



THE BOARD GAME COLLECTION

Top 10

BOARD GAMES THAT MUST BE IN YOUR COLLECTION



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Welcome to the Board Game Collection community!

You will now be receiving our newsletter, which will keep you up to date on our latest articles and videos and well as board game news and any killer deals we come across.

We're excited to have you here and look forward to helping you find your game!

Here's our list of Top 10 Must Have Board Games, only available exclusively to our subscribers, to welcome you to the fold. Thanks for joining us!

Sure, it's a beautiful life out there, no joke. Amazing things to see and do and people to meet and/or love.

But let's be honest, most of the time, we'd rather be playing board games.

Any game. You name it; Big Games. Small games. Cute games or nature themed-games. Dusty beige euros. Complicated thematic campaign games with epic stories. Animal themed card games with take-that mechanisms. Games that take six and a half hours. Games that fit in your pocket. Games you can play on a train.

I love puzzles. I love stories. I love to laugh. And I love sitting around a table with other people and having a shared experience.

It's a bit of a laugh to imply that there are only 10 games to own and many of us have sailed past any semblance of a reasonable collection. (I know I have). BUT, if I lost everything and had to rebuild from scratch, or say I was forced to live in an underground bunker during a nuclear winter, and only could carry so many games... these are the ten.

I aimed for a good mix that can play with different group dynamics and sizes – different skill levels, capacity for conflict, and attention spans. We're aiming to have a flexible collection that gives you options.

I'll drop links if you are interested in picking any, or all, of them up.

So without further ado let's get to the games:

01

COCKROACH POKER

THE ONE TO START AND END THE NIGHT



Cockroach Poker is incredibly simple with the campiest art you can find, and really has no business being as good as it is.

You place a bug card face down in front of your opponent, announce what it is, and they have to decide whether you are telling the truth or not. If they aren't sure, they can pick it up and pass it on, putting the next person in the hot seat. But if you are caught in a lie, or guess incorrectly, you'll be stuck with the card in front of you.

There's not much to it.

And there doesn't need to be, because you aren't playing cards you are ultimately playing your opponents around the table. And that is the sign of a great game: the game gets out of the way and let's you and your friends or family just have a blast with each other.

The stakes are hilariously high, but completely meaningless at the same time.

I love this game.

Buy it here: <https://amzn.to/40comMC>

02

SPIRIT ISLAND

THE EPIC SOLO EXPERIENCE



Every collection needs a solo game and there's a lot to choose from. Quick solo games have a place, of course, but if you are going to give me one solo game – I want something challenging and expansive – modular and, if at all possible, infinitely replayable.

Marvel Champions is my most played solo game, but because of the Marvel theme, which isn't for everybody, and the sprawling nature of the content, I went with another fabulous choice and one of my most played games of all time, Spirit Island.

Bonus Points because Spirit Island plays extremely well solo, but also at two, three, and four. You can even play up to six, once you've got a couple expansions.

In Spirit Island you take on the role of ancient spirits who inhabit an island that is now being colonized by European invaders. They have lived in peace, for the most part with the natives for generations, but these newcomers are relentless.

The spirits aim to deter the invaders both by destroying their cities and settlements and generating enough fear that they pack up and leave. Each spirit is extremely unique and has different powers and abilities – providing a different challenge. As they wake they develop differently each time, so no two games will be the same. The different invaders interact with the island differently, and present different challenges. You can also adjust the level of difficulty and really dial in the best experience for you (and your friends if you choose).

There is so much content in this box, the theme is fantastic, and it also presents a challenging puzzle that feels fresh each time. Everything I want from a solo game.

Buy it here: <https://amzn.to/4e3Ty4g>

CASTLES OF BURGUNDY

THE TIGHT TWO PLAYER BATTLE



Castles of Burgundy is without question one of the greatest games of all time.

It presents a perfect little puzzle as you build out your city. You have to decide which tiles to take based on the numbers you roll on the dice and there are tons of things to focus on and directions to take.

The miracle of it, is that it is that everything is so well balanced. From the different boards to the different strategies players can focus on. I'm keeping things flexible here, since this game works well at 2, 3, and 4 players – but it shines it's very brightest at two, since there is no downtime and each play has so much more weight, since ever choice you make directly takes a choice away from you opponent.

It is a triumph in board game design, from Stephan Feld and even though it is a beige themeless euro, with not a lot of flash, the strength of its gameplay and the accessibility of it, makes this an obvious choice that should be in everyone's collection.

Buy it here: <https://amzn.to/4hbP1PV>

04

VITICULTURE

THE MID-WEIGHT WORKHORSE



People love Viticulture. There are people that say best at two. People that say best at three. Some at four. There are some devotees that like it at five or even six. And there are some people that only ever play it solo.

But no matter how they like it, the truth of the matter is that this game creates die-hard fans.

It's a game about wine making. You deploy workers over the course of the seasons to develop your vineyard and carry out various tasks to harvest grapes and make wine. You are racing to score points, which can be done in a variety of ways, and that last part, I think is the whole genius of it. It isn't a strict euro in that sense.

Making and selling wine is an option, but trading developing and playing cards are options for scoring points too.

This injects some life into the game that keeps it from being solved and keeps it fresh every time.

Depending on the cards you see or the grapes you draw the orders you receive, you will be sent down a different path and the best players are able to respond to the cards they are given and be successful with the game that is presented to them.

It's funny, because people often criticize the randomness of the cards, and sure, if you want to play a certain strategy every time, it's pretty swingy depending on what cards you draw – but if you see that the randomness is actually incentivizing tactical play, well that's when this game comes alive, as far as I'm concerned. When you can see the field and play the game that presents itself to you.

It's more a story unfolding, than it is like math. And that's kind of amazing for a worker placement game.

It is a delight and that's why I keep coming back.

Buy it here: <https://amzn.to/4dYxjfZ>

05

LOVE LETTER

THE TAKE WITH YOU EVERYWHERE GAME



This one is just a couple cards and some tokens, but man does it pack a punch. It's sort of a deduction/hand management game, where you are doing your best to eliminate the other players, usually by deducing what card they have in their hand.

It can play from 2-6, which is very flexible. You play several rounds in a row until one player achieves a certain score, but it is super quick and can be played anywhere you have access to a small table. It comes in a velvet bag, that you can throw in your pocket or bag and just forget about... until the opportunity to game presents itself. And if you are prepared, it always will.

Great dramatic moments here, and even though there is player elimination, the rounds are over so fast, they won't even have time to check their phone.

Looks of great drama and interesting decisions, packed into a tiny package.

Buy it here: <https://amzn.to/48oe2mT>

THE COOPERATIVE GEM, FOR GETTING EVERYONE ON THE SAME PAGE

People who don't like cooperative games claim that you are always just putting out fires or cleaning up messes and the game just keeps throwing stuff at you. Or they don't like that someone always tends to take over the strategizing and directs everyone, taking the fun out of it.

The Crew fixes both of those problems. You are an actual team, solving a puzzle together, and each of you has a piece of the puzzle, but you can't verbally communicate your information to the other players.

It is a trick taking game where you work as a team to accomplish certain objectives, like one player taking the red 7 or one player taking no tricks. You all know the goals and are working toward them, but can't say anything about your hand. You have to rely on your team members to set you up to accomplish your objectives by paying attention to the cards you play and the decisions you make.

This is a team building game, for sure, and it is amazing how much better you get at communicating and working together over the course of working through the missions.

This is a fantastic one for families. An incredible one to take on a vacation or to go all in on over the holidays.

Sitting down with the same group over many increasingly difficult sessions is a unique pleasure and one you won't get from every cooperative game.

Even though it has a campaign that you work to complete, each time you play with a new group it will be a whole different experience and you'll develop a whole different language and rhythm. This is one everyone should have the pleasure of playing at least once, and one I think you should own.

Buy it here: https://amzn.to/4fdJhDj_



There is some argument about whether Wavelength is really a game or an activity. It claims to be a game show in a box, but to me it is nothing more - and nothing less - than a conversation engine.

Do you want to hyper detailed arguments about minutia with your friends? Like say, just how cool is a cucumber? On a scale from uncool to cool, where does it actually land? Is there something cooler? What is the epitome of cool? The Fonz, probably, but would your friends agree? These are the things you'll discuss.

I don't think there is a better game for getting to know your friends and family better and to see the way they think.

The clue giver is given a scale, like, say, from hot to cold and then they are randomly assigned a place on the scale that they have to get the folks on their team to guess, by giving a clue. The rest of the team will then discuss where on the scale they think that should be, like say, pizza. Pizza is hot, but how hot it is it? Lava is much hotter than pizza, so where does it fall.

Like I say, the conversation generator you never knew you (desperately) needed.

Buy it here: <https://amzn.to/4fw9woX>



You need a game that feels like a race. Fast-paced, but still with some strategy and interesting decisions to be made.

You might pick an actual race game like *Flamme Rouge* or *Heat*, but we don't pick the obvious around here.

For me there is no better race to the fish game than *Istanbul*.

In this case you are running around the board picking up and dropping off workers working on different tasks to earn you rubies. First to five wins.

The drop off and pick up mechanic feels so unique and requires you to think ahead as you drop bread crumbs around the board. It's a great race because you are constantly getting in each other's way and switching up tactics and strategies to eek out the rubies you need to win.

The thing this game does that's amazing, is that it is a euro game, with a fair amount going on, but it just feels like fun. And while it does come in under an hour, more often than not, you'll find yourself playing a second game.

Buy it here: <https://amzn.to/4f4CBYo>



You need a low stakes betting game, that is family weight, works with lots of player counts, and you need it to be packed with silly fun moments and memorable moments.

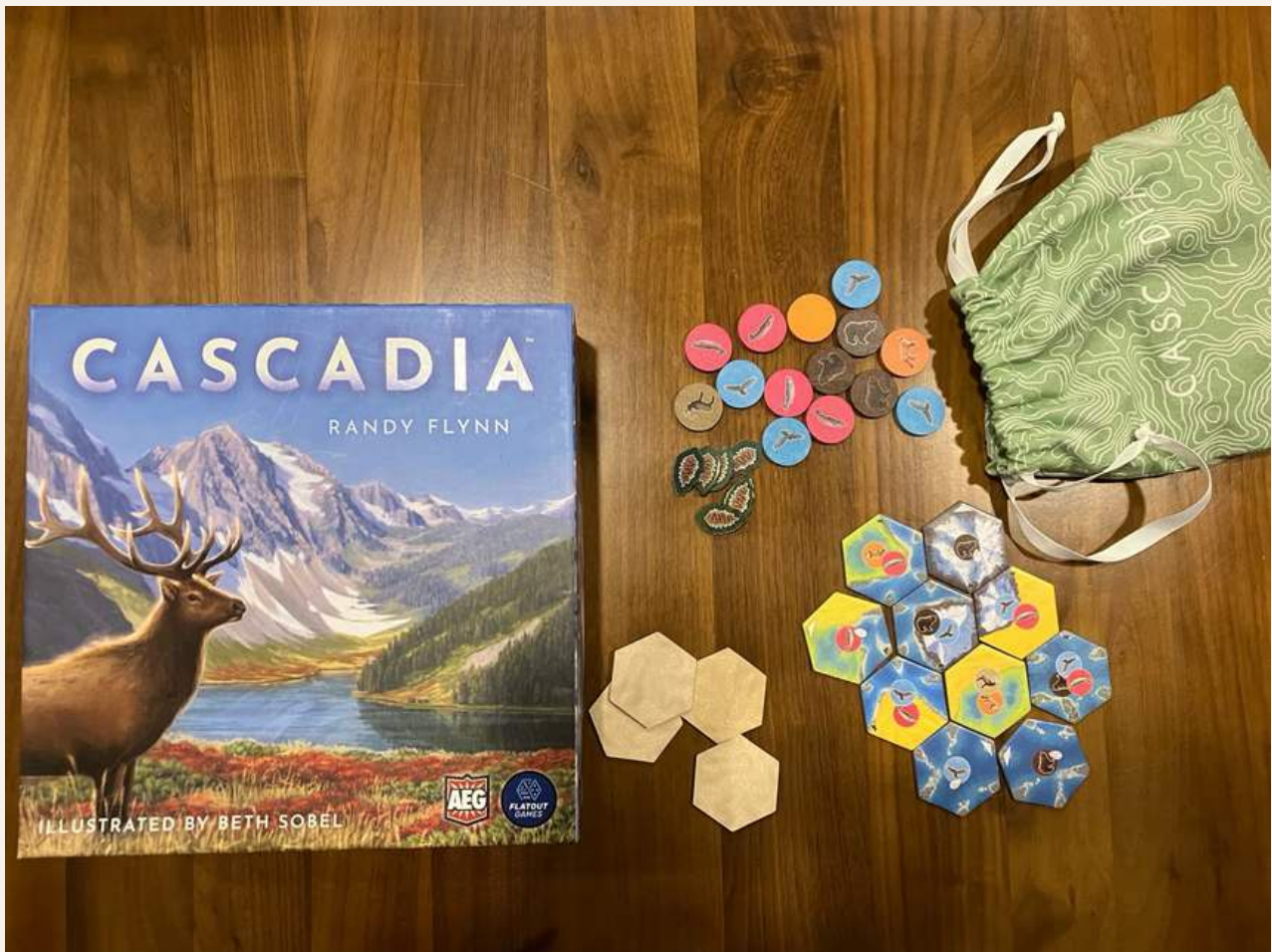
What you need, is Camel Up.

Camel up feels like a race game, but the game is about betting on the race as opposed to participating in the race. You'll take turns rolling dice and moving camels and placing bets on which ones will win the round and which ones will win (or lose) the race. The sooner the bets are placed, the less certain you are, but the higher the pay out, so there is pressure to push your luck and take a chance at the big points. Or do you wait for the sure thing, and hope you can still sneak in your bet on time?

It's simple to teach and always fun to play. Works with all ages and evens the playing field if you have players with a variety of skill levels.

It's a must have. Never disappoints.

Buy it here: <https://amzn.to/3YzR217>



Cascadia is a game you can play with your grandparents, you neighbors, your friends, your estranged aunt, and, not least of all, your kids. I'm calling it comfort food, because it's a serious game, sure, but it feels so easy to play. It's puzzly, but in a way that feels like you've got unlimited options, many of them good. As opposed to a game that gets tighter and tighter until you are left with a bunch of lackluster moves at the end.

You are adding tiles and animals to your habitat, trying to achieve different combos. These can be as simple as making groups, or as complicated as different configurations for each animal type. This what gives you the flexibility to play with so many different types of players. If I'm not sure what to play, I know Cascadia will be a hit. And that's why it belongs in every collection.

Buy it here: <https://amzn.to/4eS2Npg>

Conclusion



Listen: there are so many incredible games out there that we want to share with you. These are incredible games, but they are just the beginning.

Now that you've joined the community, you'll be receiving our newsletter each week, with a list of our latest articles and videos that we've posted across our different channels, so you check out the ones that interest you.

We'll also include board game news and any awesome deals we find.

Thank you for supporting The Board Game Collection. Whether it's you first or your next, we are honored to help you find your game!

Best,

Michael