

The Cutters of Catan

The newly colonized island of Catan is covered in forests. The colonists are trying to improve the exploitation possibilities of their new lands by cutting down forests and plowing the soil. Some of these efforts go in harmony and friendship. Some of them don't.

Scenario for 3-4 players.

Required

The base game of Settler of Catan is required, with all its components. It would help if you have an extra copy of Settlers. Otherwise, use a scanner/printer, and fabricate an extra 8 forests.

Extra material

The end of the document displays four axe and four sickle symbols. Print them out and make an axe and a sickle token for every player by colouring one set blue, one set orange and one set red. Glue them on thick card board and cut the counters. You now should have 8 tokens, of two types and in four colours.

Set-up

Instead of all five types of land tiles, use only 1 desert, 3 hills, 3 mountains and 12 forests. Set-up goes as the regular set-up in Settlers of Catan, but it is recommended to distribute the hills and mountains such that there are no large clusters of these types of tiles.

Additional rules

The rules are identical to the base game of the Settlers of Catan. However, the following additional rules are used.

Every player gets an axe and a sickle (plow). During your turn, in the phase where you can build houses and buy knights, you may pay one timber and one ore. If you do, you may place your axe on a forest tile where you have at least *one settlement*. That tile does NOT produce timber for the whole turn (place your axe on the number tile). The next round in your turn, after the distribution of resources, you remove the axe and replace the forest with a grassland tile. The number tile is kept the same. Players with a settlement on this tile can now receive wool when the appropriate number is thrown.

Grassland tiles can also be improved. Again, with the payment of one timber and one ore, you can place your plow on a grassland tile where you have at least one settlement. Again, this land doesn't produce wool. After one turn, after resource distribution, remove the plow and replace the grassland with grain fields. Players with a settlement on this tile can now receive wheat.

The grassland and grain tiles are limited to 4. A fifth tile of grassland cannot be built, unless a grassland tile becomes available after a grassland is replaced by a grain tile. A fifth grain field can never be built. At best there are four grasslands and four fields at a certain point in the game.

It is not allowed to put more than one token on the same tile at the same time. It is allowed though, to first cut a forest tile and then in the next turn reform this tile from grassland to a field of grain.

There are some strategic notes. Observe that you can cooperate with other players in land reform, or you may decide to reform a land tile without the consent of other people with one or more settlements on that specific land tile. As such players can annoy one another significantly. Ownership of the timber harbor is quite powerful, but it can make you a target. Ownership of the wool and wheat harbors is not lucrative in the beginning, but since players can reform land, these harbors will increase in significance. To secure a steady flow in type of resources, try and claim some tiles for yourself, so no other player can interfere with your income!

Extra option: land exhaustion

For this extra option you need more desert tiles, and you need another die in a different colour (for instance the red die from Cities & Knights), that functions as an ecology die.

Trees play an important ecological role in nutrient recycling and water management. Cutting down too many forests leads to massive overuse of lands and erosion. To mimic this effect the following rule can be applied.

Should a player roll a number in the resource phase that produces only wheat and/or wool, roll the ecology die. If it is a one, that player must replace one of the two appropriate lands with a desert tile. Hills and mountains are considered to have some vegetation also, and therefore numbers that produce at least one bricks or one ore are safe from this effect.

It is unwise in this variant to cut down both forests that share the same number tile.

Enjoy!

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Any questions, errata or remarks, send them to my Geekmail on www.boardgamegeek.com (Oetan).

