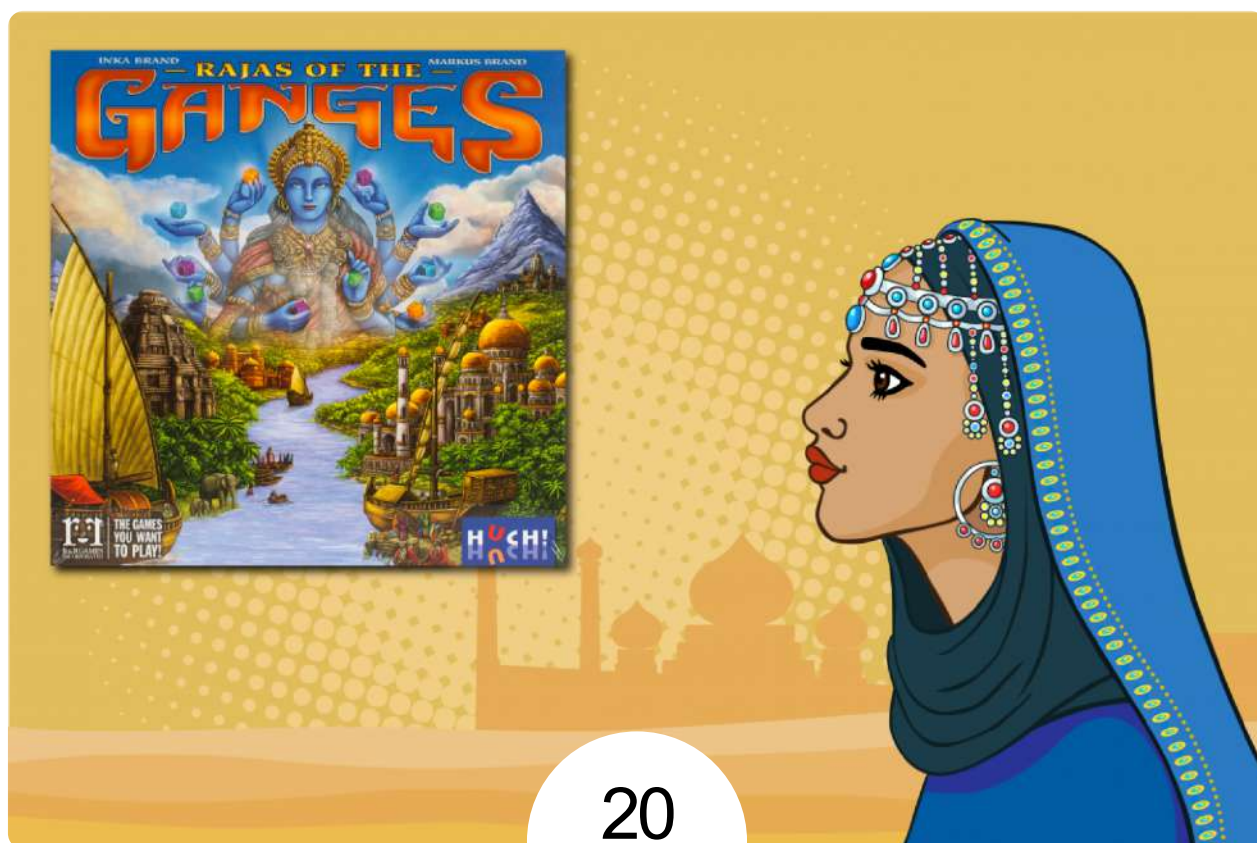


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Rajas of the Ganges Review

[Board Games](#), [Huch!](#), [Inka Brand](#), [Markus Brand](#), [Worker Placement](#)

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Set at the peak of the Mogul empire on the banks of the most sacred river in India, *Rajas of the Ganges* is a dice worker placement game released in 2017. That's right I am once again bringing you the latest hotness, just six years too late! Designed by Inka and Markus Brand, a duo perhaps better known for their *Exit: The Game* range.

As regular readers of my reviews know, I quite often pair board games to music, like a sommelier pairing wine to menu dishes. Before I even reach for *Rajas of the Ganges* from the shelf, Kula Shaker's *Govinda* is playing in my head. You're here for a review not a music lesson... so on with the mixtape, I mean review...



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TLDR: [click for final thoughts and scores](#)

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Players will receive a Province board, a dice-holding Kali statue and tokens of their preferred colour. They will then need to place their relevant pieces on the board. Add the yield tokens onto the board too. Each player then takes one of each colour dice and rolls them, placing them on Kali.

There are some mini expansions or game variants included in the box and set up can differ slightly when playing with those.

There is a bit to sort out at the start of the game, but it doesn't take long.



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Gameplay

In its simplest form Rajas of the Ganges is a race for points. A player will win the game if their wealth track which moves anti-clockwise crosses their fame track which moves

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player token, to gaining more dice, yield token bonuses or karma points. The Palace below allows you to convert, gain or reroll dice. The Quarry allows you to purchase a tile with specific coloured dice matching the cost on the tile. These are then placed on your Province board gaining fame and/or wealth. Once you have placed some tiles, the Market Place might be beneficial to sell wares matching the symbols on your tiles for money. Finally, the harbour allows to move up the river and grants handy one-off bonuses where your ship stops.

Also on the board is a karma tracker, you can spend these to flip a die to its opposite side and tracks to increase the fame of constructing different buildings when you place tiles into your province with matching symbols.

You will also unlock additional workers throughout the game which help ramp up the game time.



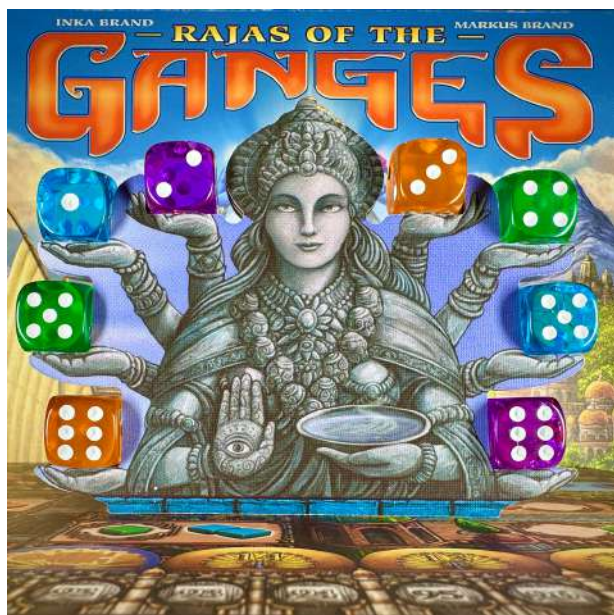
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board to the advanced side too. Whereas, the Ganga Module modifies the spaces on the river. There is also a variant that can help handicap more seasoned players against newcomers to the game.



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What it's like

While you can and will spend wealth, dice are the most important resource of the game. Most spaces on the board will see you profiting from one die maximum. Although the game tricks you into thinking you get two dice from some spaces, you will have paid a die to activate that space. Dice are important because you will need them for almost every square on the board or to build tiles on your personal Province board. With tiles often costing a couple of dice, the challenge of keeping your dice supply high is tricky.

What I have always admired in Rajas of the Ganges is how beautifully balanced the pip values are. Throughout the course of the game you will find yourself ebbing and flowing between wanting higher and lower value dice. Generally the board is better with lower pip values, but the better building tiles tend to be a higher cost and thus higher rolls are beneficial. Of course rolling dice does add an element of luck. There are times you are hoping to see a certain roll and may or may not see it. More often than not however, there are ways to utilise most rolls, they just may not be as optimum as you would like.

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At the start of the game, it feels like you are not doing much on your turn, spending a coin to get three coins on a bonus tile, or paying a dice to get two dice. As more meeples get unlocked the game speeds up and it becomes a nail biting race for fame and wealth. This can take players by surprise if they are not used to the fast pace. It is very tempting to blissfully build a beautiful network on your Province boards. This is important, but at some point you have to look at how you can make that last minute dash to cross the line. In many two player games, the defeated opponent would be left saying the immortal words 'if I just had one more turn...' which highlights the importance of making every move count.

There is a lot to take in and learn, but it clicks quite quickly. I often find the Market area the trickiest to translate, but I've played it enough to articulate it now.



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Table Presence

The board is one of the busiest you will see. It is a bombardment on the visual senses and a little daunting. I like it now and it all makes sense, but I remember when I first saw it, I was like... woah that's a lot! Bearing in mind it was released in 2017, for me the styling feels more dated than that. I almost feel like I shouldn't like it as much as I do!

The wooden components are all fine, as is the cardboard first player token. The tiles for the province board match the overall artwork nicely. I really like the backs of these tiles and I sometimes wish this palette was used more throughout the game.

The dice are satisfyingly chunky without being over the top. They are good translucent colours too. I'm a big fan of these D6s.

When you are done playing, it all packs away nicely in the plastic insert.



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Rulebook

There is a little ambiguity around the 'Master Builder' action whereby you can overlay a tile on top of a previously laid one. In the English rules it states you do not get the yield

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Otherwise the rulebook is pretty good, albeit just as busy as the board! I haven't compared and contrasted all the English and German text, so maybe there are other parts I'm playing wrong. Perhaps I should caveat that this is a review of the English rulebook version!



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Final thoughts on Rajas of the Ganges

There are some games that I will never part with and that I will always jump at the opportunity to play. Rajas of the Ganges is one of those games. I adore the worker placement and race to trigger the end of the game. While you may feel like you are in a Paula Abdul song, permanently taking two steps forward and then one step back, progress is made and the game ramps up in a really good way as the finish line draws in.

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Key Facts

Rajas of the Ganges is an excellent game at all player counts

Wholeheartedly recommend you trying it!

Number of Players: 2 to 4

Board Game Review Recommended Age: 12+

Publisher's Recommended Age: 12+

Playing Time: 60 minutes

Setting Up and Take Down Time: 3 minutes

Designers: Inka and Markus Brand

Publisher: HUCH!

RRP: £46.99



This game has been entered into the Board Game Review Hall of Fame.

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