

Reiner Knizia's

# Medici

## Overview

You are buyers for different merchant houses in the competitive, but profitable age of the infamous Medici family. Ships sail throughout the Mediterranean and beyond in search of rare and valuable merchandise and profitable markets for the goods you buy. Every day you go to the wholesale market where you must compete with other buyers for the merchandise available that day. There you expect to find fur from trappers in the north, grain from the rich fields to the north and east, exotic spices from strange lands far to the east, dyes from near and far depending on the colors, cloth from the many nearby factories, and, rarely, gold from mines whose locations are kept secret.



Goods at the wholesale markets arrive early in the morning to be sold in lots, registered as they arrive. The lots are sold at auction in the order received, but are offered in groups of one, two, or three lots. By custom, the groups are chosen by the buyers themselves, with each taking turns picking lots until all available goods are gone. Each lot is assigned a fair value, but successful buyers will find ways to buy expensive goods cheaply and sell cheap goods for large profits. To speed the process and encourage higher prices, each buyer is allowed just one bid on each group with the buyer who chose the group getting the last bid. If no buyer bids on a group, the unwanted lots are tossed into the harbor.

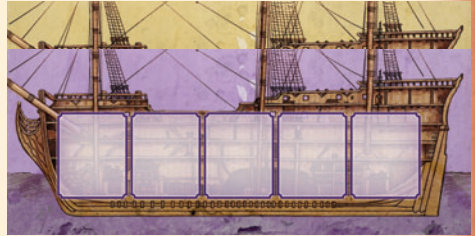
As the lots are purchased they are immediately loaded onto the waiting ships so that the ships may depart as soon as the market closes and the tide is high. Buyers filling their ships early sometimes use the free time to visit friends or one of the many nearby taverns. More often, however, they stay to watch and learn from their competitors. When only one buyer remains, the market is closed and the remaining lots, if any, are loaded onto that buyer's ship without cost, as there is no more competition. If the last buyer does not have room for all remaining lots, the extras are thrown into the harbor. Thus, the market is empty and ready for tomorrow's goods.

As the ships set sail to deliver their merchandise to foreign ports, the buyers gather to calculate their earnings for the day. A buyer's earnings are based on the total value of the goods he bought and the number of each commodity compared to the other buyers. This is also the time for those who have made great deals to brag and for the others to congratulate them, but to remind them that tomorrow will offer different opportunities for all. Later, the buyers will begin planning for the new day: should they try again to buy only the best and most expensive goods or look for deals in one or two commodities to corner the market in those goods. Both strategies offer the possibility of profit and success, but only when the rewards exceed the money spent to reap them.

The buyer who earns the most over three days, is the winner of Medici.

## Inventory

- 1 game board for tracking money and purchases
- 36 tiles (7 each of cloth, fur, grain, dye, and spice, each with values 0,1, 2, 3, 4, 5,5; 1 gold card with value 10)
- 6 ship mats, 1 in each of six colors (red, green, blue, yellow, purple, and black)
- 36 playing counters, 6 in each of six colors (red, green, blue, yellow, purple, and black)
- 1 cloth bag



## Before the market opens

- Each buyer chooses a color and takes the ship mat and six counters in that color.
- Place the board in the middle of the table. In the center of the board are five market stalls in the shape of pyramids, one for each of five commodities (cloth, fur, grain, dye, and spice). Each stall has eight levels that are used to track purchases of the commodities by each buyer. These are tracked and accumulate through the three days of the game. Buyers can earn extra money by being one of the top two buyers in a commodity. To begin, the buyers place one of their counters on the bottom level of each stall. As the buyers buy merchandise throughout the game, they move their counters up to track their purchases of each commodity. Also, reaching any of the top three levels of each stall earns a buyer an additional bonus of 5, 10, or 20 florins.
- The money track surrounds the stalls and tracks each buyer's money throughout the game. The track is labeled 0 - 99. If a player's money exceeds 100, he continues moving his counter and remembers that he now has over 100 florins. Buyers may not borrow money and, thus, cannot drop below zero on the money track. At the start of the game, the buyers place one of their six counters on the 40 (if there are 3 or 4 buyers) or 30 (if there are 5 or 6 buyers). This is the buyer's starting capital.
- The 36 tiles represent lots from the five commodities with values 0,1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5. In addition, there is a gold tile with a value of 10. The number of lots used each day depends on the number of buyers:

18 lots with 3 players; remove 18 cards  
24 lots with 4 players; remove 12 cards  
30 lots with 5 players; remove 6 cards  
36 lots with 6 players; use all cards

Shuffle all the tiles in the bag and remove the number specified, setting them aside for this day; do not look at these tiles. The remaining tiles remain in the bag for this day.

The players choose a starting player for the first day. On the following days, the buyer with the lowest money starts. Play always proceeds clockwise.

# At the market

## selecting the lots

Buyers take turns selecting the lots that will make up the groups that are auctioned. On a buyer's turn, he draws a tile from the bag and places it face up so all the buyers can see which lot it represents (it shows the value and the commodity; for example Dye 3). After examining the first lot, the buyer may draw a second and a third in like manner. The buyer may stop drawing tiles after one or two, but cannot draw more than three. Once he has selected a lot, it becomes part of the group and must be auctioned. When a player completes a group (1, 2 or 3 lots), it is auctioned.



## auctioning the groups

The lots are sold as a group and may not be split. The bidding starts with the person to the left of the buyer who selected the group. Each buyer gets just one opportunity to bid on each group; he may bid or pass. In clockwise order, the other buyers may bid or pass; successive bids must exceed the previous high bid for this group. The buyer who selected the group is the last to bid or pass.

## loading the ships

The buyer with the highest bid takes the tiles that were turned over and places them face up on his ship mat in the spaces provided. The buyer pays the bid price - he moves his marker down the money track the corresponding number of spaces. As a buyer's money may not fall below zero, a buyer may not bid more money than he has; there is no borrowing. If everyone passes, the selected lots are discarded; place them face down with any other cards removed this day.



## other rules

It is now the next buyer's turn (the buyer to the left of the previous buyer). The buyer selects lots and auctions them in the same manner. The following rules govern the auctions:

- Each buyer may buy just five lots: each ship has only five holds.
- When a lot is bought, it is loaded on a ship; it cannot be returned, traded, or discarded.
- Buyers may not bid on a group that would cause them to exceed the five lot limit for a ship.
- A buyer may select a group for others to bid on that contains more lots than he can buy. He cannot select a group larger than at least one buyer can bid for, however. When a buyer's ship is full, that buyer is out of the game for the rest of the day and can no longer buy lots or select groups for auction.

For example: Adam has two lots on his ship and it is his turn. He selects a group of three lots. Barbara already has three lots on her ship and Charles has four; both must pass. Diane has two lots and bids 7 florins for the group. Adam passes. Diane puts the lots on her ship and pays 7 florins by moving her money marker back 7 spaces on the money track. If someone were to select another group of three lots, Adam, the only buyer with room for three lots, could buy the group for one florin.

## Day's end

When all buyers but one have filled their ships, the last buyer takes enough tiles from the bag to fill his ship. He pays nothing for these tiles, but must take the tiles as they come - he is allowed no choices. If there are not enough tiles to fill his ship, it sails with empty holds.

The day ends and is scored. A day also ends when the bag is empty. When this happens, one or more of the ships will sail with empty holds. This occurs when too many lots are discarded with no one bidding on them. As each day begins with 6 tiles per buyer, there is just one extra tile per buyer. Buyers may count the tiles remaining in the bag, but may never look at them before they are drawn to be auctioned.

## Scoring the day

First, all buyers total the values of their lots on their ships by adding the numbers on the tiles. The buyer with the most valuable ship receives the highest payment. The buyer with the lowest value gets nothing. The following table shows the amount each buyer receives - note that payments are dependent on the number of buyers.

Number of Buyers	3	4	5	6
1st place	30	30	30	30
2nd place	15	20	20	20
3rd place	--	10	10	15
4th place	--	--	5	10
5th place	--	--	--	5
6th place--	--	--	--	

If two or more buyers tie, the corresponding payments are added together and divided amongst the buyers involved; the payments are always rounded down. The buyers' markers are advanced along the money track by the amount of their payments. *For example:*

*Samantha fills her boat with Cloth 5, Dye 5, Grain 3, Grain 0, and Gold 10 for a total value of 23; Doug fills his with 20: Grain 5, Dye 4, Fur 4, Fur 3, and Spice 4; Sue fills hers with 16: Spice 5, Cloth 3, Cloth 2, Cloth 1, and Dye 5; Bob fills his with 16: Spice 3, Grain 5, Grain 4, Grain 2, and Fur 2; and Nancy fills hers with 14 Spice 5, Spice 2, Dye 3, Dye 0, and Cloth 4. These buyers would receive the following payments:*

	Lot Value	Payments
Samantha	23	30
Doug	20	20
Sue	16	7
Bob	16	7
Nancy	14	0

Sue and Bob divide the third and fourth place payments ( $10 + 5 = 15/2 = 7.5$ , rounded down to 7 each).

The next step is to count the number of purchases each buyer has made in the five commodities (cloth, grain, spice, dye, and fur). The commodities are scored one at a time. Each buyer moves his counter up the pyramid on each stall by the number of lots of that type he has on his ship (some buyers prefer to do this as the lots are purchased - whichever method is chosen should be used by all). The counters are moved from their previous positions. The counters cannot move beyond the highest space. The value of the lots is not considered, just the number of lots. The Gold 10 is not counted because of its rarity.

The buyer who is in the highest position on a pyramid is awarded 10 florins. The buyer in the second highest position receives 5 florins. In case of ties, the awards are added together and then divided amongst the buyers involved, once again, rounding down. Buyers who have not purchased any of a commodity can be awarded florins if they tie for first or second at the lowest level. A buyer who reaches either of the top three spaces of a pyramid receives an additional bonus of 5, 10 or 20 florins. If two or more buyers are in the same bonus space, each receives the full bonus; it is not divided. When all five commodities have been scored and the buyers paid by moving their markers on the money track, the next day begins. The buyer with the least money shuffles all 36 tiles in the bag, removes the number specified, and selects the first group for auction. If two or more players are tied for last, select the starting player randomly.



*Example: Sue (S) receives 10 florins; Bob (B), Nancy (N), and Doug (D) divide 5 florins and receive one each.*



*Example: Sue (S) receives 30 (10 plus the bonus of 20); Bob (B) receives nothing; and Nancy (N) and Doug (D) each receive 12 florins (5 divided by 2 plus the bonus of 10 florins).*

## End of the Game

After the third day has been scored, the game ends. The buyer with the most money wins.

### Tactics

One need not always possess the most valuable ship to win the game. By buying lots in just one or two commodities, a buyer can earn a lot of money with bonuses over the three days.

Rather than selecting a single, high-valued lot to auction, consider adding additional lots to it. With luck, you will add other useful lots to the group. Although this will increase both the value and the cost of the group, bidding last gives you control of this important auction. Of course, adding lots to a lot you value can backfire, making it valuable to other buyers and reducing its value to you.

As a beginner, one should not bid too high - bid high only for high valued lots in commodities, which will bring you bonuses. Naturally, all this changes if several lots have been discarded and the lots are in short supply.



The author: Reiner Knizia lives in the UK and is one of the most prolific and successful game designers in the world

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