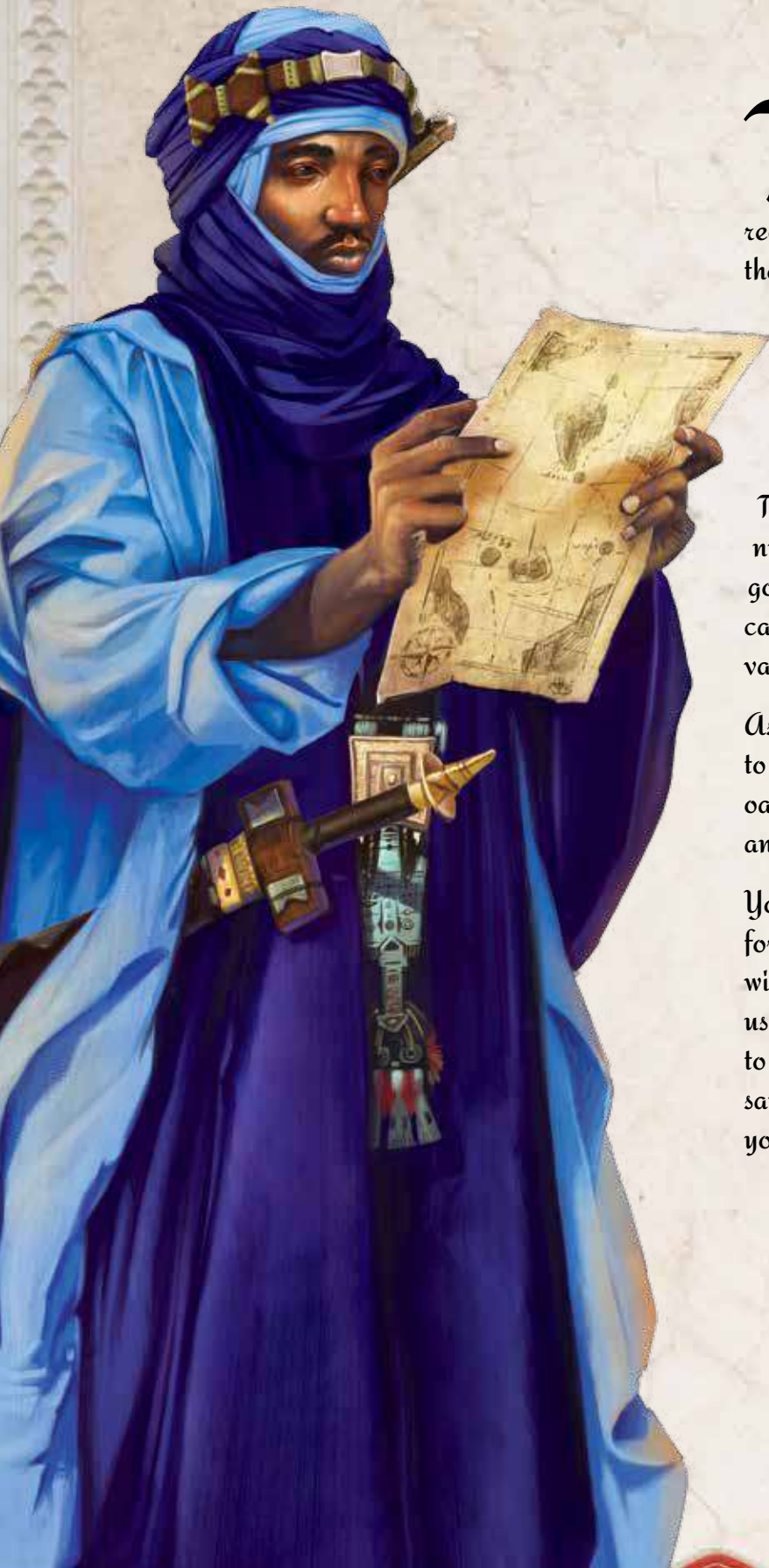


Through the Desert™



Rules of Play



Introduction

Tuareg: this is the name given to the nomadic people who journey across the sweeping sand dunes of Northern Africa. Easily recognizable by their traditional indigo garment, the Tuareg are a resilient, resourceful people.

For centuries, Tuareg merchants established and maintained trade through the Sahara Desert to facilitate commerce between cities in West and North Africa.

These caravans of the Tuareg transported numerous goods across the sands. Spices, wheat, gold, salt, and much more were all carried by camels and other beasts of burden through the various trade routes established over the years.

As the caravans could seldom carry enough water to meet their needs in the inhospitable territory, oases, water holes, and any other source of water and food became critical to their survival.

You lead a Tuareg tribe through the desert, vying for the best trade routes in this region of the wilderness. Expand your caravans wisely by making use of the scattered waterholes and gaining access to as many oases as you can. Among the shifting sands of the Sahara, the fate of your people rests in your hands.

Game Overview

In *Through the Desert*, each player controls a number of caravans consisting of pastel-colored camels. Players take turns placing more of these camels on the board, expanding their caravans in order to score points. The game ends immediately after the last camel of any one color is played from the supply, after which players compare their point totals to determine the winner.

Components



175 Pastel Camels
(5 colors, 35 of each)



5 Gray Camels



30 Plastic Riders
(5 colors, 6 of each)



5 Plastic Palm Trees



45 Waterhole Tokens
(3 types, 15 of each)



15 10-point tokens



29 5-point tokens



5 Caravan Tokens



1 Double-Sided Game Board

Before Your First Game

Before your first game, you will need to assemble the riders and their camels. Take the six riders of a single color and attach each one to a **different-colored camel** (green, pink, yellow, purple, turquoise, and gray). Do this for each set of riders. Also, attach the top of each palm tree to a palm tree base. Keep all of this plastic assembled between games.



Setup

To set up a game of *Through the Desert*, follow these steps:

1. **Place Game Board:** Place the game board with whichever side you wish to use faceup. The game board has two sides, each with its own prominent feature (mountain or river). The side with the river is used in a game variant. If this is your first game, use the side of the board with the mountain.

◆ Take note of the elevation line on the board. This line marks the area that is not used in two- and three-player games (see “Elevation Line” to the right).

2. **Gather Leaders:** Each player chooses a player color and gathers the six leaders (riders on camels) of that color. The leaders on gray camels are placed in front of each player as a reminder of who plays which color.

◆ In a five-player game, each player returns one of their leaders to the box. Each of the returned leaders must be riding a **different** pastel-colored camel (make sure all players keep their gray leader).

3. **Create Camel Supply:** Place all camels without riders near the board, separated by color. Depending on the number of players, do the following:

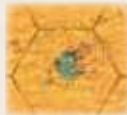
◆ **Three Players:** Return four camels of each color to the box.

◆ **Two Players:** Return eight camels of each color to the box.

4. **Place Oases:** Arbitrarily place the five palm trees, one at a time, on any spaces on the board that show a large pool of water (limit one palm tree per space). Palm trees mark these spaces as oases.



5. **Place Waterholes:** Randomly place a waterhole token **faceup** on each space of the board marked with a small pool of water **and** on each large pool space that **does not have** a palm tree. Return any unused waterhole tokens to the box.



6. **Create Token Supply:** Place the remaining tokens near the board, separated by type.

7. **Determine First Player:** The youngest player at the table is the first player.

8. **Place Leaders:** Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player places one of his or her leaders (excluding gray) on an empty space of the board. This continues until all of the leaders for all players (except gray) are placed. Players must follow these restrictions when placing leaders:

◆ A leader cannot be placed in a space **containing** a waterhole token, an oasis (large pool space with a palm tree), a mountain, or another leader.

◆ A leader cannot be placed in a space **next to** an oasis or **any** leader.

◆ The **first leader** that each player places cannot have the same colored camel as another leader who is already on the board.

Terrain Features

There are different types of spaces and terrain features on the game board:

Elevation Line

The **two and three-player games** use a smaller portion of the board, marked by the elevation line. In those games, all the spaces to the right and below this line are not used.



Desert and Small Pools



Desert spaces show sand or cracked earth, but they can also have a small pool of water, which matters only during setup.

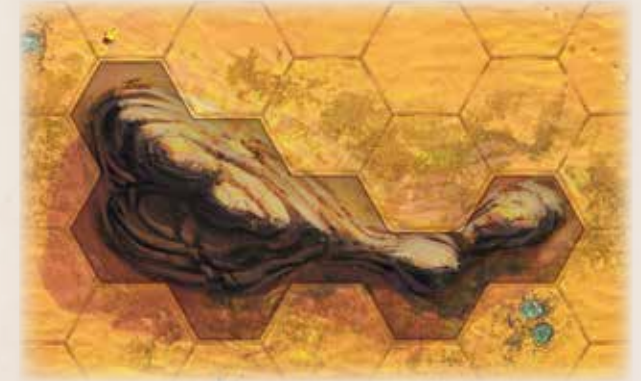
Large Pools

A large pool of water is either an oasis (if there is a palm tree on it) or a normal space containing a waterhole. If it is an oasis, camels **cannot** be placed there. If it is a waterhole, camels **can** be placed there.



Mountain Ranges

There are some mountain ranges on the board. Mountains are not spaces, so camels cannot be placed there.



Playing the Game

During a game of *Through the Desert*, you and the other players each control a number of caravans using each of the colors of pastel camels. At the start of the game, each of your caravans consists of only a single leader (camel with a rider). As the game progresses, you extend your caravans by placing camels of matching colors, working toward discovering watering holes, linking oases, and enclosing areas in order to score points.

The game is played over a series of turns starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise. On your turn, you **must** take a total of two camels from among the five colors of camel supplies and place them on the board. You can take two camels of the same color or two camels of different colors.

First Turn Placement

The first two players to take their turns place **only one** camel each during their first turn (in a two-player game, this applies to the first player only). For the rest of the game, players always place two camels.

Placing Camels

A camel can be placed in any space that is next to your caravan of the same color, but you must follow certain rules and restrictions:

- ❖ You cannot place a camel in a mountain range, a space that already contains a camel, or an oasis (large pool space with a palm tree).
- ❖ Your caravan does not have to form a single line; your caravans can “fork.”
- ❖ You can place a camel in a space next to a camel of a **different color**, regardless of whom the camel belongs to.
- ❖ You cannot place a camel in a space next to another camel of the **same color** if that other camel belongs to another player (i.e. you cannot “merge” two different caravans of the same camel color).

Scoring Points

There are several ways to score points during the game. These points are tracked by the point tokens that players earn during the game, which are kept in front of them. At the end of the game, players add up their points to determine the winner.

You will know roughly how many points the other players have during the course of the game. Most of the point tokens are kept faceup, except for the waterhole tokens, which are placed facedown when taken.

Waterholes

When you place a camel in a space with a waterhole token, take the token and place it **facedown** in front of you. It stays hidden from other players until the end of the game.



Placement Example



The purple player wants to extend his yellow caravan; the green shaded spaces indicate where he can place a yellow camel. He wants to link to the nearby oasis (lower-right), but Blue's yellow caravan is blocking the most direct path, as well as several other spaces (all shaded in red).

Ultimately, he decides to place the first camel on top of the “1” waterhole, taking that token, and then places his second camel next to that in order to link his yellow caravan to the oasis.



Oases

A space that contains a palm tree is an oasis. When you place a camel in a space **next to an oasis**, the matching caravan is linked to that oasis. Take a 5-point token and place it faceup in front of you.



- ◆ Each caravan can be linked to each oasis only once, but a single caravan can be linked to multiple oases.
- ◆ If one of your caravans is linked to an oasis, you can still place camels from that caravan next to that oasis, but you do not score any additional points.
- ◆ A single oasis can be linked to by any number of caravans belonging to any combination of players, including multiple caravans from the same player. This is limited only by the number of spaces next to the oasis (and camel placement rules).

Oasis Example



During this turn, the blue player wants to accomplish two things: she wants to link her pink caravan to the oasis, and she wants to block the red player from linking his green caravan to that oasis (via either of the green shaded spaces).

She places a pink camel in one of the spaces, linking her pink caravan to the oasis and taking a 5-point token.

Next, she places a green camel. Since she already linked her green caravan to the oasis, she does not take another 5-point token. However, placing there blocks the red player (who cannot place a green camel from his caravan next to a green camel from hers).

Enclosed Areas

When you place a camel that causes a **single caravan** to surround an area of the board, you have enclosed that area, which can provide substantial benefits.

In order for an area of the board to be enclosed, a caravan must form an **uninterrupted chain completely surrounding the area**, either by itself or with the help of the edge of the board or the mountain in the middle of the board (see “Enclosing Examples” to the right). You cannot use caravans of other colors to enclose a single area, and an enclosed area cannot contain any other camels, regardless of whom they belong to.

When an area becomes enclosed, take all the waterhole tokens in the enclosed area and place them facedown in front of you. Also, if there are any oases in the enclosed area that the **enclosing caravan is not yet linked to**, take one 5-point token for each of those oases. After an area has been enclosed, players cannot place any camels inside it.

Additionally, at the end of the game, each enclosed area is worth **one point** for each empty space within it. These points are calculated during final scoring, so no point tokens are taken when an area is enclosed.

Component Limitations

Even if the appropriate tokens have run out, players still score points. Use other tokens from the box or some other means to track the scores.

End of the Game

The game ends at the end of a player's turn in which the **last camel of any one color** has been placed on the board. When the game ends, players first determine who has the largest caravan of each color before each player's final score is calculated.

Largest Caravan

For **each camel color**, determine who among all players has the most camels in his or her caravan of that color. That player takes the 10-point caravan token matching that color.

If two or more players are tied for most of a color, **all tied players** take a 5-point token, and no one takes the 10-point token.

Final Scoring

To calculate final scores, follow these steps:

- ◆ Each player adds the values of all point tokens he or she has taken throughout the game.
- ◆ Each player adds the value of his or her enclosed areas. An enclosed area is worth one point for each empty space within it, **not counting oases**.

Players compare point totals, and the player with the most points wins. If there is a tie, the tied players share victory.

Enclosing Examples



In the above example, the green player encloses the area by placing a yellow camel as shown. She was not already linked to the oasis, so she takes a 5-point token as well as the two waterhole tokens in the enclosed area. At the end of the game, she will receive eight points from the spaces in this enclosed area.



In this example, the red player encloses the area by placing a green camel as shown, using the edge of the board to help. In this instance, there are no oases, so he simply takes the two waterhole tokens in the enclosed area. At the end of the game, he will receive 16 points from the spaces in this enclosed area.

Variant Rules

If you wish to customize your games of *Through the Desert*, you can use any of these variant rules.

River Board

The reverse side of the board shows the Niger river running through the southern Sahara and offers players a new tactical challenge.



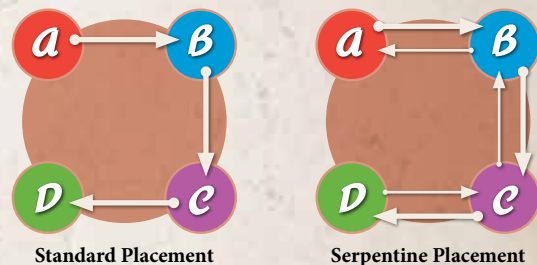
Aside from the different arrangement of land features, there are some special rules for the river board:

- ◆ During setup, you may place leaders in spaces next to the river. All other leader placement rules are unchanged.
- ◆ During the game, placement rules are the same, but the first time that each of your caravans “crosses” the river, take a 5-point token.

Serpentine Leader Placement

During setup, players can use a serpentine order for leader placement. In a four-player game, standard leader placement proceeds clockwise from the first player: A (first player) – B – C – D, repeat.

Serpentine leader placement begins like standard but then reverses the order, counter-clockwise from the last player: A – B – C – D – D – C – B – A, repeat.



Aquifers

Many water sources in the desert are actually aquifers, underground reservoirs of water just beneath the surface. Typically accessed by digging wells, you usually do not know the size of the aquifer until you draw water from it.

During setup, place waterhole tokens as normal, but place them **facedown instead of faceup**, returning any remaining waterhole tokens to the box without looking at them.

Waterhole tokens taken during gameplay are still kept facedown until the end of the game. During the game, you may secretly look at any tokens you have taken without showing them to the other players.

Quick Reference

Credits

Rule Changes by Player Count

Game setup and a few minor rules can change based on the number of players in the game.

Two Players

- ◆ **Setup:** After creating the camel supply, return **eight** camels of each color to the box.
- ◆ **Elevation Line:** The section beyond the elevation line is not used during setup or during the game.
- ◆ **Placing Camels:** During the first turn of the game, only the first player is limited to placing one camel during his or her first turn. The other player places two camels during his or her first turn of the game.

Three Players

- ◆ **Setup:** After creating the camel supply, return **four** camels of each color to the box.
- ◆ **Elevation Line:** The section beyond the elevation line is not used during setup or during the game.

Five Players

- ◆ **Setup:** When gathering leaders, each player returns one of their leaders to the box. Each of the returned leaders must be riding a **different** pastel-colored camel (make sure all players keep their gray leader). This means that, during the game, **each player** controls a different set of **four caravans**.

Frequently Overlooked Rules

- ◆ During the “Place Leaders” step of setup, the first leader that each player places must be a different color from any other leaders already placed by other players.
- ◆ The first two players to take their turns can place only one camel each during those first turns. In a two-player game, this applies to the first player only.
- ◆ You cannot place a camel in a space next to another camel of the **same color** if that other camel belongs to another player.
- ◆ You cannot enclose an area using caravans of different colors.
- ◆ An enclosed area cannot contain any other camels (no matter who owns them).
- ◆ Once an area has been enclosed, it is closed off; players cannot place camels inside of it.

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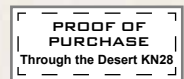
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