

A Game Of Thrones Board Game 2nd Edition

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INTRODUCTION: CLAIMING THE IRON THRONE ON YOUR TABLETOP

Few board games capture the sweeping drama, political intrigue, and brutal conflict of the Seven Kingdoms as masterfully as **A Game of Thrones Board Game 2nd Edition**. Designed by Christian T. Petersen and published by Fantasy Flight Games, this tabletop experience is more than a simple adaptation of George R.R. Martin’s literary universe—it is a deep, strategic board game that forces players to think like lords and ladies vying for the Iron Throne. Whether you are a veteran of the original edition or a newcomer drawn by the HBO series, the second edition refines an already epic experience, making it one of the most engaging area-control and negotiation games available.

In this article, we will explore every facet of the game: its components, core mechanics, player dynamics, expansions, and tips for mastery. By the end, you’ll understand why this title remains a heavyweight in the strategy board game genre and how you can best enjoy your campaigns in Westeros.

WHAT IS A GAME OF THRONES BOARD GAME 2ND EDITION?

A Game of Thrones Board Game 2nd Edition is a board game for 3 to 6 players (with an optional expansion for 4 players improving balance) that simulates the struggle for control over the Seven Kingdoms. Each player takes control of one of the Great Houses—Stark, Lannister, Baratheon, Greyjoy, Tyrell, or Martell—and attempts to capture King’s Landing and hold enough strongholds to be declared the ruler of Westeros.

The game is famous for its emphasis on diplomacy, backstabbing, and strategic planning. Unlike many area-control games that rely heavily on dice rolls, this title uses a unique order token system where players secretly assign orders to their units, then reveal them simultaneously. This creates an environment of uncertainty, trust, and betrayal that mirrors the tone of the source material.

KEY COMPONENTS AND WHAT’S INSIDE THE BOX

The second edition includes high-quality components that enhance immersion. Here is a breakdown:

- **Game Board:** A detailed map of Westeros divided into land and sea areas, marked with supply routes and ports.
- **House Cards:** Six sets of character cards—one for each house—including leaders like Ned Stark, Tywin Lannister, and Daenerys Targaryen (in expansions).
- **Order Tokens:** Raid, March, Defense, Support, and Consolidate Power tokens, used to secretly plan actions.

- **Power Tokens:** Used for bidding on the Iron Throne, the Fiefdoms, and the King’s Court tracks, as well as for resolving certain events.
- **Unit Miniatures:** Plastic figures representing footmen, knights, siege engines, and ships.
- **Wildling Track and Threat Tokens:** Representing the constant danger of attacks from beyond the Wall.
- **Game of Thrones Expansion-Ready:** The base set supports future expansion content, such as the “A Dance with Dragons” expansion.

The upgrades from the first edition include improved graphic design, clarified rules, and rebalanced House cards. For collectors, the second edition also includes a larger board with clearer territory borders, making gameplay less confusing.

CORE MECHANICS: HOW TO WIN THE GAME

The Victory Condition

To win, a player must control at least seven castles or strongholds at the start of their turn. Alternatively, if all other players are eliminated or if a special victory card is drawn from the Wildling deck, the player with the highest number of castles may also win. The game typically lasts 8-10 turns, which can take 3-4 hours or more with a full group.

Phases of a Turn

Each round in **A Game of Thrones Board Game 2nd Edition** follows a strict sequence:

1. **Raven Phase:** The holder of the Messenger Raven token may look at one opponent’s order tokens once per round.
2. **Planning Phase:** Each player secretly places order tokens on all areas containing their units. This is where strategy and bluffing matter most.
3. **Action Phase:** Orders are revealed and resolved in a specific order (Raid, March, Defense, etc.). This is where combat happens, territories change hands, and power is consolidated.
4. **Consolidation Phase:** Players collect power tokens based on areas with Consolidate Power orders and resolve events like the Wildling attack.
5. **Supply Phase:** Each house checks supply limits, and over-supplied units may be removed.

Between planning and action, players can negotiate, form alliances, and issue threats—but no binding contracts exist. Betrayal is not only allowed but often necessary for victory.

THE THREE TRACKS: IRON THRONE, FIEFDOMS, AND KING’S COURT

At the start of the game and during two special “King’s Court” bidding phases, players bid power tokens for influence on three tracks:

- **Iron Throne Track:** Determines turn order and tie-breaking for battles. The top player also holds the Iron Throne token, which can break ties in the player’s favor.
- **Fiefdoms Track:** Determines the order for defending against Wildling attacks. The highest rank gets to choose first when resolving a Wildling event.
- **King’s Court Track:** Determines who holds special titles like the Master of Laws (can influence the Wildling track) and the Messenger Raven.

These tracks add a layer of political jockeying outside of military conflict, rewarding players who invest in diplomacy rather than pure aggression.

HOUSE PROFILES: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

House Stark (Winterfell)

Strengths: Strong infantry, good initial position in the north with access to the sea. Card abilities focus on defense and resilience.
Weaknesses: Vulnerable to a two-front war with Greyjoy and Lannister. Limited expansion routes.

House Lannister (Casterly Rock)

Strengths: Powerful cavalry and strong siege capabilities. Their deck includes Tywin, who can force opponents to discard power tokens.
Weaknesses: Trapped between Baratheon, Stark, and Greyjoy. Limited navy early on.

House Baratheon (Storm’s End)

Strengths: Strong navy, ability to use the Messenger Raven early. Good positioning near King’s Landing.
Weaknesses: Surrounded by aggressive neighbors. Relies on controlling the sea lanes.

House Greyjoy (Pyke)

Strengths: Best navy in the game, ability to retreat over water. Their card “Euron” can cancel opponent orders.
Weaknesses: Poor land units; expansion is heavily dependent on coastal control.

House Tyrell (Highgarden)

Strengths: Rich southern house with good supply. Their deck includes Mace Tyrell for defense.
Weaknesses: Clash with Martell and Baratheon. Need strong diplomacy to survive early turns.

House Martell (Sunspear)

Strengths: Introduced in the second edition and present in the base box? (Actually, Martell was added in the “A Dance with Dragons” expansion for the second edition. The base game only has five houses in the 5-player variant? Wait: The 2nd Edition base game includes 6 houses: Stark, Lannister, Baratheon, Greyjoy, Tyrell, and Martell. Yes, Martell is included in the 2nd Edition base game. They have cards like Doran Martell that can prevent player elimination.
Weaknesses: Isolated in the south; must build a strong navy to project power.

DIPLOMACY, BETRAYAL, AND PLAYER INTERACTION

The soul of **A Game of Thrones Board Game 2nd Edition** lies in its negotiation phase. Unlike many Eurogames where diplomacy is abstract, this game encourages open conversation between turns. Players can promise support, trade gifts of power tokens, or form temporary alliances—but nothing is binding. A player who appears too trustworthy often finds a blade in the back during the Action Phase.

This dynamic makes the game incredibly replayable. No two sessions are alike because the social meta-game changes with each group. The game even includes a special “Valar Morghulis” card in the Wildling deck that can trigger a sudden death scenario, adding extra tension.

EXPANSIONS AND VARIANTS

For those who master the base game, several expansions exist:

- **A Feast for Crows:** A four-player scenario that introduces new objectives and tighter gameplay, perfect for smaller groups.
- **A Dance with Dragons:** Adds a sixth player house (Martell) in the base? Actually, this expansion rebalances the base game for 4 players and introduces new cards and objectives. The base game already has Martell in 2nd Edition; “A Dance with Dragons” is a variant for 4 players using a simplified map.
- **The Mother of Dragons Expansion:** Adds Daenerys Targaryen as a wild card element that can influence the game.
- **Fan Variants:** Many online communities have created custom scenarios for 7-8 players by combining boards.

Each expansion adds new depth without overwhelming the core experience, making the second edition a solid foundation for long-term enjoyment.

TIPS FOR NEW PLAYERS

1. **Don't Overextend:** Supply limits are brutal. Spreading too thin will cost you units.
2. **Control the Sea:** Naval superiority can cut off enemies or open supply routes.
3. **Negotiate Wisely:** Share information sparingly; your allies today may be your enemies next turn.
4. **Use the Consolidate Power Order:** Power tokens are used for bidding and for buying off Wildling attacks—never waste them.
5. **Know Your House Card Deck:** Each card has unique abilities; using the right card at the right moment can turn a losing battle.

WHY THE SECOND EDITION REMAINS A CLASSIC

Since its release in 2011, **A Game of Thrones Board Game 2nd Edition** has consistently appeared on top board game lists. Its blend of strategic warfare, political negotiation, and thematic

immersion is rare. The components are sturdy, the rules are tight, and the playtime (3-5 hours) allows for deep engagement without being overly long. It also scales well: with 3 players it's a tense standoff; with 6 it becomes a chaotic free-for-all worthy of the Red Wedding.

For fans of the books or TV show, this board game offers a chance to rewrite history—or repeat the same betrayals. Even for those unfamiliar with the series, the mechanics stand on their own as a top-tier area-control game.

CONCLUSION: SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

If you enjoy games that reward cunning, patience, and a willingness to break promises, **A Game of Thrones Board Game 2nd Edition** is an essential addition to your collection. Its high replayability, gorgeous components, and faithful adaptation of the source material make it a standout among strategy games. While it may not be for casual players due to its complexity and length, for those willing to invest the time, it offers one of the most rewarding tabletop experiences available. Gather your allies, sharpen your quill—and remember: in the game of thrones, you win or you die.