

Internationale Spieltage

SPIEL '21



Messe Essen · 14.-17. Okt. 2021

Press Release **for the SPIEL '21 Press Conference**

After a break due to the pandemic, SPIEL kicks off again at the Essen Exhibition Center

It is that time again, at last! It all starts next week: After an enforced break last year SPIEL '21 will take place as a physical event this month from October 14 -17, 2021 at the Essen Exhibition Center.

Around 600 exhibitors from 41 nations at SPIEL '21

Around 600 exhibitors from 41 nations will be showing game enthusiasts and trade visitors the latest board and card game trends. Despite the pandemic and the associated travel restrictions, the proportion of international exhibitors is high again this year at 63%. "In view of the imponderables in the preparation phase during the Corona virus pandemic, we are particularly pleased with the impressive list of international exhibitors," states Dominique Metzler, Managing Director of organizer Friedhelm Merz Verlag. "Realizing an international games convention like SPIEL was no easy task this year in view of the constantly changing entry and exit regulations. We are incredibly grateful for the trust the sector has placed in us and ultimately it also underlines the immense importance of SPIEL as a presentation platform for new game releases."

Play to your heart's content!

More than 1,000 new game releases are ready to try out

More than 1,000 new products and world premieres are waiting to be put through their paces. Once again, this year, there will be thousands of gaming tables with game explainers on hand to introduce visitors to the new games, including many rarities from foreign publishers that will not be subsequently available in any German toy shops and can only be purchased at the event.

The Hygiene Concept - the general rules of play for visitors at this year's SPIEL '21

In the run-up to the event, the organizer has developed a comprehensive hygiene concept. There will be a "3 Option Rule" for visitors. They must therefore be fully vaccinated, tested (rapid test) or have recovered from Covid-19. Admission is only possible with personalized tickets. Medical grade masks covering mouth and nose must be worn in the exhibition halls - the only exemption being for children under the age of six. At the gaming tables, separate contact tracing will be in place using the luca APP or handwritten lists. Disinfectant will be provided at exhibitor stands and at critical points. The aisles have been widened and the halls will be ventilated with 100% fresh air from outside.

Tickets are only available online

Tickets this year are only available online at www.spiel-messe.com and are non-transferable. One day tickets for adults cost €20, children aged 4 to 12 years pay €11.50.

The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a boom in tabletop games

Whether cards, dice, or board games, interest has never been greater than in this pandemic. While restaurants, bars and cinemas remained closed, more and more people turned to tabletop games for fun. Overall, sales in the industry climbed by 21 percent last year to around €650 million in revenue. A pleasing development that will continue in 2021.

2021 game trends

Communication and puzzle games are still very much in vogue

This year too, there are large numbers of communication and puzzle games among the new releases, such as:

- the Escape Game BREAK IN CHICHÉN ITZÁ from Schmidt Spiele,
- the APP-supported interactive audio mystery puzzle game ECHOES (Ravensburger), where players must listen carefully to solve the tasks,
- new additions to the SHERLOCK mystery game series from ABACUSSPIELE,

- DUNE - HOUSE SECRETS, which is not just a game highlight for fans of the novel series (Portal Games/Pegasus),
- FABULA RASA - SEEMANNSGARN (Hutter), in which players outdo each other in storytelling while trying to keep track of what is going on.

Solo games and games with solo mode versions are highly popular

Due to the pandemic, an increasing number of solo games or multi-player games that include a solo version are coming onto the market and are enjoying high popularity. These include for example:

- the puzzle game CATAN - LOGIK RÄTSEL (Kosmos), in which the player tries to line up raw materials in such a way that a trade route is created,
- CALICO by Ravensburger, a visually beautifully designed family game in which the players puzzle together a quilt,
- the card game ICH SEHE WAS! WAS SIEHST DU? (Match Networks), which deals with the five most common human emotions,
- new Adventure Games from Kosmos, such as DIE AKTE GLOOM CITY or IM NEBELREICH, as well as new games from the successful series EXIT,
- FLIPPERMANIA (Frosted Games), which brings all the excitement of original pinball arcades to the gaming table.
- the Flip and Write game EXPLORERS (Ravensburger),
- CITY OF ANGELS (Pegasus), in which we play as police officers in 1940s Los Angeles and try to solve murders,
- the dice game TULPENFIEBER (Amigo)
- and children's games such as ZAUBERBERG (Amigo), in which children can gain their first joint experience of strategic and tactical considerations.

A highlight for all fans of the Ruhr Region is SCHICHTWECHSEL by publisher Spielefaible, because here the players slip into the role of coal mine admin staff and experience a piece of Ruhr history in an exciting competitive game.

The prizewinning games of 2021

The DEUTSCHER SPIELEPREIS is the most important audience prize for board games in the entire world. It has been awarded at SPIEL since 1990 in the categories "Best Family and Adult Game" and "Best Children's Game".

This year

First place in the DEUTSCHER SPIELEPREIS 2021 in the category "Best Family and Adult Game"

goes to DIE VERLORENEN RUINEN VON ARNAK from the publisher Czech Games Edition / HeidelBÄR Games.

Casting an eye over the playing area and the materials used, one sees a beautiful, opulent, and very atmospheric adventure game for 1-4 players aged 12 and over. As archaeologists, the players explore a mystical island and its mysterious ruins. Choosing the right equipment, careful planning and constantly weighing up the risks are at the heart of this expedition game.

Players will have to gather resources on their journeys, fend off powerful jungle guardians and explore abandoned temple ruins.

Card and resource management, deck building and worker deployment have been wrapped up in a rousing theme and perfectly implemented in this game. Chance only plays a subordinate role due to the abundance of tactical possibilities offered on the game board. This excites strategy gamers.

DIE VERLORENEN RUINEN VON ARNAK by Michaela Štachová and Michal Štach, for 1-4 players aged 12 and over, Czech Games Edition / HeidelBÄR Games, 90-120 minutes, approx. €60

First place in the DEUTSCHER KINDERSPIELEPREIS 2021

This year's winner of the DEUTSCHER KINDERSPIELEPREIS 2021 is also a visual highlight in the form of the three-dimensional DODO - RETTET DAS WACKEL-EI! from Kosmos Spielverlag.

Speed is of the essence in this children's game for ages 6 upwards, as everyone works together to bring the rolling wobbly egg, which has unfortunately fallen out of its nest and is now rolling down a steep cliff, safely to the bottom of the mountain. To this end, dice must be thrown to collect building materials, hammers, and nails and these must quickly be used on the mountain. An exciting race against time begins!

DODO - RETTET DAS WACKEL-EI! by Marco Teubner and Frank Bebenroth, for 2-4 players aged 6 and up, Kosmos Spielverlag, 10 minutes, approx. €29.

The three nominated titles for the innoSPIEL 2021 award

Once every year, the innoSPIEL award honors a particularly innovative tabletop game. A few weeks ago, in the run-up to SPIEL '21, the contenders for the winning title were nominated:

1. GHOST ADVENTURE - Designer: Wlad Watine, Publisher: Pegasus Spiele
2. MICRO MACRO: CRIME CITY - Designer: Johannes Sich, Publisher: Edition Spielwiese
3. DER PERFEKTE MOMENT - Designer: Anthony Nouveau, Publisher: Corax Games

The winning title of innoSPIEL 2021

The winning title of innoSPIEL '21 goes to GHOST ADVENTURE - Designer: Wlad Watine, Publisher: Pegasus Spiele

The peaceful forest kingdom is in danger. Wolf warriors raided it, destroying the sacred statues, and capturing the guardian spirits. Only one of the spirits managed to escape: a tiny mouse ghost with its magic spinning top. Now it is up to us to help the ghostly mouse with its missions and save the forest kingdom.

In this cooperative family game GHOST ADVENTURE, we steer the spinning top across the game boards by tipping and tilting them. On our way we have to achieve a series of goals one by one to be able to tackle the next step of our mission. Memory points allow you to get back in if the gyro gets stuck or runs out of steam. Fifty-six missions must be completed successfully over four game boards printed on both sides before peace is restored in the forest.

The jury's verdict:

In GHOST ADVENTURE the designer has created the game of his dreams. The spinning top as a play figure is not a mere gadget, but a real innovation. Together, we are constantly challenged to pass the top from board to board, to assess the remaining momentum of rotation and to steer it with skill. Communication is important to take the right game board at the right time and coordinate actions. It is spectacular when we need to throw the spinning top up using the game board to continue the adventure on the back of the board.

The well-conceived comic-style manual immediately leads into the topic and provides intuitive and speedy access to the game. The great illustration and design add to the overall package. A game for the whole family, where nobody gets bored. At times, GHOST ADVENTURE feels like a smartphone game with a balance sensor that you suddenly have in your hands for real.

GHOST ADVENTURE by Wlad Watine, Pegasus Spiele, 1-4 players, from 8 years, 15-30 minutes, approx. €30.

To accompany the event, games can also be played at www.SPIEL.digital

Those staying at home can also get an idea of the new products on show at the event and play a virtual board game or two on the SPIEL.digital online platform. Some exhibiting publishers have prepared a comprehensive supporting program with online lectures, competitions and much more. EDUCATORS' DAY, which is aimed at educators, teachers and interested individuals, and highlights the potential of games to become a core medium for informal and formal educational contexts, has also moved online this year. Among others, there will be lectures on the topics "Playing makes you smart", "Tabletop games as an educational medium in libraries", "Advantages of using board games in the learning process in schools", "Application of pen-and-paper role-playing games in therapy and education" and "Using games to make mega-trends comprehensible - using the example of climate protection and the climate crisis".

During SPIEL '21 we will be happy to assist you at our stand in Hall 3, booth 3H100

Our team will be in Hall 3 at booth 3H100 from Monday afternoon (October 11, 2021, from approx. 3pm) until Sunday evening (October 17, 2021). Here we will be glad to assist you, as well as being available for interviews. You can reach us during this time by phone on +49 201 7244 800.

We hope to have given you a good overview of SPIEL '21. Hermann Hutter, Chairman of the interest group "Die Spieleverlage e.V." (Association of Games Publishers) will now give you details regarding economic matters concerning the German games sector.

Bonn, October 6, 2021

Dominique Metzler
Press and Organization SPIEL '21
Friedhelm Merz Verlag - Event Organizer