

SPLENDOR: THE FIRST GAME

Two to four players. One action at a time.

Original teaching summary for standard Splendor. This is not the publisher rulebook and does not teach Splendor Duel. Use the printed rules for your exact edition.

Set the table

Players	Gems per ordinary color	Nobles	Gold
2	4	3	5
3	5	4	5
4	7	5	5

Shuffle the three Development levels separately. Reveal four cards at each level: twelve faceup cards. Base deck: 40 level-one, 30 level-two and 20 level-three cards. Choose Nobles randomly. The current rules give the youngest player the first turn; continue clockwise.

Choose ONE action

THREE COLORS: take one piece in each of three different non-Gold colors. Take fewer only when the supply lacks enough colors.

MATCHING PAIR: take two of one non-Gold color only if that pile starts with at least four.

RESERVE: take a faceup card or a blind top card; take one Gold if available. Maximum three reserved cards; no discarding them.

BUY: pay for a market card or your own reserved card after matching discounts. A zero-cost purchase still uses the action.

Refill a removed market card immediately from its own level if the deck has cards. End your turn holding at most ten pieces, including Gold; return excess pieces of your choice.

Pay pieces. Keep bonuses.

Teaching example: cost 3 red + 2 blue. Your bonuses: 1 red + 1 blue. Pay 2 red + 1 blue, or replace that blue with 1 Gold. Return spent pieces to the supply; keep the bonus cards. This illustrates arithmetic, not an actual card.

Nobles and the finish

At turn end, receive at most one Noble whose matching **bonuses** you meet. No extra action or payment. Choose one if several qualify.

15+ prestige: finish the current round, not an extra round. Highest prestige wins, then fewest purchased Development cards; a remaining tie is shared.

Four-player example: seat three triggers fifteen. Seat four still acts; seats one and two do not act again. Seat four can win with a higher total.

Primary source: Space Cowboys Splendor page and linked current base manual.

SPLENDOR: BETTER DECISIONS

A discount is useful when it saves a useful turn.

Before taking gems

Name your main target and one backup. Check whether another player can buy either before your next turn. Taking flexible colors can be stronger than committing everything to a single expensive plan.

Before buying another cheap card

Which likely purchase does this bonus improve? How many turns remain? A free zero-point card still takes an action. Near the finish, buying points now may be better than improving an engine you will not use again.

Before reserving to block

Will the interruption buy you a useful turn? What are you giving up? At four players, blocking one opponent can help somebody else. A reservation is protection and possible Gold, not a free extra card purchase.

The four-to-three threshold

If a color pile has exactly four pieces, taking one **as part of a legal three-color action** leaves three. That denies a matching-pair take from that pile. It does not permit taking only one piece when three colors are available.

Choose the next box by the decision you want

THE SILK ROAD: Cities changes the finish line. Trading Posts adds persistent powers.

THE SUN NEVER SETS: Orient adds card effects and a larger market. Strongholds adds market claims and Conquest.

Both require standard Splendor. Learn one module before combining. Owners of older Cities of Splendor should check overlap and revised rules before rebuying.

SPLENDOR DUEL: a separate complete game for exactly two, with its own gem board and rules. Standard Splendor also officially plays at two. These standard-game expansions are not Duel expansions.

First-three-evening plan

First: base game, payments aloud, clear final round.

Second: main target plus backup; discuss one useful turn and one detour.

Third: repeat, or add one module everyone wants. More modules are optional variety, not compulsory progress.

Pack for your actual game

Base Development cards: **90**. With Orient: **120**. Measure sleeves for your printing and test insert clearance. Noble and City tiles are not in that sleeve count. Check that a mat has room for the expanded market. Verify fitted organizers by edition, dimensions and sleeved capacity; no physical fit test is claimed here.

Strategy recommendations are Puzzlewick analysis, not guaranteed openings or measured win-rate gains. Event-specific timing and tie rules should be confirmed with the organizer.

SPLENDOR: MODULE CHECKS

Current Silk Road and Sun Never Sets rules.

Cities: cards, not bonuses

Remove all Nobles; choose three random City tiles and sides. Meet both the printed prestige and colored-card requirements. A generic same-color requirement must use a different color from the specifically listed colors. A double-bonus Orient card remains **one card**.

Meeting a City at turn end triggers completion of the current round. Only qualifying players can win; compare prestige, then fewest cards, then share a remaining tie. Fifteen alone is not this module's trigger.

Trading Posts: earn at most one new power per turn

3 red + 1 white cards: after purchasing, take one non-Gold piece before replacement.

3 black cards: blind reservation sees two; reserve one and put the other at the bottom.

2 white cards: after a legal matching-pair take, take one other non-Gold color.

3 blue + 1 black cards: each spent Gold pays two of one color; no change. Still one held piece.

5 green cards: one prestige per owned Trading Post, including this one.

Requirements count cards. No duplicate powers. Newly gained powers do not retroactively trigger earlier actions. Keep acquired posts after a later sacrifice. With Cities, gain a post before checking the City; without Cities, check Nobles before posts.

Orient: eighteen faceup cards, distinct effects

Add two faceup cards at each level from three separate Orient decks. Refill from the correct deck. Copy cards need an existing bonus card to associate with. Double bonuses are two discounts but one card. Virtual Gold is spent in that purchase, not taken as physical tokens.

An effect that grants a lower-level card for free resolves that card's effects, but is **not another purchase**.

Sacrifice cards require the specified two colored cards instead of pieces; discard applicable copy cards first. Keep already-earned Nobles and posts.

Strongholds: Conquest is a purchase, not a gift

Each player has three Strongholds. After a purchase, place/move one onto an eligible faceup card, or remove an opponent's Stronghold from a card containing exactly one of theirs. Opponent-occupied cards are unavailable to you.

Three of yours on one card permits an additional **paid purchase** after your action, before end-turn checks. Return the three Strongholds. Conquest triggers purchase powers; a free Orient acquisition does not. Do not multiply Stronghold placements or after-purchase gems for free acquisitions.

Silk Road rules | Sun Never Sets rules | Complete Puzzlewick guide. Original condensed aid, not a complete rulebook or publisher-approved document.