

El Grande

A refined strategy-game for 2-5 players 12 years and up.

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Materials

- game board
- 5 Grandes in 5 colors
- 155 Caballeros in 5 colors (31 per color)
- 1 king
- 1 round counter (black)
- 65 power cards in 5 colors (with values 1 to 13 in each color)
- 45 action cards
- 9 region cards (with a rule summary on the reverse)
- 5 secret disks with pointers
- 1 Castillo (= tower)
- 2 scoreboards with the values "8/ 4/ 0" and "4/ 0/ 0"
- 1 rule introduction
- these game rules

Historical Background

Spain in the 15th Century: There are 12 different kingdoms, 1 county, 1 principality and the Basque provinces. The country is made up of five ethnic groups: Spaniards, Basques, Galicians, Catalans and Mauren. The aristocracy, especially the "Grandes," the high aristocracy, essentially controlled events in Spain. However the average aristocracy, the "Caballeros," also enjoyed extensive powers. All regions want to develop their own power and influence. To this end the castles (Castillos) played an important role.

(pronunciation hint: In Spanish the "ll" is pronounced like the "y" in English; Castillo = Casteeyo; Caballero = Caba-yero.)

Goal

Each player is a Grande in one region. He is allied with 30 Caballeros. Each Grande attempts, to the benefit of Spain and for his own benefit, to extend his influence across the whole of Spain. To accomplish this he must control the majority of Caballeros in as many regions as possible. The Grande who succeeds in this moves forward on the scoring track. The winner is the one who is ahead on this track at the end of the game.

The Board

The board shows the 9 regions of Spain, 1 space to hold the Castillo, the scoring track along the edge of the board, and a round chart with 9 game rounds and 3 horizontal scoring strips. There is a scoreboard with 3 symbols in each region which show the values of the various regions. The player with the most Caballeros in a region scores the highest value, whoever has the second most scores the second value, etc.

Illustration Labels

- Region
- Round Chart
- Scoring Strip
- Scoring Track
- Scoreboard
- Castillo Field

Duration

The game may be played in 9 or 6 rounds (= short form). The game takes around 90 minutes for 9 rounds and around 1 hour for 6 rounds. If you want to play the short form then you should skip rounds 1, 4, and 7 on the chart.

Preparations

Castillo: Assemble the Castillo before the first game and place it on the Castillo Field.

Region Cards The 9 cards are shuffled. Turn up the top card and place the king in this region. Then each player takes a card to decide their home region.

Grande: Each player chooses a color and takes the Grande (the large colored cube) in their color and places it in their home region.

Caballeros: Each player gets 10 Caballeros in their color. All remaining Caballeros are kept in a reserve on the table. This reserve is known as the provinces. Each player takes 2 of their initial Caballeros and places them next to their Grande in their home region. Each player also places another Caballero on the first space of the scoring track. The remaining 7 Caballeros are placed in front of each player. A player's personal reserve is known as their courtyard.

Secret Disk: Each player receives a secret disk, which must be assembled before the first game. It shows a sector for each region on the map except for the Castillo.

Power Cards: Each player receives a set of 13 power cards in their color as their hand. Each power card shows on top and at the bottom its value (1-13), and in the middle a number of Caballeros (0-6).

Action Cards These are marked on the back with between 1 and 5 Caballeros. All 11 cards with 1 Caballero form the 1 stack, all 11 cards with 2 Caballeros form the 2 stack, etc. The 5 stack is made up of just 1 card (the king's card). Each stack is individually shuffled and placed face down beside the board.

Scoreboards: Both scoreboards are placed beside the board.

Course of the Game

A game round is made up of the following actions:

- move the round counter forward
- uncover the top action card in each stack
- play the power cards

- each player takes their turn (the sequence is determined by the value of the power cards played)

Round Counter (black)

At the start of the game the round counter is placed on the 1 space of the round chart (in the short form with only 6 rounds the round count begins on space 2). Each round the counter is moved one space further along the chart. General scoring occurs at the end of the 3rd, 6th, and 9th rounds (when the round counter is moved on to the secret disk spaces).

Uncover the Action Cards

The top card in each stack is turned face up. The players should read and consider which of the actions they would like to see executed or which they would gladly prevent.

Play Power Cards

In the first round, the youngest player leads. In subsequent rounds, the player who played last in the previous round leads off. The remaining players follow around the table. The power cards are played face up. [Once a particular value has been played, later players may not play this card.] All power cards that are played must have different values!

The power cards decide two things:

1. The turn order: The player who played the card with the highest value takes their turn first, then the player that played the second highest card, etc.
2. The number of their Caballeros that they can move from the provinces to their courtyard.

Turns

The player who played the highest power card takes their turn first. A turn is made up of the following actions in the given order:

1. Move Caballeros from the provinces to the courtyard

Move at most the number of Caballeros shown on the power card from the provinces to the courtyard. If there are no more of this player's Caballeros in the provinces, the player may remove Caballeros from the board to make up the difference. Finally, the player discards the power card; it is removed from the game.

2. Select an action card

Select an action card from those displayed face up. Each action card allows two actions:

- The specified number of Caballeros may be moved from the player's courtyard to the board
- The action described by the picture and text may be executed or prevented.

Important: Each player may decide whether to place their Caballeros on the board before or after executing the special action.

3. Move Caballeros from the courtyard to the game board

[Note that this may also be executed as Step 4, if the player so chooses.]

The maximum number of Caballeros that may be moved from the player's courtyard to the game board is shown along the bottom of the action card. These Caballeros may be placed in any region adjoining the current location of the king and/or into the Castillo. The player may divide the Caballeros between the adjoining regions and the Castillo in any way they see fit. Caballeros put in the castle are simply thrown in from above.

Example 1: The king stands in Galicien. One can only move Caballeros to Altkastilien, to the Basque country and into the Castillo.

Example 2: The king stands in Neukastilien. One can only move Caballeros to Altkastilien, Sevilla, Granada, Valencia, Aragon and into the Castillo.

4. Execute the Special Action

[Note that this may also be executed as Step 3, if the player so chooses.]

The player must now decide whether or not to execute the special action depicted in the picture and text of the chosen action card.

5. Lay aside the chosen action card

After both steps of the action card are completed, lay aside the card to show that it may not be chosen by a later player. Now the player with the second highest power card takes their turn.

Next Round

After all of the player have finished their turns in this manner, if there are fewer than 5 players then the remaining face up action cards are discarded. Begin the next round by moving the round counter forward and turning 5 new action cards face up. (The king card is turned face up at the start of each round and is never permanently discarded.)

The King and the King's Region

The region in which the king stands is called the King's Region. The king has three meanings:

1. He determines which regions may receive Caballeros from the courtyards - namely the regions adjacent to the King's Region and into the Castillo! Many action cards allow exceptions to this rule.
2. The King's Region is taboo! No changes are allowed there! No Caballeros, no Grandes and no scoreboards may be moved there or be taken out. This is true without exception!
3. The King's Bonus: The player with the most Caballeros in the King's Region receives an additional 2 points whenever that region is scored. If there are several players with the same number of Caballeros tied for the most then the King's Bonus is not awarded!

The Castillo

The Castillo is a special type of region with the following special properties:

- Caballeros may be placed in the Castillo any time one adds or moves Caballeros no matter where the king stands. When adding Caballeros to the Castillo, players should clearly call out the number. It is advantageous to keep track of who has Caballeros in the Castillo and how many. Otherwise, one may not take into account the Caballeros the Castillo hides when planning for the next general scoring.
- During each general scoring (after game round 3, 6 and 9) the Castillo is completely emptied. The Caballeros are moved to other regions of the board (see the following rule) and may change the majority there!

Scoring

There occur in the course of the game three general scorings - after the 3rd, 6th, and 9th rounds. During a general scoring, the round counter is first placed on the space with the secret disk and then moves on to the other spaces to the right.

A general scoring is made up of the following actions:

- region selection with the secret disks
- assess the Castillo
- move the Caballeros out of the Castillo and into other regions
- score the individual regions in turn

Region Selection with the Secret Disks

Each player chooses a region they want to move their Caballeros from the Castillo to and secretly records this using the pointer on the disk. Any region can be chosen except the King's Region. After choosing each player should place their disk face down on the table. Important: All of a player's Caballeros in the Castillo must be moved to a single region - the one shown on their disk!

Score the Castillo

Once all of the players have placed their secret disk face down on the table, score the Castillo. Lift off the Castillo and count the Caballeros inside. Scores are awarded as in other regions (see the section, Scoring of the Regions).

Move the Caballeros from the Castillo

Turn the secret disks face up and move the Caballeros from the Castillo to the chosen regions. Anyone who has inadvertently chosen the King's Region must return these Caballeros to their courtyard! The Castillo is returned, empty, to its space.

Scoring of the Regions

So that no region is forgotten or counted twice, the round counter is move to the right along the scoring strip. The scoreboards in the regions show how many points are awarded to the players that have the most, the second most, and third most Caballeros in that region. The Grandes serve only to identify the home region and are not counted when determining the majority in a region.

Move the pieces along the scoring track to record the points score. Example: "5/3/1." Whoever has the most Caballeros in this region moves 5 spaces forward, whoever has the second most moves 3 and whoever has the third most move forward 1 space.

When playing with 2 players, only the first number of the scoreboard is scored. Only the player with the most Caballeros gets points. With 3 players, the first two numbers are used. Only the players with the most and second most Caballeros in a region get points.

If several players have the same number of Caballeros and tie for a position, these players get the points for the next lower rank.

Example 1: In a region with the values "5/3/1", red, blue and yellow have 4 Caballeros each, and green has 3 Caballeros. Score: Red, blue and yellow get 3 points for the 2nd rank. Green takes the third rank and gets one point.

Example 2: In a region with the values "6/4/2", red has 4 Caballeros, blue 3, and yellow and green have 2 Caballeros each. Scoring: Red gets 6 points and blue 4 points. Yellow and green have the same number of Caballeros, slide back one place in the ranking, and get no points in 4th place.

The King's Bonus

Every time the King's Region is scored (even special scorings due to action cards) the player with the most Caballeros in that region receives an additional 2 points. The King's Bonus is lost if no player possesses a majority (i.e. if there is a tie for first).

Home Bonuses

If a player possesses the majority in the region where their Grande stands when that region is scored, they receive an additional 2 points. The bonus is lost if there is a tie for first in this region.

The Mobile Scoreboards

The two mobile scoreboards come into play via the action cards and are used to alter the value of a region.

Game End

The game ends after the 3rd general scoring. The player that has progressed the furthest along the scoring track is the winner and "el Grande."

Recognition of Play Testers

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The Action Cards

Detailed explanations of the card texts follow. If the meaning of a special action is not clear, consult the detailed explanation of that card.

The following applies to all cards:

1. The King's Region (= the region in which the king stands) is always taboo. You may add or take nothing out of this region! Scoring occurs in the King's Region, however.
2. Secret Disk: If an action must be carried out "secretly," this means that the players simultaneously and secretly select a region on the secret disks.
3. Castillo: Whenever Caballeros are added to the game board or moved any or all of them may also be put into the Castillo. However, Caballeros may only be removed from the Castillo during the general scoring.
4. Sequence of Actions: Each card allows two actions: a) moving a number of Caballeros onto the game board and b) the action described by the picture and text (= the special action). You decide which action to execute first. An action may not be split, therefore all of one action must be completed before the next is begun.
5. Number: The cards indicate the maximum number of Caballeros that you may move onto the game board. You may move fewer Caballeros at any time.
6. Move Caballeros onto the game board: Caballeros may only be moved from the courtyard into the regions neighboring the king's region or into the Castillo. Caballeros specified by a special action may be added or moved to the Castillo or to any region except the king's region.
7. Skipping the special action: You may choose not to execute the special action shown on the card. You may select a card in order to prevent the special action from being executed.

Action Cards in the 1 Stack

The following is true for all 1 cards:

You can move a maximum of one Caballero from your courtyard into a region neighboring the king's region or into the Castillo. Furthermore, the indicated special action is either executed or prevented. There is no intrigue figure. (The cards are called scheming cards because only with these cards may another player move your Caballeros on the game board.)

Intrigant: Alle eigenen Caballeros einer Region beliebig umsetzen!

Intrigue: Move all of your own Caballeros in any one region! Take all of your own Caballeros out of a region and distribute them any to any other regions and/ or into the Castillo. You may return a subset to their original region. Don't forget that the king's region is always taboo - one may take nothing out and bring nothing in.

Intrigant: Zusätzlich 2 Caballeros vom Hof auf beliebigen Regionen einsetzen.

Intrigue: Move 2 more Caballeros from the courtyard to any region. You are allowed to move 2 Caballeros from your courtyard into any regions (except the king's) and/or into the Castillo. With this card you may add altogether three Caballeros to the board, 2 into any region and 1 into a region neighboring the king's region.

Intrigant: 2 Caballeros zusätzlich vom Hof auf beliebigen Regionen einsetzen oder alle eigenen Caballeros einer Region beliebig umsetzen.

Intrigue: Move 2 additional Caballeros from the courtyard into any region or move all of your own Caballeros from one region! You must decide which of the two actions you want to execute.

Intrigant: Bis zu 5 beliebige Caballeros einer Region beliebig umsetzen.

Intrigue: Move up to 5 Caballeros in any one region! You can move up to 5 Caballeros (your own and/or foreign) from one region into any other regions (except the king's) and/or into the Castillo.

Intrigant: *3 fremde Caballeros auf dem Spielplan beliebig umsetzen.*

Intrigue: Move any 3 foreign Caballeros on the board! You can move up to 3 foreign Caballeros from any regions into any other regions (except the king's) and/or into the Castillo.

Intrigant: *3 beliebige Caballeros auf dem Spielplan beliebig umsetzen.*

Intrigue: Move any 3 Caballeros on the board! You can move any 3 Caballeros (your own and/or foreign) from any regions to any regions (except the king's) and/or into the Castillo.

Intrigant: *2 eigene und 2 fremde Caballeros auf dem Spielplan beliebig umsetzen.*

Intrigue: Move 2 of your own and 2 foreign Caballeros on the board! You can move altogether 2 of your own and 2 foreign Caballeros from any regions into any other regions (except the king's) and/or into the Castillo.

Intrigant: *4 eigene Caballeros auf dem Spielplan beliebig umsetzen.*

Intrigue: Move any 4 of your own Caballeros on the board! You can move any 4 of your own Caballeros from any regions into any other regions (except the king's) and/or into the Castillo.

Intrigant: *4 beliebige Caballeros auf dem Spielplan beliebig umsetzen.*

Intrigue: Move any 4 Caballeros on the board! You can move any 4 Caballeros (your own and/or foreign) from any regions into any other regions (except the king's) and/or into the Castillo.

Action Cards in the 2 Stack

The following applies to all cards: You may move a maximum of 2 Caballeros from the courtyard into a region neighboring the king's region or into the Castillo. Furthermore, the indicated special action is either executed or prevented.

Veto! Sie können 1 Sonderaktion dieser oder nächster Runde verhindern. Erheben Sie Einspruch, sobald der Spieler die Sonderaktion durchführen will.

Veto! You can prevent one special action during this round or the next round. Announce your objection as soon as the player starts to execute their special action. If you have selected the veto card, you put the card before yourself on the table and play it when you want to prevent the execution of a special action which is unfavorable to you. You could prevent only one special action. You cannot prevent a player from moving Caballeros onto the board as specified in the second part of the action card. You may only prevent a special action if you hold the Veto! card and the special action is not yet complete. You may also prevent only part of a special action. Assume that a player may move 4 Caballeros. He has already moved 2. You were pleased with these moves. Now he plans to move one more. You don't like the sound of that, so you play your veto. The other player must take back the last move, and your veto prevents the remainder of the special action. After you have played the veto, the card is discarded. If you have not played the veto by the end of the next round, it is discarded in any case.

Autoritätsverfall: Ihre Mitspieler müssen sämtliche Caballeros vom Hof in die Provinz zurückschicken.

Decay of Authority: Your fellow players must send all of the Caballeros in their courtyards back to the provinces.

Autoritätsverfall: Ihre Mitspieler müssen 3 Caballeros vom Hof in die Provinz zurückschicken.

Decay of Authority: Your opponents must send 3 Caballeros from their courtyards back to the provinces. If they have fewer than 3 Caballeros in their courtyard, they only send back those that they have. [In other words, they don't have to pull the remaining Caballeros off the map.]

König erzümt! Jeder Mitspieler muß 3 Caballeros in die Provinz zurückschicken. Er kann sie aus den Regionen und/oder vom Hof nehmen. Es beginnt der linke Nachbar, dann reihum.

The King rages! Each opponent must send 3 Caballeros back to the provinces. He can take them from any regions and/or from the courtyard. The neighbor to the left of the player that played the special action begins, then it passes around the table. Each opponent in turn must decide which 3 of their own Caballeros to send back to the provinces.

Sie dürfen von jedem Mitspieler 1 Caballero aus einer beliebigen Region nehmen und in die Provinz zurückschicken.

You send 1 Caballero from any region from each opponent back to the provinces. You decide which Caballeros must return to the provinces.

Ihre Mitspieler müssen 2 eigene Caballeros aus einer beliebigen Region entfernen und in die Provinz zurückschicken. Geheim entscheiden!

Your opponents must remove 2 of their own Caballeros from any region and send them back to the provinces. Decide secretly! All opponents must simultaneously select a region with their secret disk. The selected region must contain at least 2 of their Caballeros. If a player only has at most one Caballero in any region then he must select such a region.

Ihre Mitspieler müssen alle eigenen Caballeros einer Region in die Provinz zurückschicken. Jeder Mitspieler bestimmt die Region selbst. Geheim entscheiden!

Your opponents must send all of their own Caballeros from one region back to the provinces. Each opponent decides which region. Decide secretly! Each opponent must select a region in which they have at least 1 Caballero. The election is held simultaneously using the secret disk.

Sonderwertung: Sie bestimmen eine beliebige Region, die gewertet wird.

Special Scoring: Pick one region to be scored. You can choose any region (remember: the king's region and the Castillo may also be chosen). The scoring follows the rules under "Scoring of the Regions."

Action Cards in the 3 Stack

The following applies to all cards: You may move a maximum of 3 Caballeros from the courtyard into a region neighboring the king's region or into the Castillo. Furthermore, the indicated special action is either executed or prevented.

Sonderwertung: Es werden alle 4er-Regionen gewertet.

Special Scoring: All 4 regions are scored. Score all regions with a four lilies in the first space their scoreboard. The 4 regions are Galicien (4/2/0), Katalonien (4/2/1) and Sevilla (4/3/1). If the scoreboard printed on the game board has been covered by a mobile scoreboard then only consider the values shown on the mobile scoreboard. This is true for all of the other special scorings.

Two examples:

A mobile scoreboard showing (8/4/0) lies in Galicien. So Galicien is no longer a 4 region.

A mobile scoreboard showing (4/0/0) lies in Granada. So Granada is now a 4 region.

The scoring follows the rules given in the section, "Scoring of the Regions." Players also score the home bonuses and king's bonus if they apply.

Sonderwertung: Es werden alle 5er-Regionen gewertet.

Special Scoring: All 5 regions are scored. This is carried out in the manner described above for the 4 regions. The 5 regions are Basque country (5/3/1), Aragon (5/4/1) and Valencia (5/3/2). The Castillo is not scored.

Sonderwertung: Es werden alle 6er- und 7er-Regionen gewertet.

Special Scoring: All 6 and 7 regions are scored. This is carried out in the manner described above for the 4 regions. The 6 and 7 regions are Altkastilien (6/4/2), Neukastilien (7/4/2) and Granada (6/3/1).

Sonderwertung: Es wird das Castillo gewertet.

Special Scoring: The Castillo is scored. The Castillo is uncovered, and the majority ratios are determined. After the scoring, the Castillo is put back over the Caballeros again. The Caballeros remain in the Castillo and are not distributed until the next general scoring.

Sonderwertung: Es werden von allen Regionen nur die ersten Plätze gewertet.

Special Scoring: Score only the first place in all regions. Only regions where a single player has the most Caballeros are scored; the castle is not scored. Follow the rules under "Scoring of the Regions."

Sonderwertung: Sie bestimmen eine beliebige Region, die gewertet wird.

Special Scoring: You may choose any region to score. (remember: you may also choose the king's region and the Castillo.) The scoring follows the rules described under "Scoring of the Regions."

Sonderwertung: Es werden alle Regionen mit meisten Caballeros gewertet.

Special Scoring: Score the region(s) with the most Caballeros. If several regions all have the largest number, then they are all scored. The Castillo is not considered. The scoring follows the rules under "Scoring of the Regions."

Sonderwertung: Es werden alle regionen mit den wenigsten Caballeros gewertet. Regionen ohne Caballeros zählen nicht mit..

Special Scoring: Score all the regions with the fewest Caballeros. Regions without any Caballeros don't count. If several regions all have the smallest number, then they are all scored. The Castillo and regions with no Caballeros are not considered. The scoring follows the rules under "Scoring of the Regions."

Action Cards in the 4 Stack

The following applies to all cards: You may move a maximum of 4 Caballeros from the courtyard into a region neighboring the king's region or into the Castillo. Furthermore, the indicated special action is either executed or prevented.

Wertungstafel: Bringen Sie eine Wertungstafel ins Spiel oder versetzen Sie eine.

Move a mobile scoreboard: You may move a mobile scoreboard either onto the board for the first time or into a different region if it is already on the board. A mobile scoreboard may also be placed at the Castillo. The two mobile scoreboards may not be placed on top of one another. The player is free to choose which of the two scoreboards to move.

Königlicher Ratgeber: Rücken Sie den König in eine Nachbarregion.

Royal Adviser: Move the king into a neighboring region. You may only move the king no further than one region away from his present position.

Rauswurf: Sie bestimmen eine Region. Ihre Mitspieler müssen alle eigenen Caballeros aus dieser Region entfernen und sie geheim in eine andere Region umsetzen.

Exile: You choose a region. Your opponents must move all of their Caballeros out of this region and move them secretly to a different region. After you have decided the region, all of the concerned players should choose a different region on their secret disks. All opponents then reveal their disks and move their Caballeros to the chosen region. If a player chooses the king's region then their Caballeros return to their courtyard.

Grande: Sie dürfen Ihren Granden in eine andere Region versetzen.

Grande: You may move your Grande into a different region. You may choose any region except the Castillo and the king's region. You may choose a region which already contains several Grandes.

Machtkarten: Nehmen Sie 1 Ihrer Karten vom Ablagestapel zurück auf Ihre Hand.

Power Cards: Take 1 of your cards from the discard stack back into your hand. You may take back any of your played cards -- including the card from this turn.

Der Hof: *Holen Sie 2 eigene Caballeros aus der Provinz an ihren Hof.*

The Courtyard: Move 2 of your Caballeros from the provinces to your courtyard.

Sonderwertung: *Jeder Spieler stellt geheim eine Region ein, für die eine Sonderwertung stattfinden soll. Mehrfach gewählte Regionen werden nicht gewertet.*

Special Scoring: Each player secretly chooses a region to score. If a region is chosen by multiple players, it is not scored. All players choose a region on their secret disk and reveal them simultaneously. Score all uniquely chosen regions according to the rules under "Scoring of the Regions."

Action Cards in the 5 Stack

The 5 stack has only one card, the king's card. The following applies to this card: You may move a maximum of 5 Caballeros from the courtyard into a region neighboring the king's region or into the Castillo. Furthermore, the indicated special action is either executed or prevented.

Königskarte: *Setzen Sie den König in eine beliebige Region.*

King's Card: Put the king into any region. All regions (besides the Castillo) may be chosen.