MENARA

by Oliver Richtberg

A cooperative temple-building game for 1–4 prospective builders, 8 years and up

8+

1–4

45

Deep inside the green hell of MENARA, you discover wondrously shaped fragments of an ancient structure. This makes your explorer's heart beat faster. Many thousands of years ago, there must have been a temple at this place. What might it have looked like? Would it be possible to reconstruct it? To accomplish this, you have to work together.

Strange glyphs decorate the remains of the ancient masonry and mysterious construction plans of the temple tower have turned up. It is as if a primitive curse is upon this place. For any mistake you make, the old construction plans require the building of an additional level. So you will need to aim high in order to achieve your goal!

Mind your fingers and don't tremble with reverence. That way, you'll grow with your tasks and bring the ancient temple of MENARA to new life.

*("**menara**" is Malaysian for **temple tower**)*

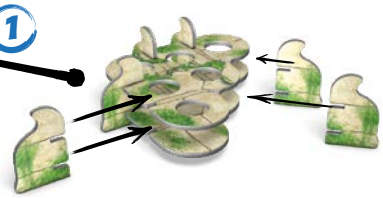
OBJECT OF THE GAME

Reconstruct the temple together. To do so, you try to fulfill the instructions on each individual construction plan card whenever possible. Use the columns and temple floors wisely and place them very skillfully. It is important that you consider the consequences of your own game turns. Only then can your fellow players also be instrumental in the success of the building project! Mishaps, imprudence, and unfavorable construction plans always have the same dire consequence: You have to build your temple higher… and higher… and maybe higher than you would like to.

GAME MATERIALS

SET-UP

- Before the first game, punch out all parts from the die-cut sheets and put the **camp** together.



- Put the **columns** into the cloth bag, then randomly draw out six columns and place them in the **camp.**

- Pile the **18 temple floors** on top of one another in random order to form a **quarry.**

- Take the **3 top temple floors** and put them in the middle of the table so that they **touch each other** (but don't overlap) at two points ○. These three temple floors form the **temple base.** You may choose freely whether to place the **light** or the **dark** side of a temple floor facing up.

- Next to that, lay out the **level cards** in a row. The number of level cards you lay out determines how many levels the temple must have at the end of the game.
The temple base does not count as a level.

- The number of level cards you lay out determines the degree of difficulty of that particular game of **MENARA:**
  - For an **easy** game, start with **3** level cards.
  - For a **medium** game, start with **4** level cards.
  - For a **difficult** game, start with all **5** level cards.

- Sort the **construction plan cards.** Shuffle each **glyph color** separately. Form three separate (draw) piles.

- Now each player randomly draws a certain number of columns out of the bag and places them in front of him. The number of columns depends on the number of players (👤) and on the degree of difficulty at which you choose to play **MENARA:**

Columns	1👤	2👤	3👤	4👤
easy	8	7	6	5
medium	7	6	5	4
difficult	6	5	4	4

COURSE OF THE GAME

The player who last entered the top floor of a building begins. After that, play proceeds in turn. On **your** turn, you carry out the following steps in this order:

1. You **may exchange columns** with the **camp.**
2. You **reveal** a **construction plan card.**
3. You **build** as specified by the revealed **construction plan card.**
4. You **replenish** your columns to their full number

Discuss the next steps with your fellow players.
Build with foresight. Only together can you be strong.

1. EXCHANGE COLUMNS WITH THE CAMP

You may take **as many columns** from the camp **as you like.** In exchange, put **the same number** of **your** columns back into the camp.

2. REVEAL A CONSTRUCTION PLAN CARD

You may choose freely from which of the three piles of construction plan cards you draw a card.

The pile with **blue glyphs** contains mostly **easy**-to-solve construction plan cards.

The pile with **yellow glyphs** consists of construction plan cards of **medium difficulty.**

The construction plan cards with **red glyphs** are mainly **difficult.**

Reveal the top card of the pile you have chosen. Consider that the construction plan cards – from the **blue** to the **yellow** and then to the **red glyphs** – increase in difficulty and that you **might not be able to solve them yet,** especially at the beginning of the game.
Therefore, choose the pile carefully.

3. BUILD

Always put the **columns** on **color-matching bases.** There are five types of construction plan cards:

Place **one, two, three,** or **four** columns on matching bases of **any** temple floors in the tower.

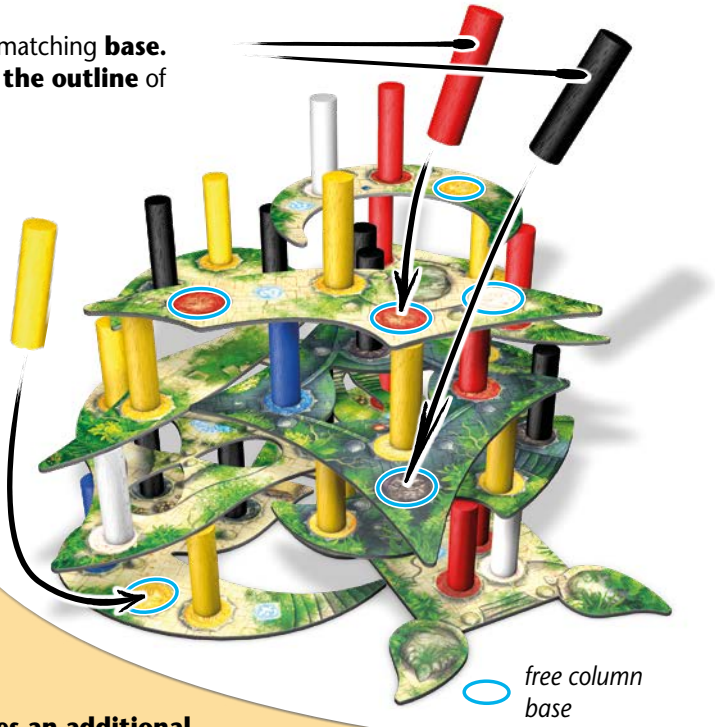
Choose **one** temple floor of the tower. Place **two** or **three** columns on matching bases here.

Move columns. Take **one, two** or **three** columns **out of** the tower, move them to any ***higher*** level and place them on matching empty bases there. You may move freestanding or overbuilt columns.
A **column already moved** may **not** be moved again **on the same turn.**

Place **as many** columns on a **single** temple floor as necessary to occupy all bases on this floor. This construction plan card always triggers the placement of a new **temple floor** (see p. 13).

Move a (built-in) temple floor **one or more levels** (up or down). If the temple floor already has columns on it, you have to move these along with that floor. If, in doing so, the columns fall over, you have **not** fulfilled the construction plan card.

- Each column is placed on a color-matching **base.** It should **not protrude beyond the outline** of this base.
- Columns can also be placed **simultaneously.**
- You may also place columns on empty bases that have already been **overbuilt by a temple floor.** Shove the column carefully between the temple floors.
- **Fulfilled construction plan cards** are put on a **discard pile.**



YOU CAN'T FULFILL THE CONSTRUCTION PLAN CARD?

If you cannot completely fulfill a construction plan card, it becomes an additional level card. Add it face down to the row of level cards.

This increases the number of levels that the temple has to consist of at the end of the game by one more level.

This also applies if you try to place a column and realize that you **can't** without causing the tower to collapse. (Put this column back into your supply.)

Every time you add a **construction plan card** to the row of **level cards,** you **may exchange the entire camp.** First draw six new columns; then throw the previous columns back into the cloth bag.

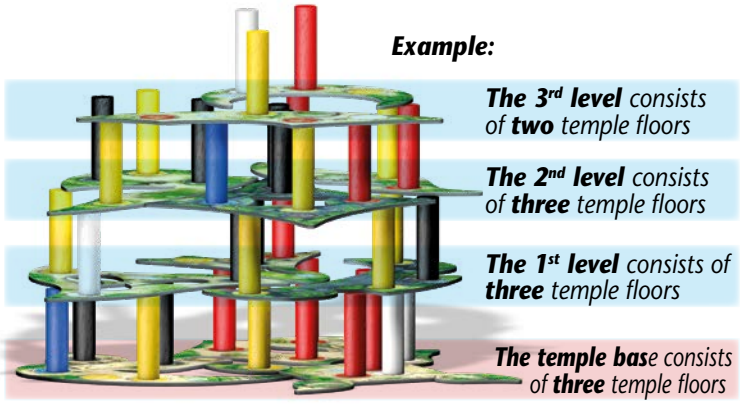
This ends your turn.

If you have placed or moved columns or temple floors during your failed attempt at fulfilling the construction plan card, **these stay in place.** Don't undo anything. If any columns have fallen over, set them up again in the same place.

Example:

Up to now, your temple was supposed to eventually be three levels high. But since one of the construction plan cards could not be fulfilled, this card is added to the row of level cards. Your temple now has to be built one level higher.

Only temple floors that are sitting on columns are considered levels! The three temple floors of the temple base don't count as a level! One level can consist of several temple floors.



PLACE A NEW TEMPLE FLOOR

Every time you place a column on the **last free base** of a temple floor, you **immediately interrupt** the execution of your construction plan card. You **must** place a new temple floor. This can happen **several times** during **the same** game turn. After that, you resume the execution of your construction plan card.

- Take the **top** temple floor from the **quarry.**
- Have a close look at the current **construction plan card:**

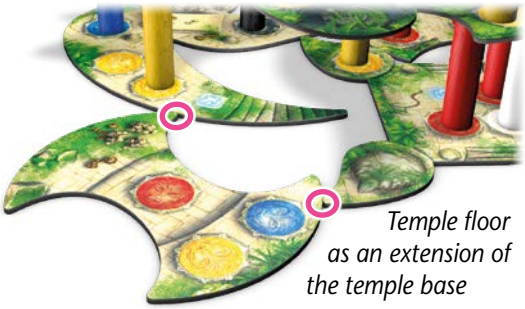
If it has an **orange-brown rim** (with a light and a dark face), you may **choose freely** whether the **light or the dark side** of the temple floor is to be facing up.

If the construction plan card has a **light rim** (with two light faces), you have to turn the **light sid**e of the temple floor **face up.**

If it has a **dark rim,** use the **dark side** of the temple floor.

- Now add the temple floor to the temple. You can build it **on columns** or **extend** the **temple base.**
  - If you build it on columns, you **should** cover **at least three free columns** (for stability). You can **freely choose** the columns on which you place the temple floor.
  - If you extend the temple base, the new temple floor has to touch the (previous) temple base **at two points at least** ○.

Attention:
Even if you **extend** the **temple base,** the number of levels that the temple has to consist of at the end of the game **increases** by **one more level.** To indicate this, add your **construction plan card** face down to the row of **level cards** at the end of your turn.



Temple floor as an extension of the temple base

- If you still have to **place columns** after building a temple floor, you may place these also on newly built temple floors.

4. REPLENISH COLUMNS

At the end of your turn, draw **as many columns** out of the cloth bag as you just placed.

THE TEMPLE COLLAPSES

If any **temple floors** collapse, the game **ends immediately.** The game ends also if any columns fall over and then can't be put back **on their previous place.**

END OF THE GAME

The game ends either if the **temple collapses** (see above) **or:**

- if a player can **no longer replenish his columns to their full number** at the end of his game turn.
- if you have made use of the **last construction plan card.**
- if you have placed the **last temple floor** (it doesn't have to be filled with columns any more).

Attention:
The game **does not** end unless **one of the three** above-mentioned conditions has been fulfilled – even if the height of your temple exceeds the number of laid-out level cards. That means you haven't won yet even if your temple is high enough at the moment, since this might be quite different by the actual end of the game…

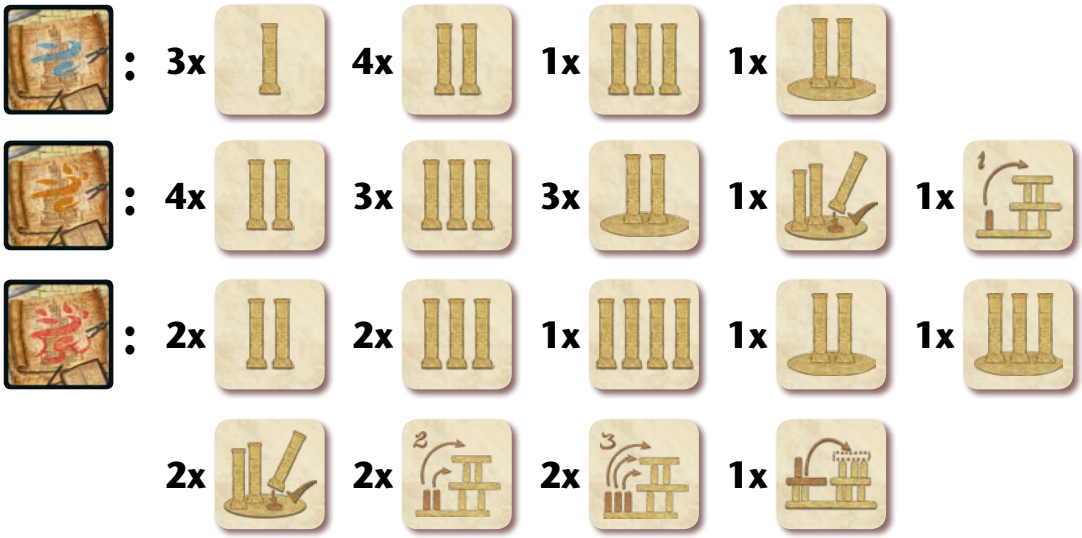
HAVE YOU WON OR LOST?

- You **win together** if your temple **now** is **high enough:**
  In other words, the **number of levels** is **equal to or higher than** the **number of the laid-out level cards.**
- If the temple does **not** have **the number of levels required** at the end of the game, **you lose.**
  This even applies if the temple has not collapsed.

TIPS FOR THE FIRST GAME

- Before the very first game of **MENARA,** it is advisable simply to build a tower **without using the construction plan cards.** Just observe the rules for placing the columns and building the temple floors. This way, you get a **feel for the architecture of the temple** of **MENARA.**

- After that, look at the **construction plan cards** in order to get an idea of **what kinds of tasks exist in which pile.**



TIPS & TRICKS

- **Talk** to each other! **MENARA is a cooperative game.** Often, it is necessary to plan several turns ahead. Only together can you act wisely enough to resurrect the ancient temple in new splendor.

- Lay out the three temple floors of the temple base **as broadly as possible** (nevertheless, all floors need to touch at two points).

- Always keep an eye on the **free bases** of the entire temple tower and on their colors.

- Also pay attention to the **colors in the camp** as well as those of the **other players.**

- Consider carefully whether you take an **easy, medium** or **difficult construction plan card.** Your decision should also depend on what tasks have already been **put on the discard pile.**

- Try to fulfill **as many difficult construction plan cards** as possible at an **early stage of the game.** When the tower is very high, difficult construction plan cards sometimes turn out to be disastrous.

- Check carefully on each turn **which columns** support the temple floor on which you want to place new columns. Will they be able to carry the *weight of the new columns?* And when you build in a **new temple floor,** check **where its column bases are** in relation to the columns on which you are going to place the temple floor.

- If you are already experienced **MENARA** players, you can try to build higher and higher temple towers. Can you manage to build the tenth level?

OVERVIEW:

When is a construction plan card added to a level card and thus to the row of level cards?

- When the task of a construction plan card is not or only partially fulfilled.
- When a temple floor is added to the temple base.

When are columns exchanged with the camp?

- Directly before the construction plan card is drawn (in exchange for the same number of your own columns).
- Out of the cloth bag when the construction plan card has not been fulfilled.

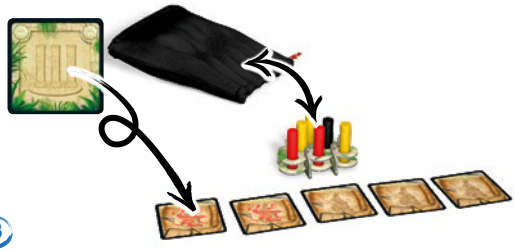
A DETAILED EXAMPLE

1

Marty exchanges two yellow columns with a red and a blue one from the camp. After that, he draws the task of placing three columns.

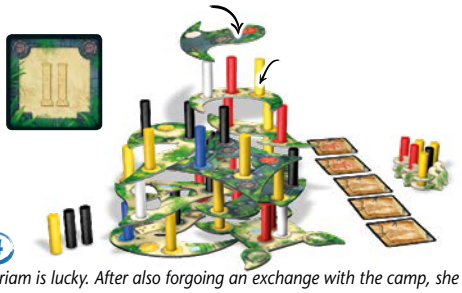
2

Marty decides to place a red, a yellow, and a blue column. He is successful. Then he draws three new columns and ends his turn.



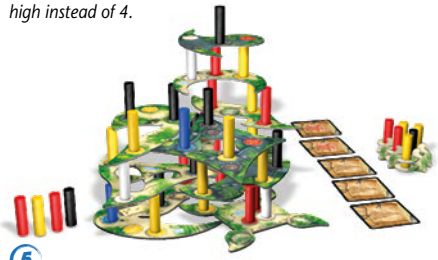
3

On the advice of her fellow players, Melanie does not exchange any columns with the camp. She draws a red construction plan card that requires the placement of three columns on the same temple floor. Unfortunately, she can't do this. Consequently, she has to add the card face down to the row of level cards. Then she draws six new columns from the cloth bag in exchange for the columns of the camp. Now the temple has to be 5 levels high instead of 4.



4

Miriam is lucky. After also forgoing an exchange with the camp, she draws a blue card that requires the placement of only two columns. First she places the yellow column on the top temple floor, which completes this floor. Therefore, she takes a new temple floor from the quarry and builds it in. The construction plan card indicates the dark side should be facing up.



5

Miriam places the second column on the newly built temple floor on the new level. After she has drawn two new columns out of the cloth bag, her turn ends.

6

Michael exchanges columns with the camp. He draws the task to place two columns on the same temple floor. He succeeds and, with this, fills the top level. With the placement of a new temple floor, the tower now contains five levels. Consequently, the players have a chance to win the game, provided that the number of level cards won't exceed the number of temple levels at the end of the game.

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