

Century: Save Earth

An astrophage-laden solo hack for Century Spice Road

I stayed up way too late last night to finish Andy Weir's *Project Hail Mary*. I woke up this morning, knowing I was going to try and design a quick game experience that evokes the feeling of problem solving from the book. After a few hours, this is the result.

Please note – this game hack will spoil parts of the book, which is really best read unspoiled. If you plan on reading *Project Hail Mary*, I suggest reading the book first, then coming back and playing.

If you've already read the book, or don't plan to, continue on to learn how to play!

Game Objective

In *Century: Save Earth*, you are a solo scientist, sent to a distant solar system to solve two science mysteries and save humanity.

Your goal is to gather resources, discover and use science to manipulate those resources, to stay alive, and solve a small and big objective – thereby saving humanity.

The game will take 20 minutes or less.

Game Setup

First, you'll need a copy of *Century: Spice Road*, or a similar re-themed version of the game (like the golem edition). All setup rules below refer to the components in the *Spice Road* edition.

Please refer to page 3 for the full-sized image of the playing area.

Small Objective Cards

This is a pile of all "Point Cards" from the game that are worth 9 points or fewer. You'll need to complete this objective first, to unlock the Big Objective.



Big Objective Cards



This is a pile of all "Point Cards" from the game that are worth 10 points or more. You'll need to complete one of these objectives, after completing a Small Objective, to win the game.

Science Discovery Cards

This is a pile of all “Merchant Cards” from the game, minus the “Create” and “Upgrade” cards. These cards are used to simulate scientific discoveries in the game.



Disaster Deck



This is a pile of all “Upgrade” cards, and the brown “Create” card. This pile is used to randomly determine when a disaster occurs to your space ship.

Planet Cards

This is a pile of all “Create” cards, minus the brown “Create” card. This pile is used to randomly determine what resources can be gathered from the five planets in the distant solar system.

Randomly draw 5 cards and place them on the playing area face down. These are the planets you can visit in the solar system. The remaining planet cards can be discarded face down outside the play area – they won't be used the remainder of this game.



Ship Mat

This is a simple graphic used to simulate your ship. It can help track which ship systems are damaged, and how many science slots you've used. Please see the last page in the rules for the printout version.

Resource Cubes

These are the “Spice Cubes” from the game. They represent different resources in the game. Most importantly, brown represents carbon compounds, including food. Place these at the top of the playing area.

Ship's Resource Bay

This is the “Caravan Card” from the game. Here, you will track what resources your ship has onboard.

Full Sized Image of Playing Area



Starting the Game

Humanity is experiencing an apocalyptic level disaster (like astrophage)...from space! Their one hope is to send a scientist to a nearby solar system, and discover why that solar system isn't falling victim to the same fate. You play the role of that lone scientist, inside a spaceship, ready to discover extraordinary science!

Your goal is to complete a small objective and a big objective, thereby winning the game and saving the Earth!

Starting Resources

Please note – the starting resources may differ depending on the difficulty you are playing with. These rules assume you are playing the game for the first time, and starting on the easiest difficulty.

First, put 10 brown resource cubes onto your ship's resource bay. Then, flip the top small objective card. Completing this card is your first objective.

Then, choose which planet you arrive on (use a dice or other token to mark where your ship is). Now you're ready to play.

Turn Sequence

There are two parts to your turn – Upkeep, and Actions. The start of your turn begins with upkeep. Your turn finishes when you complete your final action. Then the next turn begins again, with upkeep.

Play continues, turn after turn, until you've won or lost the game.

Upkeep

There are two things to do during your upkeep.

First, you must pay one brown cube from your ship's resource bay. This represents food being consumed. **If you are ever unable to consume food during upkeep, you lose the game** (this represents starving to death). You may have emergency rations or alien help, depending on the difficulty you are playing on.

Second, you must flip the top card of the disaster deck. If it's an "Upgrade" card, that's good – there are no disasters this turn! If it's the "Create" the brown cube card, that's bad. That means your ship has experienced a disaster.

If your ship experiences a disaster, first randomly determine which ship system is affected (I usually just roll a six sided dice). This system is now damaged, and cannot be used until it is repaired (see the repair action). Then reshuffle the disaster deck together, and on your next turn you'll flip the top card.

Once your upkeep is complete, move on to your actions.

Actions

During your turn, you may take 4 actions (or 3, if playing on higher difficulty). There is only 1 limitation – you cannot take the action of a damaged ship system.

Below are the different actions you can take, and how they work.

Repair

The repair action can be used to repair a damaged ship system. There are two ways to repair a damaged ship system. If your difficulty level allows, you may simply repair the ship system with "spare parts," or get alien help.

If you are on a higher difficulty level, or you have already used spare parts for a ship system, instead, draw a small objective card. This card represents the resources needed to repair the damaged ship system. To choose this action, you'll have to have the resources in your ship's resource bay. When you choose this action, discard the resources and small objective card. You have repaired the ship system, and may once again use the action for this ship system!

Ship Engines – Travel

The ship engines allow you to travel from planet to planet within the solar system. Choosing this action lets you move your ship to an adjacent planet.

On higher difficulty levels, this action costs 1, or 2 yellow resource cubes.

Ship Telescope – Observe

The ship telescope allows you to observe a planet's atmosphere, and determine which resources can be gathered from that planet. When you choose this action, flip the planet card face up of the planet you are currently at.

Ship External Sample System – Gather

The ship's external sample system allows you to gather resources of the planet you are on. When you choose this action, put resources into your ship's resource bay that are shown on the planet card of the planet you are currently at.

Ship Science Laboratory – Discover

The ship's science laboratory allows you to discover new science. When you choose this action, draw the top science discovery card. You may immediately discard this card, or put it in one of your science slots.

Depending on your difficulty level, you may have limited science slots. Once you have used all your science slots, you can no longer take this action.

Ship Materials Bay – Create Reaction

The ship's material's bay allows you to create reactions between the resources you have in your ship's resource bay. When you use this action, follow the trade on one of your science cards. This will transform some resources in your ship's resource bay, into other resources.

You cannot take this action if you do not have any science cards, or if you do not have all required resources in your ship's bay.

Ship Communications Deck – Solve an Objective Card

The communications deck allows you to send the answers that will save humanity back to Earth! When you use this action, pay the resources from your ship's bay that are shown on a big or small objective card. This completes that objective!

If you solve a small objective card, immediately flip the top big objective card up – this is your next objective.

If you solve a big objective card, you win the game, and save humanity!

Everything Else

This should give you a good idea of how to play the game. If there are any ambiguous rules, please refer to the Century: Spice Road rulebook (this explains the basic system rules, and edge cases like what to do if you have too many resources in your ship's resource bay).

Difficulty Level

Start at the easiest difficulty, and work your way up to see how challenging saving Earth really is! Feel free to use all parts of the difficulty level, or slowly check the boxes and gradually make the game more challenging for you.

Easiest

- Spare Parts – you do not have to complete a small objective card the first time you take the repair action for each ship system.
- Emergency Rations – If you run out of food during your upkeep, you may add 3 brown cubes to your ship's resource bay.
- No Fuel Tracking – Using the ship engines to travel does not cost a resource.
- Full Food – Start the game with 10 brown cubes in your ship's resource bay.
- Unlimited Science – You have unlimited science slots.
- Alien Help – Once per game, you may choose one (this does not cost an action):
 - Your alien friend fixes one ship system.
 - Your alien friend gives you one resource cube.
 - Your alien friend lets you take the discover action for free.

Medium

- 3 Spare Parts – at the start of the game, you may choose to have spare parts for only 3 ship systems.
- No Emergency Rations
- Fuel Cost 1 – Using the ship's engines to travel costs 1 yellow cube.
- 8 Food 2 Fuel – Start the game with 8 brown cubes and 2 yellow cubes in your ship's resource bay.
- 4 Science Slots – You only have 4 science slots.
- Alien Help – Once per game, you may choose one (this does not cost an action):
 - Your alien friend fixes one ship system.
 - Your alien friend gives you one resource cube.
 - Your alien friend lets you take the discover action for free.

Hard

- No Spare Parts
- No Emergency Rations
- Fuel Cost 1 – Using the ship's engine to travel costs 1 yellow cubes.
- Choice of Food and Fuel – You decide how many brown and yellow cubes to start with in your ship's resource bay
- 3 Science Slots – You only have 3 science slots
- Alien Help – Once per game, you may choose one (this does not cost an action):
 - Your alien friend fixes one ship system.
 - Your alien friend gives you one resource cube.
 - Your alien friend lets you take the discover action for free.
- 3 Actions – You can only have 3 actions per turn, instead of 4
- 2 Big Objectives – You must complete 2 big objectives to win the game

Really Hard

Same as Hard, except...

- Fuel Cost 2 – Using the ship's engine to travel costs 2 yellow cubes.
- Food Shortage – You can start the game with a maximum 5 brown cubes in your ship's resource bay
- No Alien Help
- Harder Objectives – Remove any card with points lower than 17 from the big objective cards pile

Design Notes

I hope Century: Save Earth gives people a chance to experience a new, solo, gameplay experience for Century: Spice Road (or similar editions). To me, it kind of feels like I'm playing the scientist from *Project Hail Mary*, which is what I'm going for. Hopefully you feel that way to.

But, I also made this pretty quick. So I want to apologize here in case the rules don't make sense, I've messed up a core aspect of the base game, or something in the hack is broken that I haven't caught.

No matter what, if you have any feedback, positive or critical, or some great new ideas, I'd love to hear them!

Let me know on BGG ([huron63](#)) or twitter ([@paperdicegames](#)).

PS – My graphic design and artistry is reaaaaaally bad...I usually hire out for this. But hey – I wanted to make this fast.

