

DEFCON ZOMBIES

Warning!

DEFCON ZOMBIES is a platform game - which means there is a "base" way to play defined here in the rules, but once you learn those rules and play a few times - you have the flexibility to pick and choose from many additional variant rules or even to add your own variants.

What's In The Box?

- 58 Hexagonal System Tiles
 - 1 Earth tile
 - 12 Constellation tiles
 - 2 Nebula tiles
 - 2 Wormhole tiles
 - 4 Zombies tiles
 - 1 Planet-0 tile
 - 4 Planet-1 tiles
 - 6 Planet-2 tiles
 - 8 Planet-3 tiles
 - 8 Planet-4 tiles
 - 6 Planet-5 tiles
 - 4 Planet-6 tiles
- 36 Cards
 - 12 Constellation Cards
 - 24 Event Cards
 - 12 base Events
 - 12 blank for customizing
- 128 Cubes
 - 32 Red
 - 16 Yellow
 - 16 Green
 - 16 Blue
 - 16 Purple
 - 16 Brown
 - 16 White
- 24 Outpost Chits
- This Rulebook!

Intro

It is the distant future and rampant overpopulation of Earth is having disastrous effects. Ancient texts foretell of a set of hidden constellations that - when charted - will reveal a path to a system containing a verdant planet with abundant water, landmasses, and natural resources. The nations on the space council have agreed to a tenuous treaty to halt hostilities and cooperate in exploring the systems within reach of Earth. Take to the stars with hope - but beware - the reaches of space contain a threat unbeknownst to humanity.

Objective

Cooperatively explore unknown space - flipping over hexes to reveal what each system contains as you move. When you reveal a Zombie system - it will start generating zombies each turn to swarm out across the galaxy. Buy new ships and unlock upgrades to fight off the zombie swarm. Race to discover all of the constellations before the zombies overrun Earth!

Setup

** The base rules here define a recommended process for building a three ring galaxy. After playing a few times, you may choose to use variant rules to build a four ring galaxy.

Gather Components

- Set the red cubes aside - they will represent the zombie swarm.
- Place the Planet 0 system tile back in the box.
- Give each player a set of the remaining colored cubes.
- Select and separate the system tiles into the following piles:
 - 1 Earth
 - 8 Constellations
 - Shuffle all of the constellation systems together and select 8 of them
 - 1 Nebula System
 - 1 Wormhole Systems
 - 2 Zombies Systems
 - 24 Planet Systems
 - 2 with "1"
 - 4 with "2"
 - 6 with "3"
 - 6 with "4"
 - 4 with "5"
 - 2 with "6"

Build the Galaxy

- Place the Earth system in the center of the table
- Build the first ring around Earth:
 - Shuffle together the Wormhole system, 2 Constellation systems (chosen secretly and randomly) and the numbered planet systems.
 - Place 6 of these systems (face down) around Earth to create the first ring.
 - This should ensure that:
 - No Zombies systems are in the first ring.
 - At most, 2 of the constellation systems might be in the first ring.
- Build the second ring:
 - Add 1 of the Zombies systems and 3 more of the constellation systems into the main pile.
 - Shuffle / randomize this pile of systems again.
 - Place 12 of these systems (face down) to create the second ring.
 - This should ensure that:
 - Up to 1 of the Zombies systems might be in the second ring.
 - At most, 5 of the constellation systems might be within the second ring.
- Build the third ring:
 - Add the remaining Zombies system and the remaining 3 constellation systems into the main pile.
 - Shuffle / randomize this pile of systems again.
 - Place the remaining 18 system tiles (face down) around Earth to create the third ring.

Final Setup

- Set the Constellation cards aside.
- Each player places a cube on Earth to represent a ship.
- Decide on a player to go first.

Global Rules

Keep these global rules in mind as you consume the rest of the rules and play the game.

Humans and Zombies Cannot Coexist

If ever a human ship (or outpost) and a zombie are in the same system - they immediately fight each other. Destroy (remove) one human ship (or outpost) to destroy one zombie. Repeat until only one side (humans or zombies) remains.

Zombies Don't Care Who They Destroy

If multiple players have ships (or outposts) in the same system when a zombie arrives there - the players cooperatively decide which human ship (or outpost) is destroyed by the zombie. If the players don't immediately agree, the active player decides.

Zombies on Unexplored Systems Don't Move

If a zombie is added on an unexplored system - it does not move, even after the first Zombies system is discovered and the Zombies step is added during each turn. Zombies on unexplored systems wait there and must be dealt with when a player moves to discover that system. When doing so, only reveal the system hex if you have a ship remaining after destroying the zombie. This means that you will need to move more ships than there are zombies on an unexplored system in order to have a ship remaining to be able to flip and discover what that system contains.

Players Choose When Unspecified

If something is left unspecified (ex: which exact unrevealed system in the words "add one zombie on an unrevealed system") - then the players can cooperatively decide. If the players don't immediately agree - then the active player decides.

Turn Overview

1. Move ships from one system to an adjacent system.
2. Buy one new ship or outpost.
3. Zombies generate and move.

Turn Details

1. Move

- Move any number of your ships from one system to one adjacent destination system.
 - Example - if you have 3 ships on Earth - you can choose to move 1, 2, or all 3 of them together to one adjacent system.
- If you move to an unexplored system - flip it over to discover what it is!
- You must declare how many ships are moving before revealing an unexplored system.

Planet Systems

- If you discover a planet system - collect twice the amount of resources shown on that planet!
- If you move to an explored planet system (one that has already been revealed) - you do not collect any resources for doing so if a Zombies system hasn't been discovered yet.
- After the first Zombies system has been revealed, you can collect the resources shown on explored planet systems when moving to them.

Constellation Systems

- If you discover a constellation system - collect the matching constellation card.
- Each constellation card grants you a free ship when you discover it.
- Each constellation card also grants you an ongoing ability that you keep for the rest of the game.

Nebula Systems

- If you discover a nebula system, place a free ship in that system when you discover it.

Wormhole Systems

- Whenever you move into a wormhole system, randomly select one of the remaining unexplored systems.
- Reveal the selected system and move all of your ships here to the selected unexplored system.

Zombies Systems

- When the first Zombies system is discovered, add the Zombies step at the end of each turn (including this turn!)
- Players may not build outposts on Zombies Systems.

2. Buy

- You may buy one new ship or outpost (only 1, even if you could afford more).
 - Ships cost 10 resources, and must be placed on Earth.
 - Outposts cost 5 resources, and may be placed on any planet (other than Earth) where you have a ship (Outposts may not move, so choose wisely with your placement).

3. Zombies

- Skip this step until the first Zombies system has been discovered.

3.1 Generate New Zombies

- Place a red cube on each Zombie system. If any human ships are present, they immediately fight. Destroy (remove) one human ship (or outpost) to destroy one zombie.

3.2 Zombie Movement

- Move the new zombie to the closest planet system with the highest resource number.
- If that planet now has more zombies on it than the resource number, it overflows: Move one zombie from that planet to the next closest planet system with the highest resource number.
- If the zombies ever overflow from a planet system that is adjacent to Earth - they will always choose to move to Earth next.
- If a turn ends with a zombie alive on Earth - the zombie swarm has overrun Earth, and the zombies win!

Winning or Losing

You win if all of the constellations are discovered before the zombies overrun Earth!

Variant Rules

Below is a collection of variant rules. After you have played a few times, try introducing some of these to customize your experience.

Variants that Increase the Difficulty

Fourth Ring

- During setup - place the "0" planet system tile back in the box, then proceed with all of the remaining tiles to make a galaxy with four rings around Earth. Consider what measures you wish to take to ensure (or not?) where the Zombies systems may end up!

Experimental Jump Drives

- When you want to move into an unexplored system, declare which ships are moving together - then roll a die to randomly select between all unexplored systems that are valid destinations.

Outer Ring Scouts

- At the end of each player's turn, add one zombie on an unexplored system in the outermost ring that doesn't already have a zombie. As defined, this would cease once each unexplored system in the outermost ring has a zombie on it. If you are really looking for a challenge, keep going - moving in a ring until every unexplored system has a zombie on it.

Overrun Planets Become Zombies Systems

- Warning - this was brutal - use this only if you want the most extreme challenge! When the number of zombies on a planet system matches the resource number of that planet - remove all of the zombies from it and that planet system transforms into a Zombies system. This system is no longer considered a "planet system" and doesn't have a resource number. Treat this system as a Zombies system for all successive turns - generating a new zombie each turn that moves out from here.

Variants that Decrease the Difficulty

Collect from Explored Planets Early

- When you move to a planet system that has already been revealed, collect the number of resources shown even if a Zombies system has not yet been discovered.

Industrious Manufacturing

- You may buy as many ships and outposts each turn that you can afford.

Flagships

- During setup - each player stacks a second cube on-top of their starting ships. This indicates this ship as their “flagship”. When buying a new ship, you may place the new ship either at Earth or in the same system as your flagship.

Other Variants

The Slow Swarm

- Use the ‘Overrun Planets Become Zombies Systems’ variant above, however the Zombies step only happens at the end of the player’s turn who discovered the first Zombies system - meaning only once per “full round” around the table. This is easier with more players - harder with less.

Different Systems In the Galaxy

- During setup - define your own mix of system tiles to use instead of the recommended types and numbers. Want more of a challenge? Skew the planets selected to be more with lower resource values. Or - add more wormholes, nebulas, or constellations and remove some of the lower resource value planets. Just make sure you know how many constellations you need to find in order to win!

Event Cards

- Some event cards help the players, some make things more difficult.
- Shuffle the event cards together during setup to form the event deck, then decide when you will draw an event card during this game. Some options of when to draw an event card are:
 - Each time a constellation is discovered.
 - Each time the last system in a ring of the galaxy is explored.
 - Roll a die during setup, then draw an event card each time a planet system is discovered with its resource number matching the die roll.
 - etc...

Custom Event Cards

- Extra “blank” event cards have been included - write up some of your own events to include in the event deck. Be careful what writing instrument you use - some will smear or rub onto other cards.