

Taj Mahal

A game for 3-5 players by Reiner Knizia. Condensed rules by Eric Postpischil, <https://edp.org>.

Introduction

A game feature is that players bid for several things simultaneously, possibly winning some but not others:

- 6 items are available in each province. Cards with corresponding symbols are used to bid. A player may withdraw from bidding and take each item for which they are the high bidder or may continue, trying to win more.

Points are gained primarily for accumulating goods or connecting provinces.

Some points are also available from bonus tiles, a special “+2” card, and leftover cards.

Cards

The main deck has 96 normal cards:

- 12 white cards, each providing 1 symbol for bidding, and
 - 84 colored cards (21 each of background red, yellow, green, or violet), each providing 2 symbols for bidding.
- 4 special cards also have a white background but have a different back and start by the board, not in the deck.
- These are special because they are kept after being used for bidding.
 - However, a player who acquires the two oval tiles shown on the bottom of a special card takes the card.
 - The Elephant special card and the Grand Mogul special card provide 1 symbol for bidding.
 - The “+2” special card gives the player 2 points immediately each time it is used (once per province).
 - The Color Change special card lets the player use a different color (once per province).
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Setup

Put one Crown (ring) aside. (Leave the second in the box; it is a spare, not used in the game.)

Put the number 12 octagonal province tile in the province with Agra. (Avoid covering roads or cities.)

Shuffle the other 11 octagonal province tiles and put one randomly in each of the other 11 provinces.

- (The provinces will be visited in the resulting order, 1 to 12.)

Put the Taj Mahal “+4” bonus tile face up on the fortress city Agra.

Shuffle the 15 square bonus tiles and put one randomly face up on each other fortress city (red/purple coloring).

Display the four special cards face up beside the board.

Shuffle the 96 normal cards.

Optionally, separate the 24 oval influence tiles by color.

Deal 6 cards facedown to each player. (Players may look at their own cards.)

Give each player all palaces of one color and put its scoring marker on the 0 space of the score track.

- (Palaces are not token limited; use other markers if necessary.)

Put a black figure in province 1 to mark the current province.

Select a start player and put a black figure in front of them to mark the current start player.

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Visit Each Province

Conduct the competition below in each province, in the order shown by the octagonal tiles, and then the game ends.

Prepare the Province Visit

Fill each empty award space in the court in the upper-right corner of the board:

- 4 ovals, taken from the supply, 1 each of: green Vizier, purple General, orange Monk, and yellow Princess.
 - Each of these is bid for by a matching symbol and represents an opportunity to place a normal palace.
- The Crown (ring), taken from wherever it is (set aside at game start, left unclaimed in court, or on a palace).
 - This is bid for by a Grand Mogul on a throne and represents an opportunity to place a special palace.
- The next octagonal tile in ascending order.
 - This is bid for by an Elephant and represents an opportunity gain goods (and their points).

For 3/4/5 players, deal 5/7/9 cards face-up beside the board. (When the deck is empty, shuffle the discards.)

Compete

Beginning with the current start player and continuing clockwise until all players withdraw, each player who has not withdrawn either plays or withdraws. (The last player may play as many times as they wish before withdrawing.)

Play:

Play 1 colored card and, optionally, play 1 white card (normal or special) to the table in front of you.

- You may start with any color but then must use the same color throughout this competition.
- Display played cards (overlapped) so all players can see the symbols.
- When you play the Color Change special card, your colored card may be any color.
 - On later plays, you must play your original color.
- When you play the “+2” special card, score 2 points.

Withdraw:

Take each award for which your cards show more symbols than any other remaining player, if it is not yet taken:

- For the most green Viziers, purple Generals, orange Monks, or yellow Princesses, take the matching oval tile.
- For the most Grand Moguls, take the Crown (ring).
- For the most Elephants, take the octagonal tile.

For each oval tile you take:

- Put 1 of your palaces on any city space in the current province without a normal (uncrowned) palace.
- If there is a bonus tile in that space, score it:
 - For the “+2” tile, score 2 points and discard the tile.
 - For the “+1” tile with a deck image, draw 1 card from the draw pile and discard the tile.
 - For a tile with a good, score as many points as you have goods of that type, including this one, and keep the tile. (1 for the 1st good of a type, 2 more when you take the 2nd, 3 more at the 3rd, and so on.)
 - For the Taj Mahal “+4” tile, score 4 points and discard the tile.

When you take the Crown:

- Put the Crown on one of your palaces and put it on any city space in the current province, empty or not.
- Do not take or score any tile in that space. (Placing this palace is only for improving province connections.)

When you take the octagonal tile:

- For each good on it, score as many points as you have goods of that type, including this one, and keep the tile. (1 for the 1st good of a type, 2 more when you take the 2nd, 3 more at the 3rd, and so on.)

Take your played special cards back into your hand and discard your played normal cards.

If you withdrew before playing any cards, draw the topmost pile from the deck.

Take 2 cards of your choice from the face-up supply, except there is only 1 for the last player.

End the Province Visit

Give each player with a palace in the province 1 point for that province and 1 point for each province connected to the current province by an uninterrupted sequence of that player’s palaces.

- A city without a palace of that player is an interruption.
- A province is not scored twice for the player even if they have multiple connections to it from different starts.

Each player with two identical oval influence tiles returns them to the supply and takes the corresponding special card (from the supply or the current possessor). (They discard the tiles even if they already have the card.)

Move the black current province figure to the next province in number.

Move the black start player figure clockwise one player.

Game End

After the 12th province, each player scores points for cards remaining in their hand:

- 1 point for each white card, special or normal.
- 1 point for each card in the color (not white) the player has the most of.

The player with the most points wins.