

Mutineer (Meuterer)

by Marcel-André Casasola Merkle

translation by Lindsey Dubb, last updated August 8th, 2004

A card game for 3 or 4 players, 12 years and up

Game length 45 to 60 minutes

Contents

- 2 Captain (Kapitän) cards – These are two sided with values of 0, 1 and 2, 3.
- 12 island cards – These each show a picture of an island on both sides. Just in case you're curious, here are the English translations of their names: Hochland (Highland), Frosthöhle (Frost Cave), Karge Zunge (Barren Tongue, I think), Sandkap (Sand Cape), Grünland (Greenland), Kalte Klippe (Cold Cliff), Eisfelsen (Ice Rock), Piratennest (Pirate Nest), Fingerhut (Thimble), Affeninsel (Monkey Island), Sommerland (Summerland), and Rotes Riff (Red Reef)
- 2 ship cards (untitled, with a ship picture) – merchantman, pirate
- 37 goods cards – Their backs are labeled "Warenkarte" and have a small picture of a ship. There are 4 rubies (Rubine), 5 salt (Salz), 6 wine (Wein), 7 cloth (Tuch), 8 grain (Korn), 6 conflict (Konflikt), and 1 pirates card (Piraten). The number in the deck is shown on each card.
- 5 action cards – Their backs are labeled "Aktionskarte" and show a small picture of a hand. The actions are Mutineer (Meuterer), Cabin Boy (Schiffsjunge), First Mate (Maat), Merchant (Händler), and Loader (Lademeister)
- 2 destination cards (Fahrziel, showing a rough map on both sides) – Captain's (light, with a hat in the lower left) and Mutineer's (dark, with crossed sabers)
- 4 Übersicht (overview) cards, which aren't very useful unless you know German. They're all the same. Side one gives details on each of the actions, and side two shows the sequence of play.
- 2 Skizze (sketch) cards, which explain the different symbols used on the cards, and show how to set up the game.
- The rulebook
- If you check online at <http://www.boardgamegeek.com> you can find printable English versions of the sketch and overview cards. (But beware that the translation uses somewhat different terms.) As of the middle of 2003, the appropriate file to download is at <http://www.boardgamegeek.com/viewfile.php3?fileid=1383>
- The most recent version of this translation should eventually be available from <http://www.boardgamegeek.com>

You can find a (German) multimedia version of the rules at

<http://www.casasola.de/meuterer/start.htm>

If you are familiar with Verräter (Traitor, another game by Marcel-André Casasola Merkle), then you know what to expect – a complex, demanding card game which resembles a board game. Meuterer has the same general form as Verräter, but both games stand entirely on their own.

Overview

Mutiny on the high seas! Everyone on the merchantman takes roles which let them sell their goods for as many victory points as possible. The Merchant gets the best price for his goods when he ties for selling the most; The Loader can choose which goods to take into the ship. The Mutineer has a very different idea; Together with the Cabin Boy he will try to overthrow the Captain. The Captain tries to keep control of the ship and hopes for support from his First Mate.

The goal

Players try to gain victory points through profitable sales, through winning mutinies, and by choosing the destination of the ship.

Setup

- Find a paper and pencil so you can record the score and the passage of turns.
- You're supposed to put the Skizze cards next to the table for reference. Skizze 3 (which shows the layout) is useful even in German, but the other sides are much more informative if you find an English translation.
- Give a (translated) overview card to each player, if you have some.
- For the standard game, the pirate ship and pirates goods card aren't used, so you should lay them aside. You can find the rules for the pirates variant on the back of the pirate ship card – in German. Or you can read them in English at the end of this translation.

Format of the rules

After each section of the rules, you'll find the phases of an example round. The example is written in *italics*.

General rules

Sorting out the cards at the start of the game

The island cards are the game's board. On the bottom left of each island card is a picture of the kind of goods which can be sold there. The bottom of each card shows a table with the victory points for trade. On the lower right is the number of victory points received by the Captain or Mutineer for docking the ship at that island. Each island has a light (active) and dark (inactive) side. Goods can only be traded at active islands.

- At the start of the game, shuffle the islands and place all twelve in a circle, as shown on the Skizze 3 card. Put the Hochland card active (light) side up, and the others with their inactive sides showing.

The Captain (Kapitän) cards show which player is Captain. The number on the card shows how many victory points the Captain is willing to give to the First Mate for his support.

- Choose a player to be the first Captain, and give him both the cards. One way to decide is to

give the Captain card to the player sitting closest to Hochland.

The ship card shows the current location of the ship. In the rest of the rules, this island will be called the “ship’s island.”

- Place the ship card on Hochland.

The goods cards are important since they can give victory points when they are sold. The six conflict (Konflikt) cards decide the outcome of a mutiny.

- The goods cards (including the conflict cards) are shuffled and placed face down in a stack next to the circle of islands. From this deck, deal each player a hand of five cards.

The action cards let the players take a different role each round. Each action has its own advantages. The Captain and his cards do not take part in the choice of actions.

- The Mutineer incites a mutiny. If it succeeds, he becomes the new Captain.
- The Cabin Boy supports the Mutineer if there is a mutiny. If the mutiny succeeds, he gets 2 victory points.
- The First Mate supports the Captain if there is a mutiny, adding an automatic extra conflict card to the Captain’s side. If the Captain is not replaced (even if there is no mutiny), the First Mate gets 1 victory point, plus any points offered by the Captain to the First Mate.
- The Merchant gets the highest available price whenever he sells the most goods, even when he is tied for the most.
- The Loader draws an extra three goods and gets to choose which of them to keep.
- At the start of the game, all five action cards start face down in the center of the circle of islands.

The destination cards are placed on islands in the circle to show where the Captain and Mutineer want to send the ship.

- The destination cards are placed to the side of the playing area.

Welcome to the

Example Round

A contest between aspiring merchants Bernhard, Steffi, Florian, and Carmen

Before the game, the cards are sorted out.

The island cards are shuffled and dealt in a circle, as shown on the Skizze 3 card. Near Bernhard is Hochland. Clockwise around the table are Frosthöhle, Grünland, Karge Zunge, Eisfelsen, Affeninsel, Kalte Klippe, Sommerland, Rote Riff, Piratennest, Fingerhut, and Sandkap.

Hochland is placed light (active) side up, and the rest are placed showing their dark (inactive) side.

Bernhard is chosen as the Captain, and is given both the Captain cards.

The ship card is placed on Hochland.

The goods deck is shuffled, and five cards are dealt to each player. The rest of the deck is placed to the side of the circle of islands. In the example game, each player has been dealt –

Bernhard: 2 conflict, 2 wine, 1 grain

Steffi: 2 conflict, 1 salt, 1 corn, 1 cloth

Florian: 2 cloth, 1 grain, 1 salt, 1 wine

Carmen: 2 salt, 1 wine, 1 conflict, 1 rubies

The five action cards are placed upside down in the middle of the circle of islands.

The Captain's and Mutineer's destination cards are placed to the side of the circle.

Play of the Game

The game consists of 8 (with four players) or 9 (with three players) rounds, each of which is divided into various phases. The main parts of the round are the offering of goods and (if necessary) the mutiny.

Phase 1 – Choose the Captain card

- The Captain decides how many of his own victory points (from 0 to 3) to give for the support of the First Mate. He then shows the Captain card with that many points in front of himself.

Bernhard places the Captain cards with the 0 showing – He is not offering any extra points to encourage another player to choose the First Mate.

Phase 2 – Offer goods

Goods can only be sold at active islands. (These are usually the ship's island and the ship's previous location.)

- Rubies, salt, wine, cloth, and grain can only be sold at an island which shows their picture on the lower left. Hochland and Piratennest are exceptions – At these islands, any number of a single kind of goods may be sold.
- Conflict cards are a kind of goods card, but cannot be sold even at Hochland or Piratennest.
- Only the player who sells the most goods at an island receives victory points. If players tie for the most sold goods, they each get a reduced number of points.
- The Captain makes the first offer of goods.
- Play continues clockwise around the table. On his turn, each player may do one of the following:

A) Show a goods card

- The player puts one of his goods cards face up in front of himself. Players may choose to reveal any card, even those which cannot be sold at an active island.
- When play comes back around the table, the player may choose to show another goods card, and another, and so on as long as they still have goods in their hand.

- Conflict cards, like any other goods card, may be shown during this part of the turn. If the player has the Captain, First Mate, Mutineer, or Cabin Boy action, the played conflict cards will aid his side if there is a mutiny.

B) Leave the offering phase and pick an action card

- Once this is chosen, that player is no longer able to show any more goods. The goods remaining in his hand are set aside for future use. The number of cards still in his hand should be clear to the other players.
- The Captain does not choose an action card. Instead, he leaves the offering phase by placing the Captain's destination card on the island where he intends the ship to dock in the next round. This island is decided by the number of goods cards he has kept unrevealed in his hand. For each unrevealed goods card, the destination card is moved one island clockwise from the ship's island. If the Captain has no unrevealed cards, the destination card is placed on the ship's island.
- When a player other than the Captain leaves the offering phase, he chooses an action card. He takes and views all the remaining action cards from the center of the table, picks one, and places it face down in front of himself. The remaining action cards are returned face down to the center of the table.
- Once all players have left the offering phase, play continues to the next phase.

Since only Hochland is active, that will be the island where all goods will be sold this round. At Hochland, any number of one kind of goods can be sold.

As the Captain, Bernhard begins the offering of goods. He shows a conflict card. Though the card cannot be sold, it will become important later if a mutiny occurs.

Steffi likewise shows a conflict card, Florian then plays a cloth, and Carmen a wine.

It is Bernhard's turn, again. He shows a wine.

Steffi leaves the offering phase. She sets her remaining four goods cards aside and takes the five action cards from the center. She chooses the Mutineer action and places it face down in front of herself. She returns the other action cards to the middle.

Florian then shows a second cloth. Carmen shows a salt. Bernhard plays a second wine.

Steffi has already left the offering phase, so she cannot offer any more cards.

Florian then leaves the round. He places his remaining three cards in front of himself and chooses from the remaining action cards. He notices that Steffi has chosen the Mutineer, since the card is missing. He considers – If he chooses the First Mate, a quelled mutiny would only give him 1 victory point, since Bernhard did not offer any extra. If he chooses the Cabin Boy, he could get 2 points if the mutiny succeeds. But he himself has no conflict cards to affect the mutiny's outcome. He decides to take the Merchant so that he will get more points if there is a tie for the most goods. He places the Merchant card face down in front of himself, and returns the other cards.

That leaves Carmen and Bernhard still in the offering phase.

Carmen offers a salt, for a total of two.

Bernhard leaves the offering phase. Since he is the Captain, he does not take an action card.

Instead, he places the Captain's destination. Bernhard has two unplayed goods cards, so the destination card is placed two islands clockwise from the ship – at Grünland.

Carmen is the last player in the offering phase. If she had another salt, she could show it and

have the most goods to offer. But she does not, so she leaves the offering round by picking up the three remaining action cards. She chooses the Cabin Boy.

In summary –

Steffi showed 1 conflict, then chose the Mutineer action.

Florian showed 2 cloth, then chose the Merchant.

Bernhard showed 1 conflict and 2 wine, and placed the Captain's destination on Grünland.

Carmen played 1 wine and 2 salt, and chose the Cabin Boy.

Phase 3 – Turn up action cards

- All players show their action cards.
- If anyone reveals the Mutineer, that player puts the Mutineer's destination card on an island. As with the Captain's destination, the card is placed one island clockwise from the ship's island for each unrevealed card in the Mutineer's hand. The Captain's and Mutineer's destinations may be on the same island.

The players show the actions they have chosen. Bernhard has a bad feeling – If only he had offered a better reward to his First Mate, he might have had some support on his side of the mutiny.

Steffi, who chose the Mutineer, places the Mutineer's destination card. Since she has four unplayed goods cards, she places the destination four islands clockwise from the ship – at Eisfelsen.

Phase 4 – Mutiny

This phase only takes place if someone has chosen the Mutineer action.

- Beginning with the Captain and going clockwise one time around the table, each player involved in the contest (that is, everyone except the Merchant and Loader) can play conflict cards to support or quell the Mutiny. These cards count in addition to any played during the offer goods phase.
- The Captain and First Mate's cards count to suppress the mutiny. Remember that if someone chose the First Mate action, it automatically counts as one conflict card against a mutiny.
- The Mutineer and Cabin Boy's conflict cards count for the mutiny.
- The Merchant and Loader cannot play conflict cards. Any conflict cards they played during the goods offering phase have no effect.
- The side with more conflict cards wins the mutiny. On a tie, the mutiny succeeds.

Since Steffi chose the Mutineer, the mutiny begins.

The mutineers (Steffi and Carmen) together have 1 conflict card, and the Captain likewise has 1. Ties go to the mutiny, so at the moment the mutineers are ahead.

But the players have a chance to show more conflict cards. As the Captain, Bernhard must do so first. He plays 1 additional conflict card. Then Steffi plays 1 conflict card. Carmen (the Cabin Boy) could then choose to play her conflict card. But the totals are already tied, giving a win to the mutineers. Carmen chooses not to reveal her card.

With the tie, the mutiny has succeeded.

Phase 5 – Distribute victory points

Victory points for the Captain, First Mate, Mutineer, and Cabin Boy

- If the mutiny is suppressed, or if no mutiny takes place
 - The Captain removes the Mutineer's destination card (if any) from its island.
 - He receives the victory points for docking at the Captain's destination, shown on the bottom right of the island card.
 - The First Mate gets 1 victory point, plus any which were offered by the Captain (from 0 to 3 points). The Captain must then subtract those points from his own, even if that gives a negative total. If there is no First Mate, the Captain keeps the offered victory points.
 - The Mutineer and Cabin Boy get nothing.
- If the mutiny succeeds
 - The Mutineer removes the Captain's destination card from its island.
 - He receives the victory points for docking at the Mutineer's destination.
 - The Mutineer becomes the new Captain, and takes the two Captain cards from the previous Captain.
 - The Cabin Boy gets 2 victory points
 - The Captain and First Mate go away empty handed.

Since the mutiny was successful, the mutineers receive victory points. Carmen, the Cabin Boy, gets 2 points. Steffi removes the Captain's destination card and gets victory points for docking at the Mutineer's destination. In this case, Steffi receives 5 victory points for Eisfelsen. Bernhard (and Florian) do not get any points from the mutiny. Since Steffi was the victorious Mutineer, she gets the two Captain cards from Bernhard and is now the new Captain.

Victory points for selling goods

- All active islands (there will be one or two) are counted separately. Note that the ship's new destination is not yet active.
- Only the player(s) who are showing the most of that island's sought goods get victory points.
- If a single player has the most of that island's goods, he receives the first (highest) number of points shown toward the middle of the lower part of the island card. If two players tie, both receive the second number. If three tie, all get the third number. If four tie, no one receives any victory points for sales at that island.
- If any players have goods which can be sold at both of the active islands, then each player must decide where to use their goods. The Captain decides first, followed clockwise by the rest of the players. Each player can only sell one kind of goods at each port. A player may choose to split one kind of goods between the ports, though, if they wish. Remember that the Captain may have just changed hands – It is the new Captain who must make the first decision.
- Note that Hochland and Piratennest will accept any kind of goods other than conflict cards. However, each player may still only offer a single kind of goods at each. As with the other islands, the victory points go to the player who offers the most goods.
- If the Merchant ties for the most goods sold at an island, he receives victory points as if he alone had the most. The other player(s) victory points are not affected. If the Merchant is not tied for the most goods, his action has no effect.

Goods can only be sold at Hochland this turn, since it is the only active island. Since Bernhard (with 2 wine), Florian (2 cloth), and Carmen (2 salt) are tied for selling the most goods, Florian's selection of the Merchant action was well chosen. The Merchant always gets the highest available number of victory points – in this case, Hochland's top reward is 4. Since there is a three way tie, Bernhard and Carmen receive the third number at the island, for 2 points, each. Steffi doesn't get any points for sales, since she didn't sell anything. Had she sold a single goods card, she would still receive nothing, since only players who sell the most get victory points.

In summary –

Bernhard receives 2 points for sale of his 2 wine

Steffi gets 5 points for docking the ship at Eisfelsen

Florian gets 4 points for sale of his 2 cloth (using the Merchant ability)

Carmen gets 4 points – 2 as Cabin Boy during a successful mutiny, and 2 for the sale of 2 salt.

Phase 6 – Move the ship

- Turn any active islands other than the ship's island to the inactive (dark) side.
- The ship's current island remains active for the next turn's sale of goods.
- Move the ship to the remaining destination card's island.
- Turn that island to its active (light) side.

To rephrase things, since this is a common cause of confusion — During the offering of goods, both the ship's island and the previous ship's island are active. On the first turn, or if the ship didn't move in the previous turn, only the ship's island will be active. The ship's upcoming destination (as decided by the Captain or Mutineer) does not affect the sale of goods until the following turn.

Only Hochland is currently active. Since that is the ship's island, no islands are turned to their inactive side.

The ship is then moved to the remaining (Mutineer's) destination at Eisfelsen, which is turned to its active side.

Phase 7 – Return destination cards and discard goods cards

- Return the two destination cards to the side of the circle of islands..
- Put any shown goods cards into the discard pile.

The remaining destination card is placed to the side of the islands. All the face up goods cards are discarded.

Phase 8 – Draw goods cards

- Players take new goods cards from the goods deck. If the deck is used up, shuffle the discard pile and use those cards face down as the new deck.
- Starting with the Captain and going clockwise around the table, all players fill their hands up to

five goods.

- The Loader can take three extra cards and then return any three of the drawn cards to the bottom of the discard pile. The remainder go to his hand.

The players fill their hands back up to five cards. As the new Captain, Steffi starts by drawing 2, then Florian draws 2, Carmen 3, and Bernhard 4.

If Florian had chosen the Loader, he would instead draw 2 (to fill the hand) and an extra 3 (for the Loader). Of those 5, he would choose 2 for his hand and put the rest at the bottom of the discard pile.

Phase 9 – Return action cards to the middle

- All action cards are returned upside down to the middle of the circle of islands.

The players return their action cards.

Phase 10 – End of the round

- The round is over. The next round then begins with phase 1. Be sure to mark that the turn has passed on your score sheet, so you will know when the game should end.

The example round is finished. The next round begins with Phase 1 with the new Captain Steffi.

End of the game

- In the 8th round (or 9th round, if playing with 3), the game ends after the distribution of victory points in phase 5. Whoever has the most victory points has won the game.

Pirates variant

- This variant makes use of the pirates goods card and the pirate ship. The pirates goods card is mixed in with the rest of the goods deck. The pirate ship starts the game at Piratennest, one of the islands.
- When the pirates card is played during the offer goods phase, the pirate ship travels to another island. For each remaining goods card in the hand of the pirates card's player, the pirate ship moves one space counterclockwise. The unplayed cards are counted right when the pirates card is played, not at the end of the offer goods phase. The player of the pirates card can continue to play other goods cards later in the same phase.
- The pirates card is discarded immediately after it is played.
- If the pirate ship meets or passes the merchantman during its journey, all revealed goods cards (including any conflict cards) are discarded. The player's own revealed goods are not exempt. Afterward the round continues normally.
- If the pirate ships is at the same island as the merchantman, any play of the pirates card (even if

- the pirate ship does not move) will result in the pirates taking all players' goods.
- If the merchantman meets or passes the pirate ship, nothing happens.

Translator's notes –

This is a pretty loose translation – I've attempted to retain the sense of the rules without following the German text word for word. There are also a number of spots where I chose to clarify as well as translate.

The rules here for the pirates variant are more explicit than the German rules (which are necessarily very brief, since they're written on the back of a card). Based on a note from Marcel-André Casasola Merkle, the interpretation here is correct.

The August 8th, 2004 update of the rules changed the word choice in a few spots, and tried to clarify a couple of the game's most confusing rules — That the Merchant's ability only helps if there's a tie, and exactly which islands are active for trade.

For any comments or corrections, please feel free to contact me at lindseyspammenot@alumni.caltech.edu. (To really use that address, you'll need to remove "spammenot" from my user name.)