

The Mara

A game of photographing
animals in Maasai Mara



by Nicholas Hjelmberg
Nova Suecia Games

<http://www.novasuecia.se>

Version 1.0



2-4
players



30
minutes



min
age 14+

1. Introduction

Welcome to The Mara, the national reserve of the Maasai people. Your job is to drive tourists across the savannah where they may take photos of animals. Each tourist has a favourite animal and each animal has its favourite habitat. When all the animals have been photographed, the game ends and the player with the most photos wins.

2. Components

- * 30 habitat tiles in 5 different colors
- * 2 gray Mount Kilimanjaro tiles
- * 6 white lodges
- * 4 jeeps in 4 different colors
- * 30 tourist cards
- * 2 player aide cards
- * 60 tracks in 4 different colors



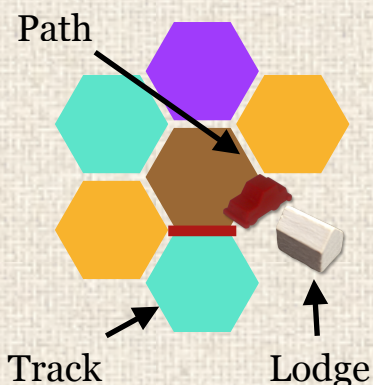
3. Game Concepts

In The Mara, **habitats** are identified by colors and **animals** are identified by symbols. Each **tourist** is represented by a **camera** showing the color and symbol of the animal that she wants to take a photo of.

- Grove
- Bush
- Savannah
- Waterhole
- River



- 🦁 Carnivore
- 🐘 Herbivore
- 🐒 Primate
- 🐢 Amphibian
- 🦩 Bird
- 🌿 Insect



When driving in The Mara, you must adhere to the rules of the national reserve and only drive your **jeep** either to a **lodge** or on the **paths** (the space between exactly two tiles). When a jeep drives on a path, a **track** is placed there.

3. Setup

Place the 2 **Mount Kilimanjaro tiles** ❶ on top of each other face up. Shuffle the 30 **habitat tiles** ❷ face down and arrange them randomly around Mount Kilimanjaro according to the image. Make sure that there is some space between the tiles. **Do not flip them.**



Place the 6 **lodges** ❸ in the corners according to the image. Sort the **tourist cards** ❹ by animal (6 piles in total). The order of the tourist cards do not matter. Randomly place 1 pile at each of the 6 lodges.

The player who last saw a wild animal starts. In reverse turn order, choose a **jeep** ❺ and place it at a lodge where there is no jeep already. Also take the **tracks** ❻ of the same color as your jeep and keep them near you.

You are now ready to guide tourists to The Mara!

4. Gameplay

The player take turns to choose 1 of 2 possible **tasks**.

- 1) Meet tourists: Take the actions drop off and/or pick up.
- 2) Guide tourists: Take the actions drive and/or peek.

4.1 Meet tourists (actions Drop off, Pick up)

Drop off and/or **pick up** any number of tourists. You must be adjacent to a lodge to do this.

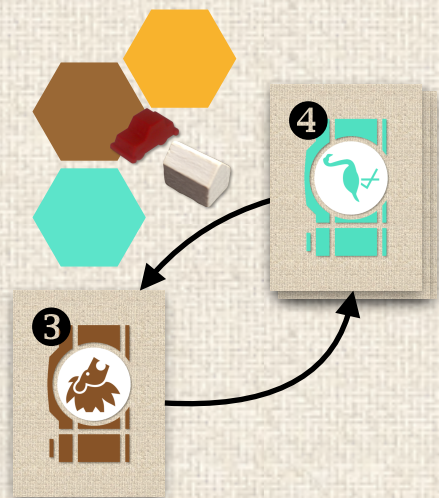
- * To drop off a tourist, flip a tourist card in front of you face down *if it is rotated* (this means that the tourist has taken a photo, see 4.2 Guide tourists), otherwise place it at the bottom of the pile next to the lodge.
- * To pick up a tourist, choose a tourist card from the pile next to the lodge. Place it face up in front of you.

You may take any number of those actions but may not end with more than three face up tourists in front of you.



Example: Red plays her first turn. She decides to pick up 1 tourist and chooses a savannah bird ① from the lodge pile. She places the card in front of her face up.

At a later turn, Red is back at the lodge with 3 tourists. She wants to pick up a river bird but must first drop off tourists. She flips a rotated grove lion ② and places a non-rotated bush lion ③ at the bottom of the pile.



Red then picks up a river bird ④ and ends the turn with 2 tourists.



4.2 Guide tourists (actions Drive, Peek)

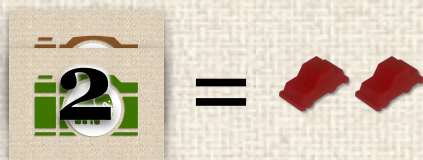
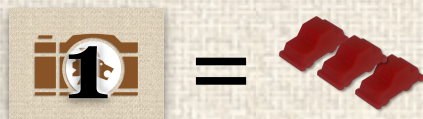
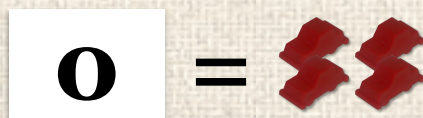
Drive your jeep and/or **peek** at the two habitats adjacent to the path where your jeep is.

- * To drive your jeep, move it from a path or a lodge to an adjacent path or lodge. If you move from a path without a track, place one of your own tracks there. If you run out of tracks, relocate any own track from the board.
- * To peek at habitats, take the two adjacent habitat tiles and look at them without showing them to anyone.

You may take those actions in any order but the number of actions is limited to the number of face up tourist cards in front of you.

- * 0 cards = 4 guide actions
- * 1 card = 3 guide actions
- * 2 cards = 2 guide actions
- * 3 cards = 1 guide action

When driving, you **must** skip other players' jeeps and you **may** skip any number of continuous tracks of one color (even opponent tracks).



When peeking, you **may** take free "take a photo" actions if the tile's habitat and animal match a picked up tourist of yours. To take a photo, flip the habitat tile and rotate the tourist card. Once an animal has been photographed, its habitat tile remains face up for the rest of the game.

Example: Red has 2 tourist cards and may thus only take 2 guide actions. She wants to drive to the distant river tile in 1 action but skipping 1 of her own tracks only takes her to ①, However, driving on Blue's track (skipping Blue's jeep and 1 blue track) takes her all the way to ②.

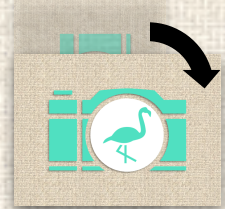




Example: Red uses her 2nd guide action to peek at the adjacent river and grove tiles and sees that they hide a bird and a carnivore.



The animals match Red's picked up tourists so as free actions, Red takes two photos and show this by rotating both cards horizontally. The tiles remain face up for the rest of the game.



If the players wish to play without the memory element, they may agree to use the notepads to keep track of the tiles they have peeked at.

5. End of Game

The game ends when any of the following happens:

- * A player ends a Guide tourists action with all habitat tile face up.
- * A player ends a Meet tourists action with no face up tourists in front of her, nor any tourists in any lodge.

The players score **victory points** (VP) for their sets of photos (rotated tourist cards). It does not matter if the tourist cards have been dropped of (flipped) or not. Do not count tourist cards that haven't been rotated.

	6 different animals:	21 VP
	5 different animals:	15 VP
	4 different animals:	10 VP
	3 different animals:	6 VP
	2 different animals:	3 VP
	Single animals:	1 VP

The player with the most VP wins.

Example: Red drops off her last tourist and there are no tourists left at any lodge. The game ends and the players count their VP.

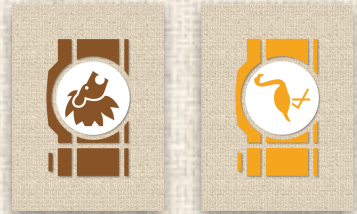
Red has 1 set of 4 animals, 1 triplet and 1 single animal. Red scores $10+6+1 = 17$ VP.



6. Family Variant

For a simpler family variant, try the following changes:

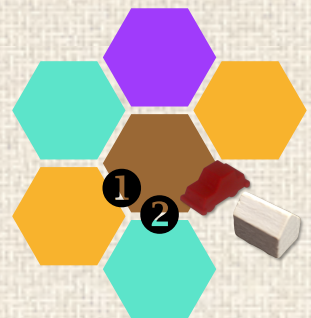
- * **Setup:** Play without the tracks and do not place any tourist cards at the lodges. Instead, deal 2 tourist cards to each player.



- * **Meet tourists:** You do not have to meet tourists at the lodges. Instead, each time you flip a tourist card you draw 2 new tourist cards and choose 1 of them. Return the other card to the bottom of the deck.



- * **Guide tourists:** The players always take 2 guide actions. Thus, in a turn they may either drive 2 tracks ❶ or drive 1 track and peek at adjacent habitat tiles ❷ (before or after driving).



- * **End of Game:** End when a player is unable to draw a new tourist card. The players simply count their photos (rotated tourist cards) to determine the winner.



Credits

Game design: Nicholas Hjelmberg
Artwork: Nicholas Hjelmberg
Production: The Game Crafter
Game testers: Stockholm Board Game Design Meetup
Special thanks: My wife Su-San Oh for having to listen to my endless historical and game technical considerations
game-icons.net for graphics
