



Seafarers of Catan - Basic Seamanship

by S. Coleman Charlton
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The people of Catan are beginning to venture further out into the wild, unknown waters that surround their homelands. In The Seafarers of Catan, you control a group of seafaring settlers exploring and taming these uncharted seas. The path to victory lies with the clever use of trading, development, and productive shipping lanes. The best strategy and a dash of luck will decide who will be the undisputed ruler of the Isles of Catan. The Seafarers of Catan is an expansion set for the award-winning game: The Settlers of Catan. Seafarers adds ships, pirates, gold fields, and a collection of scenarios, each with unique challenges for Settlers fans. the game.



The Settlers of Catan

The Settlers of Catan is not a game of conquest and warfare. Instead, each player controls a small group of “settlers” trying to tame the remote and bountiful island of Catan. To expand, you must collect valuable resources, and use them to build roads, settlements and cities. But as it is almost impossible for one player to produce all the resources needed, this leads to the heart of the game: trade and commerce. Players are free to negotiate and trade resources between themselves, creating a highly interactive experience. Player interaction is further complicated by the presence of a robber, which is used to steal from other players and hinder their production of resources. You are always involved in the game, collecting resources and negotiating deals on your quest to develop the most prosperous and advanced civilization.

At the beginning of each game, the island of Catan is laid out randomly using terrain hexes depicting hills, fields, pasture, mountains, and forest. Each turn, based upon a dice roll and the adjacent terrain, settlements and cities founded by the players provide natural resources: brick, grain, wool, ore, and lumber. These resources can then be used to build settlements, build roads, upgrade settlements to cities, and purchase development cards which represent a variety of advances toward civilization. These activities also provide victory points, and the first player to accumulate ten victory points wins.

The Seafarers of Catan

When playing Seafarers, you gather resources, expand, and build just as in a normal game of Settlers. However, you are no longer restricted to a single island—instead the board consists of a number of islands separated by sea hexes. The following unique Seafarers elements make Settlers a more varied and exciting game:

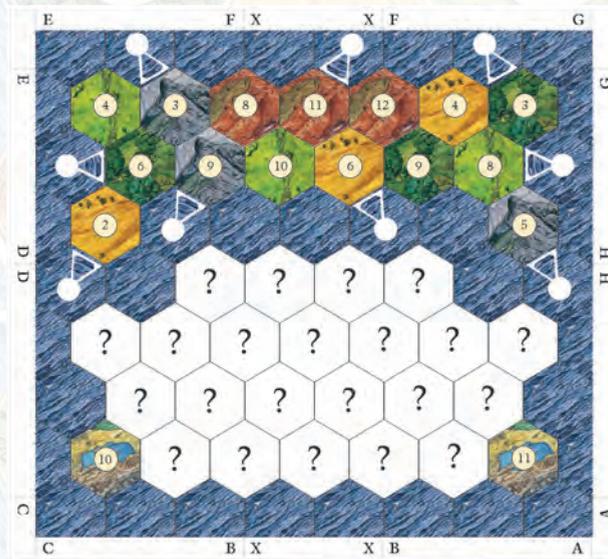
Ships — You can expand across the sea to other islands by building ships. You may build a ship on the edge of a sea hex, just like you can build a road on the edge of a land hex.

- It takes 1 wool and 1 lumber to build a ship.
- You may build a settlement the end of a chain of ships.
- Unlike roads, ships may be moved.
- “Longest Trade Route” (i.e., Longest Road) can include ships and roads.

The Pirate — In addition to the Robber, Seafarers includes a “Pirate.” When you would normally move the Robber to a land hex, you may instead move the Pirate to a sea hex, causing the following effects:

- You may steal from a player with a ship adjacent to the Pirate.
- A ship adjacent to the Pirate may not be moved.
- You may not build a ship adjacent to the Pirate.

Gold Fields — Seafarers includes a new type of terrain: gold fields. When a gold fields hex produces a resource for you, you get to choose the type of resource.



Scenarios — Seafarers provides eleven scenarios, each with a different board setup and different victory conditions:

- Victory requires more than 10 victory points (VPs)—usually in the 12-13 range.
- Some scenarios award special victory points for activities like settling new islands or establishing trade routes.
- Some scenarios include “unexplored territory” that gets filled in as the game progresses.





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The Settlers of Catan

by Klaus Teuber



Basic Strategies

Most of the basic Settlers strategies are also applicable to Seafarers—increase your production as much as fast as possible, watch out for opponents blocking you from prime building sites, etc. However, there are some significant factors unique to Seafarers that you should keep in mind:

Setup — The basic Settlers setup criteria are still applicable: place settlements on the best resource producing spots, try for some production in all five resource types, and consider harbor spots that compliment your resource production mix. In Seafarers, you should also:

- Try to get at least one settlement on or relatively close to the coast so that you have more options. Some scenarios are almost impossible to win without building ships to reach new islands.



- If you place a settlement on the coast, starting a ship instead of a road is often a good idea.
- In many scenarios, wool and lumber are very important in that they are used for ship building.

Harbors — Getting a harbor early is even more advantageous than it is in Settlers. Harbors are on the coast, and you can build more things (making maritime trade more important).

Be Flexible — Since you are playing to 12+ VPs and have more sources of VPs, you usually have more time than in a Settlers game. Be flexible and react to the situations that arise during play.

Expansion — Expanding overseas can be very advantageous if not essential in most of the scenarios:

- It gives you access to more potential building spots.
- You often get a victory point for each new island you settle.
- If you focus on expanding and building ships and settlements, it will allow you to easily compete for the Longest Trade Route (+2 VPs).
- Reaching a “unexplored territory” hex first gives you a free resource as well as first shot at settling there.

Concentration — In some scenarios, it is possible to win without building ships. So you should consider using a concentration strategy in appropriate situations. Such a strategy usually focuses on producing ore and grain in order to build cities and development cards. So, if all of the other players seem to be focused on expansion (wool, lumber, and brick), the road to victory may lie in another direction.

Along the Coast — Along a coast edge, you can build a road or a ship, so:

- When building along the coast, try to build ships instead of roads—unless you may need to head inland.
- Beware, one of your opponents can “break” a chain of your ships along the coast by building a settlement. Similarly, an opponent can use his ships to block you from desired routes.

Wool & Brick — In Settlers, you can often run into a problem of “too much wool and not enough to spend it on.” Since wool is required to build ships, this is not something you usually need to worry about in Seafarers. Similarly, while a brick shortage is often a problem in a Settlers game, it is not as significant in a Seafarers game since you often want to build ships instead of roads.

Gold — Gold is good, but don’t focus too much on it. It gives you more flexibility, but over the course of the game it gives you no more resources than any other terrain hex with the same production number.

Longest Trade Route — Remember that for the purposes of building and Longest Trade Route (2 VPs), ships and roads can only join at settlements or cities.

The Pirate — There are a number of factors related to the Pirate/Robber that you should keep in mind:

- Use the Pirate not only to block your opponents, but also to keep your opponents from blocking your ship routes.
- Moving the Pirate keeps the Robber stationary. This is a good thing for you if it is next to your opponents’ settlements/cities, but it is a bad thing if it is next to your settlements/cities.

Development Cards — The more victory points you need to win, the more significant development cards become:

- Soldier cards are even more important than they are in Settlers—not only do you have more time to get Largest Army, but soldiers can keep the Robber from camping indefinitely next to one of your settlements/cities.

- You have more time to develop since you play to 12+ VPs.

End Game Situations — Near the end of the game, victory points matter more than production. So if you get a chance to build a settlement on a new island, remember that it will often give you 2 VPs—one for the settlement and one special victory point.

