Small Samurai Empires



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Draft rulebook (English)

ARCHONA GAMES

Overview and components

Small Samurai Empires is an action-programming, area-control strategy board game for 2-4 players.

In this game, players play as Daimyo - leaders of the great houses with the purpose of conquering Japan and becoming its most powerful emperor in history. In order to accomplish this, players will recruit samurai armies, move them across provinces to gain majority, harvest resources to enhance certain actions, attack enemy armies to take over provinces, and build castles to fortify their position in a province.

At the end of the game, players will score points for each province they controlled at the end of each era, depending on it's final value in the last era. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game, becomes the Emperor of Japan!



Setup

1. All players get pieces of one color: player screen, 20 Samurai, all order tokens of their color, 2 Food and 2 Bushido. Then each player places all of their tokens behind their screen. Place the Samurai armies in front of your screen.



2. Prepare and deal Objective Cards:



If you play with 4 players, play with all the Objective Cards. Shuffle the deck, and deal 3 cards to each player.

If you play with 3 players, remove cards marked with 4+. Then shuffle the deck and deal 3 cards to each player.

If you play with 2 players, remove cards marked with 3+ and 4+, shuffle and deal 3 cards to each player. Then draw 2 cards and place them face up beside the score track.

3. Take 6 Bushido and 6 Food tokens. Seed them randomly on each space of the map that has the Harvest (scythe) symbol.



4. Each player places 2 armies in each region capital.



You are ready to start the game!

Gameplay

A game of Small Samurai Empires is divided into 3 Eras, and each era is divided into 2 rounds. Each round will have the following phases, but please note that the two rounds in an era are played and resolved a bit differently from each other:

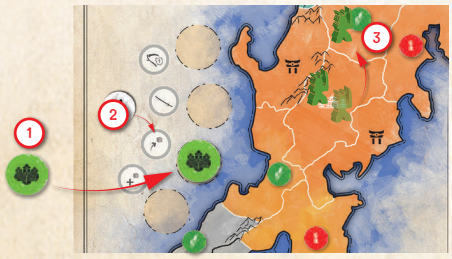
1st round of an Era

1. Planning Phase:
Each player chooses one of his or her objective cards in hand and places it face down. Then all players reveal them simultaneously, and put them next to the score track.

In clockwise order, players place one order tokens of their choice facedown on one of the empty. Depending on the number of players player will be able to place this many tokens during one round:

2 and 3 players: each player will place 4 Order Tokens **4 players:** each player will place 3 Order Tokens

When a player places an order token, he or she can play out a single "triggered" order that is printed next to the slot. For example:



1. The red player has decided to place one of his order tokens face down on this slot of the board.
2. Because of that, he has triggered the "Move 1 army" action in that region.
3. He decides to use that action to move one army from the (Capital City) province to the above province where there is a Food token.

Explanation for these "triggered" orders and the regular player orders in the next section.

When all players have placed the required number of Order Tokens on the board, play proceeds to the next phase of the round.

Important: Army Power and Controlling Provinces

Each samurai meeple adds 1 power to your army total in a province.



A player controls a province if he or she has most power among players in that province. If two or more players have are tied for having the most power in that province, no-one controls it.

Example (photo on right): The blue player has the majority of armies in that province and that is why he or she controls it at the end of the era.



2. Resolution Phase:
Starting from the bottom order token on the board and going upwards through all of the slots, players will reveal and resolve their order tokens one by one (do not return the order tokens to your supply).

Important: Before we explain the order tokens and the actions they provide, please note that each order token can only give you an action in the region where it is placed.

For example: if you placed a recruit armies order token on one of the slots in the orange region, then you will be able to recruit up to 2 armies only in that region (more specifically the Region Capital territory for that action - the one with the City Icon).

Actions overview



Recruit Armies:
Add one army from your supply in the (Capital City) province in this region or at one province in this region where you have a (Castle).
Then, you may spend 1 (food) to place an additional army in that province.



Move Armies:
Spend 2/Spend 3 movement points to move armies in this region. Divide the movement points as you wish (either move one army 2/3 provinces, or move one army 1 province, then another army 1 province etc.)



Move Armies by Sea:
With this action, you may either:

1. Spend 2 movement points to move armies in this region, same as you would with the regular Move armies action or;
2. Move up to 2 armies from one single coastal province to another single coastal province anywhere on the board.

Important - Moving across regions:

While moving your armies, it is possible to cross regions on the board.





Attack:
Destroy one opponent army in a province in this region where you have at least 1 army. Then, you may then spend 1 (bushido) to destroy another opponent army in the same province.



Harvest:
Gain and/or for each province you control in this region that produces those resources.



Build Castle:
If you don't have a in this region, return 2 of your armies from a single province to your supply to place a Castle in that province. Then place one army on top of that , to mark that you control it.

However, if you already have a under your control already in this region, you may add one army from your supply to the province where the is located.

3 Additional Castle Rules

1. A Castle gives 2 power to the player's army in a province.



Example: The red player controls the province because he has one castle (2 power total) and the green and blue players each have one samurai army (1 power total for each).

2. Castles cannot be attacked and players cannot lose control of a castle.

3. At the end of era, each Castle gives +1 influence on the score track corresponding with the province color the Castle is built in.

Triggered Actions

Move one army:
Spend 1 movement point to move an army in this region.

Attack:
Destroy **ONE** opponent army in a province in this region where you have at least 1 army.

Recruit army:
Add **ONE** army from your supply in the (Capital City) province in this region or at one province in this region where you have a (Castle).

Harvest:
Gain or from **ONE** province you control in this region that produces a resource.

2nd Round of an era

This round also has the Planning and Resolution phase, with these differences:

1. Planning phase:

1.a Each player puts one order token **LESS** from their supply.

1.b Additionally, when players put their order tokens face down, they may either put it on one of their own tokens that they have placed in the 1st round for free, or place them to cover an opponent's order token that was placed in the previous round, by paying 1 Bushido (if it is your first time covering an opponent token during this round, 2 bushido if it is your second time, or 3 bushido if it is your third covered token). Please note that you cannot put a token on another token that was placed this round (a facedown token).

Note: Players still play the **Triggered actions** when they place their tokens.



2. Resolution phase:
Instead of starting from the bottom order token on the board and going upwards through all of the slots, players will now reveal and resolve the order tokens **from the top and down to the bottom.** The actions on the tokens that were placed in the 1st round of the Era and were not covered by new order tokens will also be played out.

Era end

After all the players have resolved all the tokens in the 2nd round of an era, the era ends. Players then proceed to these steps:

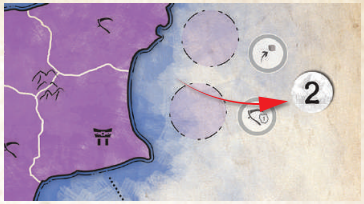
1. Full Harvest – Each player that controls a territory that produces a resource, gains that resource and places it behind his or her screen.

2. Order Tokens Cleanup - Players take back their order tokens from the board behind their screen to be played during the next era.

3. Gain influence - For each province in each region players control (and each Castle), they advance that many steps on the score track.



4. Receive Region Bonus points - If a player controls the most provinces in a region, that player gains the Region Bonus points. Calculate these points for all regions on the board.



5. Receive Shrine points - For each province a player controls with ⛩ (Shrine) symbol, that player gains 1 point.

6. Draw new objectives - Each player draws one new objective card.

7. Next era starts with the player last on the points track, then the player that is next in amount of points and so on.

Game end and Influence Scoring

After the Third Era ends, players continue to resolve "End Era" steps 1-5. Then, players will calculate final Influence Scoring:

For each region, each player checks their influence level (the right column on tracks marked with (x) and then multiplies that value with the number of objective cards corresponding with the region, to get their final Influence points.

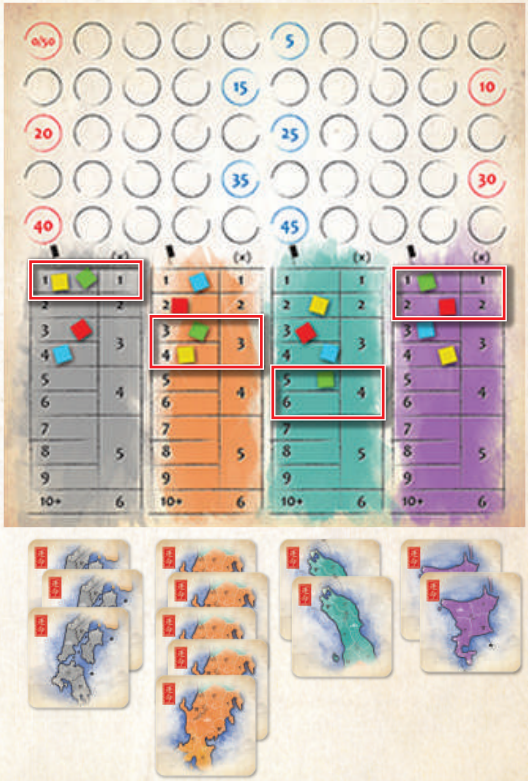
For example, let's look at the Green Player. For the gray region he has an Influence of 1 because he only controlled 1 gray province at one of the Era Ends. He multiplies that with the amount of objective cards for that region (which is 3) to get 3 points from that region total (1 x 3 = 3).

Then, he gets 15 points total for the orange region because he has 3 influence there, and there are 5 orange objective cards (3 x 5 = 15).

For the green region, he gets 8 points because he has 4 influence and there are 2 green objective cards (4 x 2 = 8).

And finally, for the violet region, he gets a total of 2 points because he has 1 influence and there are 2 violet objective cards (1 x 2 = 2).

The total points that the green player gets from influence are: 28 points (3+15+8+2).



Finally, the player with the highest amount of points is the winner and becomes the eternal emperor of Japan!