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AstroNavis™
Merchant

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the AstroNavis universe. AstroNavis Merchant is the first in a series of board and computer games detailing humanity's exploration and colonization of the local portion of our galaxy. It's a solitaire freight shipping game set on the frontier of human space between the Alliance's outer core and Hovahlen space in the 2310s.

With the creation of the A-Drive in 2102, humanity began moving out into the local arm of our galaxy. By 2180, we'd explored the regions close to Earth. By 2240, we'd pushed out farther, established the Alliance of Worlds, and begun expanding beyond it into the Alliance frontier areas. In 2296, we contacted the Hovahlens at the edge of our expansion and briefly went to war with them based on the mistaken idea that they were hostile. Normal relations were established in 2303 and economic trade between the core worlds of the Alliance, worlds on the edge of Hovahlen space, and new colony worlds soon flourished.

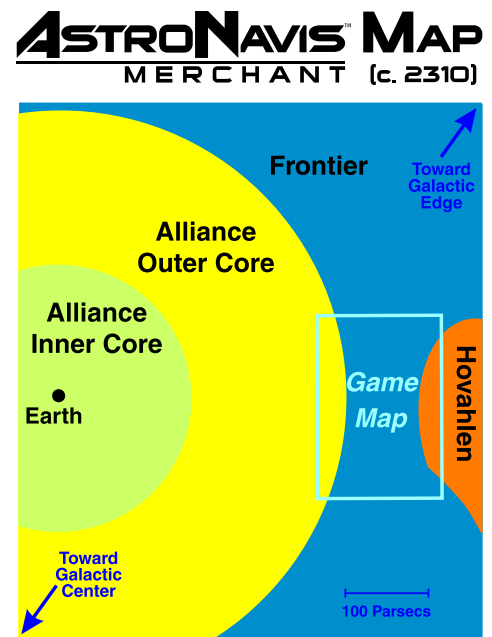
Trade means interstellar shipping. Though most commerce is handled by huge shipping conglomerates with giant freighters plying established shipping routes, there's still a nearly endless amount of cargo that's too small or specialized to be economically shipped by this method, can't wait for regular shipping schedules, or needs to go to worlds not considered profitable enough to put on a route. For these cargoes, small merchant ships are ideal, and many enterprising individuals have become small ship owners to fill the void.

These individuals can make money quickly if they have what it takes and get a bit of luck (or make it themselves). In fact, some have made back their original investment within a few years of buying a ship. There are risks, of course, and making poor choices in cargoes can result in losing everything, including the ship. But some of the wealthiest individuals in the Alliance have made their money in shipping.

Being the adventurous type, you've decided to take a chance. You've sold everything you own to scrape up enough to buy your own merchant ship. It's an old, worn-out freighter headed for the scrap yard, but now it's all yours. Unfortunately your vessel needs major repairs before it can be issued the standard trading certification required to dock at established ports. You don't have the money needed, but you've convinced the inspectors to issue you a temporary three-month license pending repairs. You now have that long to make what you need. You'll have to carry cargo between worlds, cover normal operating expenses like crew salaries and fuel, and make enough money for the repairs. With skill and a little luck, you'll also make a profit.

2. Overview of Play

First, you will set up the map, which is different each game. Then, in each of 22 to 25 turns, you will move on the map or conduct business. Each planet you visit has a selection of cargoes to be shipped to other worlds and which pay different rates. You may accept these cargoes as you see fit, but must deliver them before getting paid. Your ship has fixed expenses each turn, and fuel must also be purchased. At the end of the game, your net worth determines your level of success.



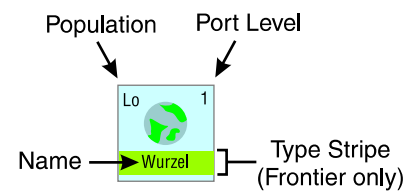


3. Equipment and Scale

- This rulebook
- One 8½" x 11" map. Each square is about 15 parsecs across. The map is divided into colored zones for planet placement (the zones are only for planet placement and are ignored afterward).
- Two sheets of Tables and two sheets of Displays
- Counters: 22 Planet counters, one Ship counter, and numerous indicator markers (green triangles used on the tracks on the various displays)
- Record Sheet (copies of this can be used instead of the Displays)

You will also need one or two six-sided dice.

The colors of the planet counters indicate their trade types: red counters are Hovahlen worlds, yellow counters are Alliance outer core worlds, blue counters with a green stripe are agricultural Alliance frontier worlds, blue counters with a gray stripe are industrial Alliance frontier worlds, and blue counters with a brown stripe are mining Alliance frontier worlds. Each planet counter has a population code (Hi, Md, or Lo) showing if the planet has a high, medium, or low population level. And lastly, each planet counter has a port level ranging from 1 to 4 which indicates how extensive its facilities are.



Planet Counter

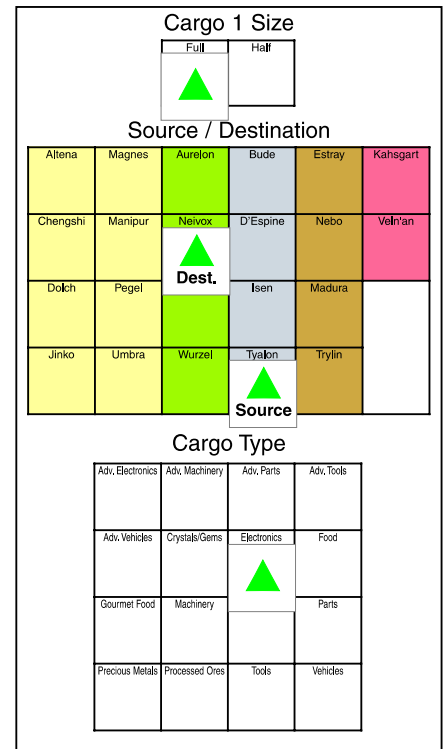
Each game turn is about half a week (3-4 days). A game lasts between 22 and 25 turns (about three months).

7. Cargo

If your ship counter is underneath a planet counter (even if placed there this turn), you may now unload any cargo(es) you have aboard that have this planet as its/their destination. You then receive payment for cargo. You will have recorded the amount and type of cargo you're carrying on the "Cargo(es) on Ship" display. As you unload the cargo by removing its counters, adjust the "Money" section of the "Resources" display to reflect how much you're paid (per the Freight Rate tables). The example at right shows a full cargo of Electronics carried from Tyalon to Neivox. Assuming these planets are 6 squares apart, the "FULL Cargo Freight Rate" table shows that you'd receive a payment of 383. Payment is based on how far apart the planets are on the map, not how far your ship traveled between them (for instance, if you made a diversion to drop off another cargo along the way).

If your ship counter is underneath a planet counter (even if placed there this turn), *and you did not just unload cargo this turn*, you may roll to see what cargoes are awaiting transport.

The population code of a planet counter determines how much cargo is available for shipment ("Number and Sizes of Cargoes" table) and the planet's trade type determines what sort of cargo it is and where it's bound ("Destination Planet for Each Cargo"). Once the destination world has been determined, the cargo type is determined ("Type of Each Cargo from Source World to Destination World" table).



Cargo Type	FULL Cargo Freight Rate					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Adv. Electronics	202	244	306	345	410	449
Adv. Machinery	125	149	185	208	245	268
Adv. Parts	111	132	163	183	215	235
Adv. Tools	104	123	152	170	200	218
Adv. Vehicles	139	166	207	233	275	301
Crystals/Gems	202	244	306	345	410	449
Electronics	174	209	262	295	350	383

There may be as many as three cargoes awaiting shipment to various planets, each either taking up your ship's entire cargo bay or half of it. There are three areas on the "Cargo(es) Available on Current Planet" display where you can record each possible cargo using triangular indicator markers as you roll it up on the three tables just mentioned (or you can write them on the Record Sheet if you prefer). If you decide to load any of them, you may do so now, using the indicators on the "Cargo(es) on Ship" display to record it/them (with plain indicator markers and "Source" and "Dest." markers as shown in the above example). Or again, you could use the Record Sheet if you find that easier. Your ship may carry one full cargo or two half cargoes.

8. Expenses

You may only refuel if your ship counter started the turn underneath a planet counter and did not just unload or load cargo this turn (though you may have rolled for cargo and decided not to load it). You must first check to see if the local port has fuel available and what the going rate is. Roll on the Fuel Availability chart. The result of this roll only applies to the current turn. You don't have to refuel if you don't like the result.

If the upper, availability result is "Unlimited," then you may purchase any amount of fuel. If a number of units are listed instead, then you may only purchase up to that amount this turn. The lower, cost result shows how many units of money each unit of fuel costs. Multiply that number by units of fuel purchased to determine total cost (rounding any fraction up). Adjust your Fuel display to reflect the current fuel carried. The maximum fuel that your ship can carry is 99 units.