



Taifa

INTRIGUE AND WAR IN MEDIEVAL SPAIN



1. Introduction

Taifa is a game for 0-6 players (yes zero) set in the era of “El Cid”, where each player (or Bot) controls one of the six main Muslim Taifas or Christian kingdoms that dominated the Iberian Peninsula during the 11th century, with the goal of expanding it through intrigue and conquest.

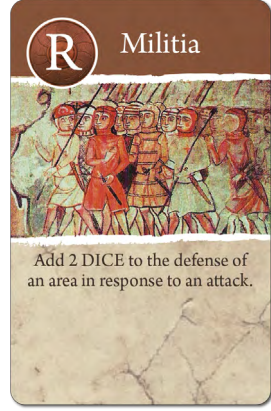
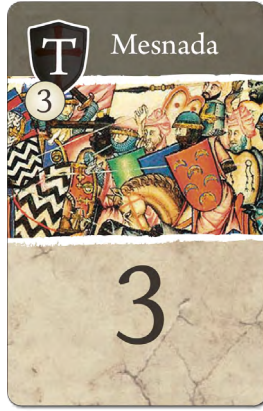
2. Game components

2.1 Cards

Comprised of two decks: one Muslim (brown back) and another Christian (blue back). They can be of three types:






- Events: Have an explanatory text that describes its operation.
- Troop: Marked with a number that indicates their strength.

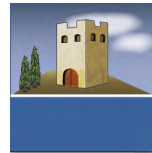
- Response: Depending on the text of the card, can be played during the kingdom's round or during the round of other kingdoms; and can be used alone or in combination with other cards of any kind.



2.2 Castles and garrisons

When castles are placed in the map areas, they indicate who controls that area. There are 6 different colors corresponding to the following kingdoms (listed in the order they play):

KINGDOM	COLOR	
Castile †	Red	
Catalan Counties †	Yellow	
Taifa of Valencia ☾	Light green	
Taifa of Seville ☾	Light blue	
Taifa of Badajoz ☾	Dark green	
Leon †	Dark blue	



Only one castle of any one color is allowed in an area at a time. Flipped to its +1 face they represent castles with garrison.

2.3 Dice

The dice get an impact with a score of 4, 5 or 6.

2.4 Card Bonus

It is used to show how many more or less cards the kingdom will draw at the beginning of the next turn (and to decide winners in case of draws in the last turn). Its position may be between -2 and +2. There is a Bonus counter to track each kingdom's Card Bonus.

2.5 Map

The map shows the 58 most important cities or regions in the Iberian Peninsula at the time. The connections of Mallorca with Denia and with Tarragona have a special color, but for all purposes they are like the rest.

The map also shows six external invasion routes from outside the peninsula.



The area with the largest shield is the capital of the kingdom.

3. Starting the game

The players choose the kingdoms that each one will play, the rest of the six kingdoms will be controlled by Bots (note that the game can be played even by 6 Bots and 0 players).

3.1 Deployment

Each kingdom begins controlling 8 areas marked on the map, castles of the corresponding color will be placed on these areas.

Empty areas are considered to be independent areas.

The bonus counter from each kingdom will be placed at position 0 of the bonus track on the map.

Finally, **8 CARDS** of the corresponding deck (Christian or Muslim) are distributed to each kingdom.

4. How to play the game

The game is divided into three turns. The turns have the following sequence:

1. Each kingdom draws the appropriate number of cards (see How the Card Bonus works) belonging to the Muslim or Christian decks, according to the religion of his kingdom.
2. The Card Bonus markers are set to 0.
3. Starting with the kingdom of Castile, and following in clockwise or-



der, kingdoms can make one (and only one) of the listed actions (see Game Actions below).

4. The kingdoms perform actions following that order until, consecutively, **all of them have passed**.

5. Game actions

The actions that kingdoms can perform during their game round may be one of the following:

- **Attack:** The kingdom selects a border area (i.e. an area connected to one it controls) and announces the attack.
- **Incursion:** The kingdom selects an opponent with whom it has a border and makes an incursion.
- **Play an event:** The kingdom shows the card and proceeds according to its text.
- **Discard:** The kingdom voluntarily discards one of its cards face up.
- **Pass:** The kingdom announces that it will not do any of the previous actions (if all the kingdoms consecutively pass, the turn ends).

NOTE: This means that players can pass sometimes, and continue to play later in the turn. But they must be careful because if they all pass consecutively the turn ends and they can end up carrying over to the next turn cards they wanted to play.

5.1 Attack

The attack is carried out following this sequence:

1. The kingdom selects a **border area**, which must belong to another kingdom or independent area, and announces the attack.

In the unlikely event that a kingdom does not control any area, it can only make attacks against its capital (indicated on the map with a larger shield).

2. Then it will put face down on the table, all the Troop cards from his hand that he wants, and optionally any Response cards (as long as the text printed on the card allows it).

3. Any kingdom (although it will usually be the owner of the area targeted by the attack) can place (face down) the **Response cards** it wants on both the attack and the defense of the area (see the text printed on the card).

4. The defender can use one or more of his garrison markers in and adjacent to the attacked area, in order to obtain extra dice in defense (1 extra die for each garrison marker used). Once garrison markers are used,



they are removed by flipping the castle counter to its regular side.

5. The cards of the attacker and the defender are revealed and the combat is carried out.

6. If the attacker wins, the castle marker in the area is removed and the attacker places one of its castles and chooses between advancing one position on its Card Bonus marker, or adding one garrison to the area that was just captured. The defender reduces its Card Bonus marker by one position.

7. All cards used during this go to the discarded deck.

5.2 Combat

The attacker adds the value of its troop cards and rolls that number of dice. Each 4, 5 or 6 result is a hit.

Then the defender adds the defensive value of the attacked area and +1 for every garrison marker it chooses to spend in the defense of that area, rolling that number of dice. Each 4, 5 or 6 result is a hit.

If the attacker makes more hits than the defender, the attacker wins. If he makes the same number of hits or less, the defender wins.

In the case of an attack to an independent area (empty area), any player can throw the dice for the defender.

Response cards can modify the procedure described above.

5.3 Incursion

The kingdom selects an opponent with whom it has a border (at least one area connected), and discards one of its Troop cards of its choice (face up).

Roll one die: With 4, 5 or 6 result, the opponent discards one random card face up from its hand.

5.4 Events

The kingdom shows an Event card and proceeds with what is described in the printed text.

If the event is marked with **P** (permanent), it is kept face up in front of the kingdom to remember that its effect lasts the entire turn. If not, it is discarded after its effect.

If the event is marked with **D** (discard from game), it will not be played again for the rest of the game.

Some events result in an attack, in those cases proceed as described in 5.1 Attack.



5.5 Discard

The kingdom discards one of its cards face up.

5.6 Pass

The turn is given to the next kingdom. Kingdoms without cards can only do this action (Bots only pass when they no longer have cards in their hand).

If all kingdoms pass consecutively, the turn ends and any cards remaining in their hands are carried over to the next turn, reducing the number of cards they will draw on the next turn.

FOR EXAMPLE: If a player passes with 3 cards in his hand, the next turn the draw number is reduced by 3.

6. End of turn

Cards will be played in the order described until all kingdoms, consecutively, pass. Next, the turn marker is advanced one position.

Then the discard piles, permanent cards, and unplayed card piles are re-shuffled together (Christian and Muslim decks separately).

If not the end of the game, next turn the kingdom of Castile will start again (same order).

7. How the Card Bonus works

Each time a kingdom wins an area, it advances the Card Bonus by 1 (or adds a garrison to the conquered area), and each time it loses an area it will roll it back by 1.

The bonus score can't exceed +2 or be less than -2 (negative or positive variations outside this range are ignored).

At the beginning of each turn, each kingdom will draw 8 cards, adding or subtracting cards to that number as indicated by the Card Bonus marker. **The resulting number will be reduced by the number of cards saved by the kingdom from the previous turn.**

NOTE: The first turn, since the Card Bonus is 0, each kingdom receives 8 cards, as already indicated in section 3.1 Deployment.

Then the Card Bonus markers are all reset to the 0 position.

Example: A player with the Card Bonus at +1, who has saved two cards from the previous turn, will draw 7 cards in total (8 +1 Card Bonus, -2 he saved). He will start with 9 cards (7 that have been drawn +2 he had previously saved) and with the bonus again to 0.



8. End of game: Who wins?

The game can end in two ways:

- By sudden victory, whenever a kingdom has placed all its available castles in areas on the map, it wins immediately (each kingdom has 13 castles).
- At the end of the third turn, the kingdom with the most castles in areas on the map wins. In case of a tie, the one (or ones) with the highest Card Bonus marker wins the game.

9. BOTS

Bots play exactly like players with the following special rules:

9.1 How Bots use cards

- The Bot hand is left on the table stacked face down.
- The Bot reveals and plays the first card from that pile each round of play (it plays one card per round), and only passes when it no longer has cards in its hand.
- Troop Cards: It plays them by leaving them face up close to its card pile, adding them to other deployed troop cards (if any) and forming a single “army”.
- Response Cards: It plays them by leaving them face up close to its card pile, if they accumulate, they are placed in the order in which they’ve been drawn.
- If the turn is over and the Bots have deployed Response or Troop cards that they have not been able to use, they are carried to the next turn.

KEY RULE: *Unlike the players, Bots do not reduce the cards they draw by the number of cards saved in this way from previous turns.*

- Event cards: It plays them immediately. Some event cards have italicized text at the end that clarifies or modifies how they are played by the Bot.
- When due to an event the Bot draws additional cards, it adds them face down on top of its available card pile.
- In case that the Bot cannot play a card, it discards it.

9.2 Attacks by Bots

The instant a Bot accumulates deployed Troop cards with a force greater than 3, it launches an attack with all of them.

The Bot will select the area with the highest possible defense (including the garrison, if any, in the area) but always lower than the strength of



its attack (response cards are not taken into account in this calculation, they are added later). If there are several areas that meet this condition, proceed according to the “ Choosing targets ” section (if there is none, the attack is cancelled until it gather sufficient strength).

Once the attack is made, the cards used are discarded as usual.

9.3 Offensive cards

Some Event and Troop cards have the Offensive symbol. This symbol only affects Bots (players ignore it).



If a Bot plays a card with this symbol, it ignores the content of the card and instead makes an attack with its deployed Troop cards.

If the attack is not possible because there are no troops or there is no area with a defense value inferior to the strength of the attack, the Bot will use the card to make an Incursion (see section 5.3 Incursion) into a kingdom with cards in hand and with which it has a border (if there are several to choose from, proceed as indicated in the “Choosing targets” section, if there are none discard the card).

9.4 Bots’ defense

The Bot will use its deployed Response cards as soon as it can, but will spend them one at a time, taking them in order from those deployed.

The Bot will only use response cards to defend itself if the troops attacking have a strength of 3 or more.

The Bot will always use the garrison of the attacked area, but not the garrisons of adjacent areas.

Bots only exchange a Card Bonus for a garrison when their Bonus is +2.

9.5 Choosing targets

When the Bot has to choose an area (to make an attack, place a garrison because an event...) and there are several areas that meet the conditions, a die is thrown. In case the result is 1, 2 or 3, it will choose the area with the lowest ID number, if the result is 4, 5 or 6, it will choose the area with the highest ID number.

When a Bot must choose a kingdom (to make an Incursion, play an event card...) and there are several candidates who meet the conditions, it will roll a die. In case the result is 1, 2 or 3, it chooses the first kingdom counter-clockwise. If the result is 4, 5 or 6, it chooses the first kingdom clockwise.

9.6 Independent campaign

When playing this event, the Bot will select as a target one of the 6 areas



marked by an external invasion route, which are not its own or independent. If there are several areas to choose from, proceed according to the “Choosing targets” section (if none, discard the card).





10. El Cid. Solitaire Scenario

El Cid was a Castilian knight and warlord, who after fighting in the service of various Christian and Muslim kingdoms, ended up controlling his own kingdom. After having some quarrels with his Christian neighbours, he fought against the powerful North African Almoravid empire. In this scenario the player will take the role of El Cid trying to stop the Almoravids.

10.1 Deployment

Only the areas east of the white line on the map are played, the rest are ignored. The deployment printed on the map is ignored, instead deploy as shown in the illustration on the next page.

The following kingdoms are played (listed in the order they play):

KINGDOM	COLOR	CONTROLLED	HAND
Almoravids 	Light green	Bot	12
Castile 	Red	Bot	5
Catalan Counties 	Yellow	Bot	5
El Cid 	Dark blue	Player	7

10.2 Special rules

The “Truce” card is removed from the Christian deck, this card is permanently held by El Cid played face up and does not count as a card in his hand. At the beginning of each turn, El Cid chooses one Christian kingdom and applies the event to it., this kingdom will also not be able to make incursions against the player (it can still use event cards against him, like “Razzia”, “Judgment of God”...).

Instead of 8 cards per turn, each kingdom receives the cards indicated in the table above (modified by the Card Bonus on turns 2 and 3, as usual).

The Almoravid capital is Málaga.

10.3 How to win

- By sudden victory, whenever a kingdom has placed all its available castles (13) in areas on the map.
- At the end of turn 3, the player wins if he controls more areas than the Almoravids and the Almoravids control less than 10 areas. Note that,



at the end of the game, the player can win even if another Christian kingdom controls more areas than he does.

Tip: You can easily increase the difficulty level by increasing the size of the Almoravid hand.



11. Examples of play

11.1 Combat example

Starting from the situation at the left, the Catalan Counties decide to attack from Valencia to Denia (controlled by the Taifa of Valencia).

The Catalan Counties declare the attack and place, face down, 2 Troop cards of values 2 and 3 respectively on the table. Then any player can place Response cards both to add them to the attack or to Denia's defense. In this case, the Taifa of Valencia places the "Champion" card face down and announces he sends the garrison of Murcia.

Both players reveal their cards and roll dice:

The Catalan Counties will throw 5 dice in total, obtaining the results 1, 3, 4, 4 and 6, which are a total of 3 hits.

The Taifa of Valencia throws 5 dice (2 for the intrinsic defense of the area, one for expending the garrison at the area of Murcia and 2 for the "Champion" card), obtaining the results 1, 1, 1, 4 and 4, which in total are 2 hits.

The Taifa of Valencia has lost the fight, the castle of Denia is replaced by a castle of the Catalan Counties, the garrison in Murcia is removed from the map, and Taifa of Valencia reduces its Card Bonus from -1 to -2. The Catalan Counties increase their Card Bonus from 0 to 1 (they could place a garrison in Denia instead).

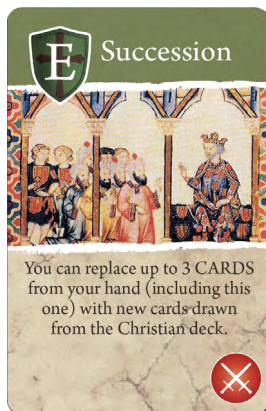




11.2 Bot campaigning example

A Bot controls the Catalan Counties, it has a force 3 Troop card and the response card “Champion” deployed. The Bot has not attacked with the Troop card because its strength doesn’t exceed three.

It’s its turn to play and the Bot plays a card with the Offensive symbol, automatically discards that card and attacks with the 3 Troop card. It must attack an area with defensive strength less than 3, therefore it can’t attack either Navarra or Tortosa (both have strength 4). But from Zaragoza it can attack the areas with defense 2 of Tudela (independent) or Calatayud (Taifa of Valencia). As there are two areas that meet the condition to be attacked, the Bot will roll one die; if it gets a 4, 5 or 6 result it will attack Calatayud (highest identifying number, 23), if it gets a 1, 2 or 3 result it will attack Tudela. It will then add the “Champion” card to the attack.





Suppose the Bot has no Troop cards deployed but has the “Champion” card deployed, in this case the Offensive card is transformed into an Incursion, the Bot will add the “Champion” card to the Incursion rolling three dice (instead of one), if it gets at least one 4, 5 or 6 result it would be successful. The Bot has adjacent areas of two kingdoms (Castile and Valencia), suppose that both have cards in hand, the Bot will have two kingdoms that meet the condition to make the Incursion and must throw another die to choose one of them; if it gets a 1, 2 or 3 result it will make the Incursion against Castile (counter-clockwise), and if it gets a 4, 5 or 6 result, against Valencia (clockwise).

Finally let’s suppose the Bot, instead of the Offensive card, gets a 2 Troop card. The 2 Troop card would be added to its army which would become force 5 and automatically attack (no need for an Offensive card), again it would have to roll a die to choose between the areas of Tortosa and Navarra (defense 4). Then it would add to its army the “Champion” card and attack with 7 dice.

Note that the kingdoms of Castile and Valencia can be either bots or players.





Historical context

In the Iberian Peninsula, at the end of the 11th century (the time in which Taifa is set) Christians, Muslims and Jews coexisted in a climate of religious tolerance. This tolerance did not prevent wars from taking place. The peninsula was divided into several Christian kingdoms to the north, and various kingdoms of Muslim taifas; in which Al-Andalus had been divided after the disintegration of the Caliphate of Cordoba (year 1031). The Christian kingdoms were generally larger and more powerful than the small Muslim taifas, many of them reduced to a single city. To resist the push of the Christians, the taifas were forced to hire mercenaries, many of them Christians, or to pay tribute (parias) to avoid attacks.

It is the time of leaders like El Cid (of the Arabic voice Al-Sayyid, meaning Lord or Chief); adventurers who fought alongside both Muslims and Christians, as well as for their own interest. It is also the era of splendor of Andalusian art and science, whose degree of civilization was much more developed than that of its Christian neighbors.

In the year 1085 Alfonso VI of Castile took the city of Toledo, causing great commotion among the Andalusians. They called to their aid the fierce Almoravids, African Muslim fanatics who temporarily halted the Christian advance.

It was the arrival of the Almoravids and the beginning of the Crusades (1st Crusade 1096) that broke the climate of religious tolerance, which became the intransigence that marked subsequent centuries.



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Credits

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Inspired by "Taifa: El juego de la Reconquista" and developed by its creators.

<http://printandplay.games/>

