Dale of Merchants 2

The Era of Trade Masters

2 - 4 players • Ages 10 & up • 20 - 40 minutes





The world has grown smaller. Civilizations around different continents have established independent free trade cities in order to ease trading between distant lands. One of those cities, Yengzuh, is now looking for a new ruler – a new Trade Master.

The post is only open every ten years and the selection of the said individual is no small task. It's handled by holding a trading competition as it's in everyone's best interest to get the best merchant chosen for the job.

All the participating merchants are prestigious, but the competition also tests their ability to deal with unexpected situations. After all, the winner will be responsible of keeping the global prices more fair and stable for years to come.

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Components

- 110 cards
  - 6 animalfolk decks with 15 cards in each
    - *Experimenting platypuses*
    - *Diligent pale-throated sloths*
    - *Intimidating dwarf crocodiles*
    - *Friendly fennec foxes*
    - *Restless marbled polecats*
    - *Observant snowy owls*
  - 20 junk cards
- 1 market board
- 1 polecat die with sides 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, and 3

Compatibility with the original game



Dale of Merchants 2 is fully compatible with the original Dale of Merchants. You can freely mix and match the animalfolk sets between them.

There are few rule additions and clarifications. These sections are marked with green and are the only parts you need to read, if you already know how to play the first installment in the series.

Every time we thought that there weren't any new decks to come up, one single idea emerged and we quickly built a whole set around it. Of course there were a lot of balancing, streamlining and reworking before we were fully happy with the results. If you combine both games, there's countless fun combos available for you to find. We hope you enjoy these new decks as much as we enjoyed creating them!

Credits

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Special thanks to all **1793 Kickstarter backers** who helped to make this game a reality. You rock!

If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions, contact us at:
info@snowdaledesign.fi (*snowdaledesign.fi*).

We also read and follow conversations over at BoardGameGeek (*boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/191597/dale-merchants-2*). Feel free to post questions there and we answer them as soon as we get a chance.

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Game overview

Players take the roles of animalfolk merchants learning new techniques, trading goods, and managing their stocks. The player who first manages to finish their **astounding merchant stall** by building 8 ascending stacks of cards in front of them, is the winner of the game and the new Trade Master!

There are only twelve free trade cities in the world. Yengzuh near Pandala is one of the oldest. The Guild of Extraordinary Traders from Dale promoted the founding of the city after the trade wars in Asia had spread too wide. The city's harbour has tens of great ships all the time, loading and unloading passengers and cargo.



Card overview



1. Value, set icon and possible bonus action icon (✚)
2. Card and set name
3. Type
4. Effect and flavour text
5. The Era of Trade Masters icon (◉)

Card types

There are three types of cards in the game. Two of them are *animalfolk cards* and the last one is a rubbish card named *junk*.

Technique

Technique cards can be played as a *technique action*. A bonus action icon (✚) in the card rewards the active player with a bonus action.

Passive

Passive cards have effects which apply when you have the card in your hand or when using the card for other actions unless stated otherwise on the card text. Show the card to other players when using its effect.

Rubbish

Players start the game with multiple *rubbish cards* named *junk* in their decks. Usually you can only use junk to purchase new animalfolk cards.

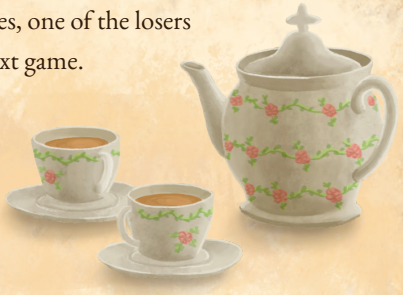
Going to an expedition sure is exciting. Polecatfolks love to get their blood flowing and heart pumping. Finding a rare relic is secondary to an epic adventure in the wilds! More often than not they come back with only junk. But at least they have new and fresh stories to share with foxfolks.



Game setup

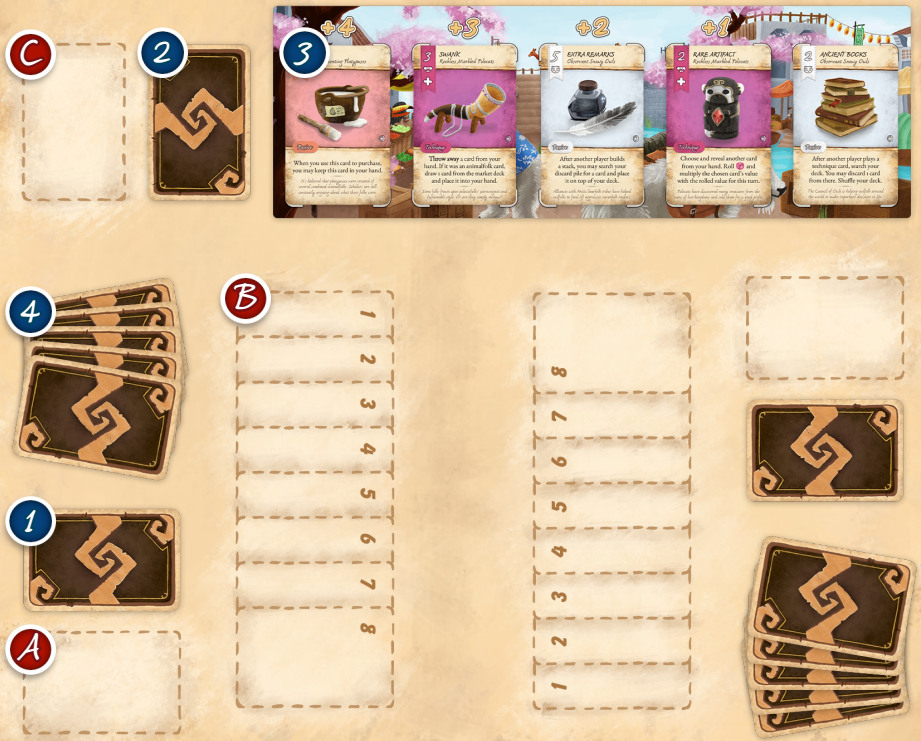
Choose as many animalfolk decks as there are players, **plus one deck**. Put the other animalfolk decks back in the game box. You can change the feel of the game by choosing animalfolks whose abilities match with your group's playing styles. For example, *Diligent pale-throated sloths* reward careful planning while *Observant snowy owls* make you keep an eye on your opponents. There's a list describing all the animalfolks on the last page of this rulebook.

The player who woke up the earliest today should start the game. When playing consecutive games, one of the losers should be the starting player of the next game.



Official contestants have owl supervisors watching them a couple of days prior to the campaign. A head start might not be worth it, if you stayed up all night.

1. Build each player's *deck* by giving each player one 1 valued card **from each of the chosen animalfolk decks** and a number of junk cards until they have a **total of 10 cards**. Shuffle the decks and place one next to each player. Place the remaining junk cards near the playing area to form a separate *junk pile*.
2. Put the remaining 1 valued animalfolk cards back in the game box. Shuffle the remaining animalfolk cards. This becomes the *market deck*.



Example of a 2 player setup

3. Place the *market board* next to the market deck. Draw **5 cards** from the market deck and place them on the board to form the *market*.
4. Each player draws **5 cards** from their own deck to form their starting *hand*.

A *Player's discard pile*

B *Player's merchant stall*

C *Market's discard pile*

Turn overview

1. **Action phase** - Do **one** of the following actions
   - *a)* Market action - Purchase a card from the market
   - *b)* Technique action - Play a technique card
   - *c)* Stall action - Build a stack in your stall
   - *d)* Inventory action - Discard any number of cards from your hand
2. **Clean-up phase**
   - *1)* Fill your hand back to 5 cards
   - *2)* Fill empty market slots

1. Action phase - Do one action

Start your turn by choosing **one** of the four available actions. You do not get to do the other actions this turn unless you're awarded with a bonus action.

When a card tells you to ***throw away*** something, it does not go to your own discard pile. Instead, junk cards are placed in the junk pile and animalfolk cards are placed in the market's discard pile.

NOTE: Cards are placed face up in all discard piles. Players may look through all discard piles at any time but not reorder them.

a) Market action - Purchase a card from the market

Buy 1 card from the market by paying its price in a combination of any cards from your hand. Your cards are worth their printed value when used to purchase new ones. The rightmost card's price in the market is equal to its value. Moving to the left, prices increase one by one: +1, +2, +3, and +4, as indicated on the market board slots. Place the cards you used to purchase in **your discard pile** and then place the newly purchased animalfolk card **into your hand**.

NOTE: You are allowed to pay more than needed for a card, if you can't pay less **with the cards you are making the purchase**. In other words the amount you overpay must be smaller than the value of each card you pay with. For example, you're allowed to buy a card costing 5 with two fours even with a five card in hand, but are not allowed to use additional ones when buying the same card with a five or a three plus a two.

b) Technique action - Play a technique card

Play 1 technique card. Every technique card can be played as the trading technique printed on the card's bottom half. Show the card and do the action described on the card. The effects always happen in the order they are written on the card.

Place technique cards in front of you for the duration of their effect. These cards are on your *schedule*. They are not affected by other effects until they are fully resolved. In case effects of these cards resolve at the same time, you choose the order to resolve the cards one by one.

Place the card in your discard pile **after the card effects have been resolved** unless told otherwise.

Some animalfolks sure take their time. For example, sloths are notoriously precise with each move they make. Most of their methods involve slowness in one form or another. This saves energy and can actually be used for your own benefit, if you plan efficiently.



NOTE: If you can't draw, take, or exchange the defined amount of cards specified in the effect, perfom the action with the maximum amount of cards possible. Searching a deck of 0 cards does simply nothing.

If the card has a bonus action icon (✚), you may do another action after resolving that card's **immediate** effects. The bonus action is awarded on the turn when a card is played, even if the card remains on your schedule and has a delayed effect. Your bonus action can be any of the four usual actions. If you use your bonus action to play another technique card that has a bonus action icon, you can then play another action – and so on.

NOTE: The bonus action is only awarded when a card is played for its technique - not if it's used to purchase from the market or played in your stall.



It's important to find the balance between stalking your competitors and actually doing work. Gathering info is beneficial, but you're not going to win without building up your stall.

When you need to discard or throw away multiple cards at the same time, you choose the order they go to the designated discard pile. The played technique card goes to the discard pile after its effects have been resolved.

c) Stall action - Build a stack in your stall

Your merchant *stall* consists of 8 *stacks* of cards with ascending values. The total value of your first stack must be **exactly** 1, the next 2, and so forth. They have to be built in ascending order. Keep in mind that you can't play those cards for any other effects later once they're in your stall.

To build a stack, choose any number of cards from **one animalfolk set** from your hand and place them in front of you in your stall with all the card values visible. You can't build a partial stack and continue to add to it later.



Example of a player stall with currently 6 stacks (values 1 - 6)

In some cases certain card effects can modify your stacks' values. That's fine. When building up your next stack, it should always be valued the same as its sequence number in your stall. Once a stack is finished, it doesn't matter what values and cards it has in it, it's considered finished.

d) Inventory action - Discard any number of cards from your hand

Place **any** number of cards from your hand into your discard pile.

If your plan doesn't go fully the way you envisioned in your head, it may be better or easier to just start again from a clean slate.



2. Clean-up phase

Clean-up happens after the player has made the chosen action and possible bonus actions.

1) Fill your hand back to 5 cards

Draw cards from your deck until you have 5 cards in hand. There's no maximum hand size, in case you had more cards in hand before. Only the active player fills their hand. If other players hold less than 5 cards for any reason, they fill up only at the clean-up phase of their own turn.

Any time your deck runs out and **you or anyone else needs to draw new cards from it**, shuffle your discard pile and use it to form a new deck.
In addition to drawing cards from your deck, taking and discarding cards also trigger forming of a new deck – **searching your deck does not**.

If your deck and discard piles ever run out at the same time when you need to draw new cards, draw junk cards from the junk pile to fill your hand to 5 cards. In the rare case the junk pile runs out, use the cards from the decks not in play as substitutes. Junk cards are the only ones of which there are considered to be an unlimited amount.

Have you ever wondered where junk ends up to? It's actually far from useless. It's mostly the matter of perspective. Folks desire what they don't have and overlook the value of goods they have abundance of.



2) Fill empty market slots

If there are empty slots in the market, move all cards to the next empty slot to the right if it's possible to do so. Draw new cards from the market deck and fill the slots with them from right to left until the market has 5 cards in it.



You can sometimes get free tasters from the market keepers. This isn't even that rare. You just need to keep in mind that they don't do that out of generosity.

If the market deck ever runs out **and you need new cards from the deck**, shuffle the market discard pile and use it to form a new market deck. If the market deck and discard pile run out at the same time, nothing happens.

Winning the game

Once you place **the 8th stack in your merchant stall**, you're immediately celebrated as the winner of the game.

There's a short duration where the previous Trade Master is supervising the newly selected one. The winner of the competition is then left to lead the city after this familiarizing period. The first years are truly stressful.



4 player team rules

Merchants can join forces with others to form teams when playing with 4 players. This reduces downtime and greatly improves gameplay. We recommend using team rules after a couple of games with the normal rules, which familiarizes you with the game's core mechanisms.

Changes to the normal rules

There are two teams with both containing two players. Two of the players sit opposite to each other and are in the same team. The other two players, who also sit facing each other, are in the other team. Thus, **each player has an opponent on both sides** and a teammate across the table.

During setup, choose **4 animalfolk decks** instead of 5 to include in the game.

NOTE: The game comes with 20 junk cards. You need 4 more for the team rules, if you don't own the original Dale of Merchants. In that case, take all 1 valued cards from a single deck not used in the current game and use those as subtitutes for junk.



Trade Masters need a reliable right hand in order to be able to handle the vast plethora of tasks they are trusted with. Sometimes they get to choose their First Secretary by themselves, sometimes both are chosen in a single competition. Below this duo, there is the Trade Council who makes all the necessary administration.

Each team shares a stall. The first team to finish their **10th stack** wins the game immediately.

When you build a stack, your teammate can help you by adding one or more cards to the stack. Remember to fill your hand **only after your own turn**.

When a card affects "*another player*", you are allowed to choose your teammate. Card effects affecting "*other players*" only affect players in the opposing team. For example, discarding cards and paying extra for cards. "*All players*" and "*each player*" still refer to everyone.

All communication is public.

Examples

- You're not allowed to swap *Acorn (Hoarding flying squirrels 4)* with a card from your team's stall as it's considered to be yours.
- Your teammate doesn't...
  - pay additional +2 price, when you play *Gunfight (Intimidating dwarf crocodiles 2).*
  - discard a card, when you play *Nuisance (Thieving northern raccoons 2).*
- Exception, *Blindfold (Lucky ocelots 5)*: You're not allowed to ask from your teammate.



While you can't talk in private, you're not expected to be telling the truth all the time. If you're sly enough you can use this fact for your advantage.

Experimenting platypuses

Card control - Platypuses get the right cards into their hands at the right time. Rookies grasp platypuses quickly and experienced players like to try out new things with them.

Diligent pale-throated sloths

Delayed actions - Sloths focus on efficiency in the long run. You need to make plans if you don't want to waste their delayed effects. Feel free to include them even in your first game – just don't expect to be able to unleash their full potential right away!

Intimidating dwarf crocodiles

Threatening and harassing - Crocodiles bully other competitors by stealing their property and making threats. Invite crocodiles if you want interaction and conflict!

Friendly fennec foxes

"Helping" others - Foxes love to get everyone involved. Other folks are wary of their seemingly friendly gestures, but can't resist foxes' tempting aid. Playing with them requires skill as timing is critical when trying to get the most out of these fellows.

Reckless marbled polecats

Taking risks - No mountain is too tall or ocean too deep for polecats! These brave adventurers live for danger and aren't afraid of taking chances. Feeling lucky?

Observant snowy owls

Reacting to others - Owls wait patiently for their target to make a move before making their own. They are great at adding more interaction between players and make you stay on your toes. Be sure to stay vigilant when playing with them.

You may activate an owl card once each time its trigger happens – even multiple times in a turn. An exception is Owl 1 that can only be used once during your own turn.