



MERCURIUS

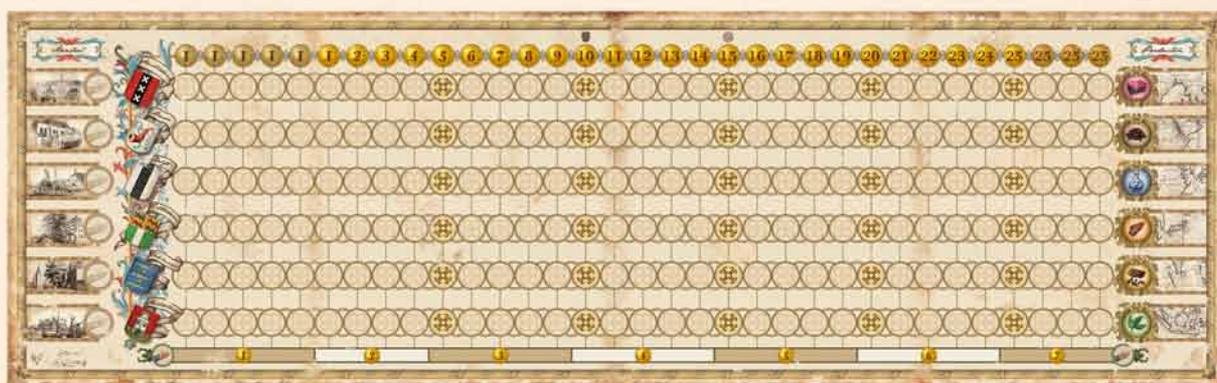


Goal of the game

In the game *Mercurius*, players take on the roles of powerful, wealthy Dutch burghers in the seventeenth century, whose goal is to multiply their wealth by speculating on the Amsterdam stock market. Players can invest money in shares of chambers of the Dutch East India Company and in commodities imported by the company from distant lands. Using information about events affecting the financial condition of the chambers and the commodity prices and availability, players will try to influence the prices for their own benefit. They have to be careful, because their knowledge and influence on the markets is incomplete. Players must observe their opponents' moves and the information they reveal to the market.

Only through effective use of their own knowledge and responses to market events will they earn a fortune and a reputation as the best investors in the world's first stock exchange.

Game components



The main board, with 6 tracks showing the current prices of shares and primary commodities of each of the 6 chambers



5 player boards



72 price change cards



Dividend

Black Market

News

15 special action cards (3 per player)



30 coin tokens worth 1 guilder
 20 coin tokens worth 5 guilders
 20 coin tokens worth 10 guilders
 15 coin tokens worth 50 guilders
 15 coin tokens worth 100 guilders



6 dividend tokens



Amsterdam



Hoorn



Delft



Rotterdam



Enkhuizen



Middelburg



silk



coffee



porcelain



copper



spices



tea

60 tokens representing shares of chambers of the Dutch East India Company (10 of each type)

60 commodity tokens (10 of each type)

Before the first game gently punch out the tokens.

Game preparation

Place the board in the center of the table (1). Place the coins near the board to create the bank (2). Put one token of each type of share and commodity onto the appropriate price tracks: shares on the space indicating a price of 10 guilders (3), commodities on the space indicating a price of 15 guilders (4).

Number of players	Number of tokens of each type of stock and commodity
3	5
4	7
5	9

Depending on the number of players, place the appropriate amount of shares (5) and commodities (6) beside the board. They will form the bank of shares and commodities available in the game. All remaining stocks and commodities are returned to the box, as they will not be used. Place the dividend tokens (7) near the board. They will be used to show which chambers have paid dividends.



Each player receives:

1 player board (8), 70 guilders (9), 3 special action cards in their selected color (10).

Shuffle the 72 price change cards and form them into a single deck. Deal out the top 12 cards face down. This creates two decks: a deck of 60 cards and a deck of 12 cards.

- The deck of 60 cards is placed face down beside the board where all players can easily reach it (11). **This is the main deck.**
- The deck of 12 cards is placed face down in reach, but it will be used less often than the main deck. (12). **This is the backup deck.**

Deal each player 5 price change cards from the main deck. Each player's 5 cards form their hand, visible only to the owner.

Whichever player last bought or sold stock is the start player. In case of ambiguity, determine the starting player by mutual consent or randomly.

The game is ready to begin.

Sequence of play

The start player takes the first turn, then players take turns clockwise around the table. During their turn a player does the following steps in order:

1. Perform up to 3 financial transactions.
2. Play a price change card from their hand onto their player board.
3. Update the prices of shares and commodities which were affected by the price change cards lying on the player's board. Then shift price change cards on the player's board to the right.
4. Draw a new price change card from the main deck.

1. Perform financial transactions.



A player can perform up to 3 transactions. A transaction consists of buying or selling one share of a chamber of the Dutch East India Company, or buying or selling one commodity.

A player may choose to perform no transactions at all; in that case, the player may instead play one of these two special action cards: Black Market or Dividend.

Rules of buying shares and commodities.

- If during their turn, a player buys exactly 1 share or commodity of a given type, then the player pays its current price indicated on the board to the bank.
- If during their turn, a player buys exactly 2 shares or commodities of a given type, then each one costs the current price +1.
- If during their turn, a player buys exactly 3 shares or commodities of a given type, then each one costs the current price +2.

Each time a player buys shares or commodities, the purchased items are taken from the bank.

Example: In his turn, Robert buys 2 shares of the Amsterdam Chamber and 1 tea. The current price for shares of the Amsterdam Chamber is 13 guilders and of tea is 17 guilders. Robert pays 45 guilders: 14 guilders for each Amsterdam share and 17 for the tea.

Rules of selling shares and commodities.

- If during their turn, a player sells exactly 1 share or commodity of a given type, then the player receives the current price indicated on the board from the bank.
- If during their turn, a player sells exactly 2 shares or commodities of a given type, then the player receives the current price -1 for each one.
- If during their turn, a player sells exactly 3 shares or commodities of a given type, then the player receives the current price -2 for each one.

Example: In a later turn, Robert sells the two Amsterdam shares and 1 tea which he bought earlier. The current price of Amsterdam shares is 18 guilders and of tea is 21 guilders. Robert receives 55 guilders: 17 guilders for each Amsterdam share and 21 for the tea.

2. Play a price change card.



After performing actions, a player plays 1 price change card from their hand. It is played face up on the player's board on the leftmost space, marked with the symbol .



Instead of playing a price change card, a player may place their News special action card. Otherwise, a player must play a price change card.

3. Update the prices of shares and commodities.



After playing a card, the player updates the current prices of shares and commodities on the price tracks on the main board, according to the price change cards on the player's board.

NOTE: In a player's first turn, their player board will have only one price change card which affects the prices of stocks and commodities. In their second turn, their player board will have 2 price change cards, and in their third and later turns, there will be 3 cards.

Example:

Magda's player board has 3 price change cards:

- Amsterdam +1 / silk -2
- Amsterdam +1 / coffee -2
- Rotterdam -1 / copper +2



The current prices are:

Amsterdam 12/silk 11

Hoorn 11/coffee 13

Delft 8/porcelain 19

Rotterdam 9/copper 17

Enkhuizen 10/spices 17

Middelburg 11/tea 13



After updating the prices based on the 3 cards on Magda's player board, the prices are:

Amsterdam 14/silk 9

Hoorn 11/coffee 11

Delft 8/porcelain 19

Rotterdam 8/copper 19

Enkhuizen 10/spices 17

Middelburg 11/tea 13

Both ends of the price tracks have some spaces with repeated values: the left end has 5 extra spaces with values of 1, and the right end has 3 extra spaces with values of 25.

The usual rules for buying apply to these spaces, e.g. buying 2 shares with a current price of 1 causes the shares to cost $1+1=2$ guilders each, and buying 3 shares with a current price of 25 causes the shares to cost $25+2=27$ guilders each.

But the price for selling never goes below 1 when selling multiple items of the same type, e.g. selling 2 shares whose current price is 1 gives 1 guilder per share, not $1-1=0$. Price change cards move the tokens left or right the indicated number of spaces (so that if the token is near an end of the track, the price change shift might not actually change the number, only the location on the track).

Tokens do not move off the track; they stop at the end instead of being moved past the end.

After updating the prices, the player shifts all the price change cards on their player board one space to the right, leaving the leftmost space empty. Starting with the 3rd turn, the board will be full with 3 cards: the card on the rightmost space, marked with the symbols  is shifted off the board and discarded, leaving 2 cards.

Thus each price change card will affect prices for 3 consecutive turns, and all the players can see which price changes will occur and for how many more turns.



4. Draw a new price change card.



At the end of their turn, a player draws one new price change card from the main deck.

Playing special action cards

Players have three special cards to use during the game. Each card can be used only once.



Black Market card

Playing a Black Market card costs all of a player's 3 financial transactions for the turn. The player plays the Black Market card face up with up to 3 share and commodity tokens to sell on the black market. After doing this, the player continues to step 2 (playing a price change card).

At the beginning of their next turn, before step 1, the player first sells their items on their Black Market card. The tokens are returned to the bank and the player receives payment equal to their current prices.

Przykład: In her turn, Magda decides to play her Black Market card. She does this instead of performing financial transactions in step 1. She puts the card in front of her and places 2 shares of the Hoorn Chamber and 1 spice on it. Then she continues her turn with step 2.

Later, at the start of her next turn, Magda first completes her black market transaction. The current price of Hoorn shares is 17 guilders and the current price of spice is 20 guilders. Magda returns the tokens to the bank and takes 54 guilders. Now her turn continues with step 1 (performing up to 3 transactions).

NOTE: tokens on a Black Market card do not belong to any player or the bank. They are not available for purchase.



Dividend card

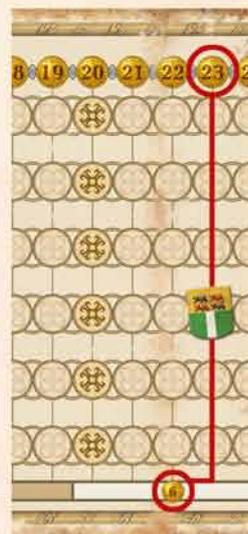
Playing a Dividend card costs all of a player's 3 financial transactions for the turn.

The player plays their Dividend card and chooses a chamber which has not yet paid dividends. This chamber will now pay dividends to its shareholders.

The player places a dividend token onto the main board on the symbol of the chosen chamber to indicate that it has now paid dividends (so it will not pay dividends again later).

All players with share tokens of the chosen chamber receive the current share price (as indicated on the main board) for each owned share.

Example: Robert plays his Dividend card. He chooses the Rotterdam Chamber, which has not yet paid dividends. The current price of Rotterdam shares is 23 guilders, so the dividend is 6 guilders per share. Robert has 3 Rotterdam shares so he receives 18 guilders from the bank. Magda has 1 Rotterdam share so she receives 6 guilders. Rafal has 2 Rotterdam shares so he receives 12 guilders.



News card

Once per game, a player may play their News card in place of a price change card. The News card is placed face down onto their player board on the space where a price change card would have been placed. The News card will shift each turn with the price change cards, without affecting the prices of shares and commodities. At the moment when the News card is played, the player may discard up to 3 of their price change cards. The player draws that many new price change cards:

- ♦ One price change card from the main deck.
- ♦ Additional cards from the backup deck.

End of the game and wealth calculation

When the main deck is exhausted, the players play **2 more rounds**, until all players have only 3 price change cards left in their hands. Once the main deck is exhausted, players no longer do step 5 (draw new price change card).

At the end of the game, players calculate their wealth.

Players sell all their shares and commodities at their full current prices, receiving guilders from the bank.

Players add up all their money. **The player who has the most money wins the game.**

Ties are possible.

Price change cards and the game economy

Each price change card reveals information influencing the price of one chamber's shares and one commodity. Each card will influence the market during 3 consecutive turns of the player who placed it. The cards are designed to reflect the relationship between chambers and the commodities which they trade. Each chamber has one primary commodity which it trades and one other secondary commodity. The chambers are connected in pairs, in such a way that the primary commodity of one is the secondary commodity of the other.

CHAMBER	PRIMARY COMMODITY	SECONDARY COMMODITY
Amsterdam	silk	coffee
Hoorn	coffee	silk
Delft	porcelain	cooper
Rotterdam	cooper	porcelain
Enkhuizen	spices	tea
Middelburg	tea	spices



Every price change card alters the price of one chamber's shares and one commodity. Every share price changed by 1 and every commodity price is changed by 2. The price changes are inversely related, i.e. if the share price increases, then the commodity price decreases, and vice-versa.

Each chamber has 12 cards associated with it. For a given chamber, 7 cards increase the share price and 5 cards decrease it. Of the 7 cards increasing the stock price, 5 cards decrease the main commodity's price and 2 cards decrease the secondary commodity's price. Of the 5 cards decreasing the stock price, 4 cards increase the primary commodity's price and 1 increases the secondary commodity's price.

This means that share prices will tend to rise over time and commodity prices will tend to fall over time. Since share value is more stable and more certain to increase in the long run, it can be a safe long-term investment. Commodity prices can change more drastically, so trade in commodities is risky but can give great short-term profits.

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