 6 of the same good or a mixture.



To fulfil this contract you need to turn in at least 5 separate tiles. What is pictured on the tiles does not matter.

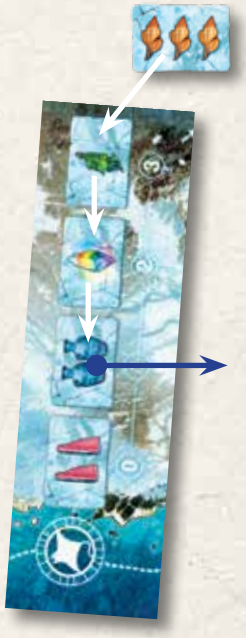
Replenishing:

After you have performed both of your actions, you must replenish your cards and any tiles you bought. This concludes your turn, and it will then be the next player's turn.

- **Draw cards:** If you have fulfilled or discarded contract cards, refill your hand to three cards from the face down deck. If all the cards in the deck are used up, reshuffle the discard pile to make a new deck.
- **Replenish tiles:** If you bought any tiles on your turn, push the other tiles in that location towards the port icon to close any gaps. Then, one at a time, replenish the now empty space(s) with new tiles from the bag. (Unlike during set up, all the tiles in the bag may now be placed legally on the board.) *Note:In the rare case that the bag is empty, the spaces on the board remain empty for the rest of the game.*



Snow storm tiles: As the game progresses, the replenishing of tiles will bring more and more snow storm tiles onto the board. They represent the increasing danger of travelling along the Ice Coast as the winter freeze approaches. These tiles cannot be bought! In this way, the 'inexpensive' spaces will get blocked as the game progresses. Note that the Sun Port has a snow storm in place from the beginning of the game (printed on the board), so no starting pearl will ever cost less than 1 coin!



Replenishing example: If a player bought this pottery tile, at the end of their turn the crystal and kelp tiles would slide down to fill the gap. Then, a new tile would be drawn from the goods bag and placed in the empty 3-cost position at the far end of the port.

Game End

The starting pearl tiles at the Sun Port cannot be bought from the beginning of the game. They only become available towards the end of the game, when the whale riders return to the Sun Port. Once a whale rider has returned, they may buy these pearls in the usual way, and the move expensive pearls above the ones purchased will be pushed downwards to close any gaps at the end of a turn. However, any empty spaces at the top of this column are never replenished with tiles from the bag.
The game ends immediately once all seven starting pearl tiles have been bought.

Now each player counts the number of pearls on their tiles and on their fulfilled contract cards. The player with the most pearls is the winner! *Note: Ties are broken in favour of the player who has the most money left over. If it is still a tie, then the tied player with the most tiles left over wins.*

Variants

Players may wish to add variety to the game by using the following extra rules and game pieces...

The Clan's Decree:
When setting up the game, randomly select three (in a 2-4 player game) or four (in a 5-6 player game) of the following tiles, and place them face-up near the board. Each tile depicts something the whale rider clans want you to do or to have. The first player to successfully reach an achievement on their turn may claim the corresponding tile and place it in their stack of fulfilled contract cards. The player immediately earns any coins shown on the tile, and will score any pearls on the tile at the end of the game, as usual.



Be the first to fulfil three contracts.
(+3 pearls)



Have eight tiles (goods/crystals/pearls).
(+2 coins)



Be the first to reach Lobster Port.
(+2 pearls)



Have eight coins.
(+2 pearls)



Be the first to have earned eight pearls (on cards and tiles).
(+3 coins)



Be the first to return to Sun Port.
(+3 pearls)

The Magic of the Whales:
When using this variant, the whales endow their trusted guides with magical abilities! When setting up the game, after selecting the starting player, lay these tiles face up on the table and in a line. In reverse player order (starting with the last player and ending with the starting player) each whale rider selects the magical ability tile they will have for the game, placing it in front of themselves and in view of the other players. When it is their turn to select a tile, a player may only choose from the first three tiles remaining in the row (from the far left of the line) - they may not simply choose any tile they wish! Any leftover tiles are removed from the game.



When performing the take one coin action, you take two coins instead.



When performing the buy one tile action, you may buy as many tiles as you like at your current port.



As an action, you may swap the position of any two tiles at your current port.



When performing the buy one tile action, you may purchase a tile at your current port that shows a single icon for one coin, no matter its printed price.



The first time you move your whale rider on your turn does not count as an action.



To fulfil contract cards requiring payment in goods, you need one fewer good than depicted.



All goods on your tiles can count as crystals (wilds).



Your hand size is six contract cards, not three. Draw six at the start of the game and always replenish your hand back to six.