

# Ocean Trader

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## Game guide

**Written by mortenesser**

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Version 1.0

This document describes the general contents of the business simulation game Ocean Trader. This is by no means an official document, but just a help to new players of this game.

Written with help from  
hansz  
Another\_Guest  
Guest

And

Shrek

From the abandonia.com forums. I have browsed through the Ocean Trader thread and found some really good posts from the above mentioned users. I have included those posts, more or less as is, in the relevant sections of this guide.

If you have any comments or questions, please PM me on the abandonia.com forum. Have Fun!

Best regards

mortenesser

## Contents

Interface and navigation: .....	4
Save game error: .....	4
Goods turnover: .....	5
Goods transfer:.....	5
Buy Warehouses:.....	5
Buy oil tanks .....	7
Cargo:.....	7
Ballast: .....	7
Oil:.....	7
Passengers: .....	7
Resources: .....	8
Fuel: .....	8
Speed: .....	8
Repair: .....	8
Map:.....	9
Telephone:.....	10
Bank: .....	10
Stock Market: .....	10
Office: .....	10
Insurance: .....	10
Ship-Yard: .....	11
Ship Broker: .....	11
Gameplay:.....	12
Artificial canals: .....	12
Tax: .....	12
Minor events: .....	12
Major events:.....	12
Routes:.....	13
Types of ships: .....	13

## Interface and navigation:

Most of the navigation in the game interface is done by mouse and is pretty intuitive, so I will just answer a few of the more common questions I have stumbled across.

Right click on a given screen to return to the previous one.

Click once on a port on the world map to select it, click once more to sail to this port. When all ships are bound for a destination, time will start to pass. If needed, you can also click on the same port as you are already in, to ask the ship to wait for a given period (1-365 days).

Loading, saving and exiting the game is done through your 'office', which is accessed by clicking on the phone icon.

## Save game error:

Quite a few people have asked about an error occurring when they try to save their games. Make sure you have a X:\...\Ocean Trader\Gamesave folder in your game folder

## Goods turnover:

## Goods transfer:

In here you can buy and sell goods from ports, ships, and warehouses.

The current ship in port can transport the goods without ‘- -’ in the ‘Ship’ column.

## Buy Warehouses:

Author: hansz

The warehouses are GREAT way to make money.

When you are in any port you can see two values:

The price of 1 ton warehouse is: x (from 8\$ in Sudan to 55\$ in Tokyo)

The daily storage cost is: y (from 0.01\$ in Sudan to 0.15 in Tokyo)

The "daily storage cost is" is the value that you will be EARNING each day per 1 ton of your's EMPTY warehouse. But beware! Buying good warehouse is not easy because cost/profit are DIFFERENT in every place.

I had made computation of ALL ports' warehouses and oil tanks in the game and i had created indicator "cost/profit". The results are following:

The value of cost/profit is always somewhere between: 366 and 450.

The usual average is about ~390. Therefore in order to maximize profit investor should buy only those warehouses with cost/profit ratio as small as possible.

Examples:

Barcelona:

The price of 1 ton warehouse is: 40\$

The daily storage cost is: 0.1\$

cost/profit=  $40\$ / 0.1\$ = 400$  [Bad place to buy warehouse]

Sudan:

The price of 1 ton warehouse is: 8\$

The daily storage cost is: 0.01\$

cost/profit=  $8\$ / 0.02\$ = 400$  [Bad place to buy warehouse]

Dar-Es-Salam:

The price of 1 ton warehouse is: 11\$

The daily storage cost is: 0.03\$

cost/profit=  $11\$ / 0.03\$ = 366$  [Very low ratio, good warehouse to buy]

Tokyo:

The price of 1 ton warehouse is: 55\$

The daily storage cost is: 0.15\$

cost/profit=  $55\$ / 0.15\$ = 366$  [Very low ratio, good warehouse to buy]

As you can see, the results can be sometimes quite surprising. I had created list for all warehouses in the game, and I will upload it soon as Excel document.

You can buy maximum of 500.000 tons of warehouse per port. Therefore you can make quite good profit from it even if the price of warehouses seems high.

Example:

Tokyo:

Funds required for buying 500000 tons on warehouse:

$$500000 * 55\$ = 27.500.000$$

Profit:

$$\text{Tokyo: } 0.15\$ * 500000 = 75000\$ \text{ per day}$$

$$\text{Days required for return of investment: } 27.5\text{m}/75.000: 367$$

Dar-es-Salam:

Funds required for buying 500000 tons on warehouse:

$$500000 * 11\$ = 5.500.000$$

Profit:

$$\text{Tokyo: } 0.03\$ * 500000 = 15000\$ \text{ per day}$$

$$\text{Days required for return of investment: } 5.5\text{m}/15.000: 367$$

As you can see on previous examples, the warehouses give you about 99.5% Return of Investment per year. It is much more comparing to the investing money in bank (usually about 5% per year). And what is most important: you are earning money EVERY day - therefore you can earn for fuel/port charges while you sailing to your destination. It really help you with cashflow.

Remember to insure the warehouse! Cost of insuring warehouse is ALWAYS 6250\$ per 500.000 tons per month.

Example:

Cost of insurance as percent of monthly profit from lending of warehouse:

$$\text{Tokyo: } 6250\$ / (75000\$ * 30\text{days}) = 0.27\%$$

$$\text{Dar-es-Salam: } 6250\$ / (15000\$ * 30\text{days}) = 1.38\%$$

While im still converting my data for Excel spreadsheet, here is the quick hint about few most profitable ports (cost/profit ratio) in the world:

$$\text{Asia: Tokyo: } 55\$ / 0.15\$ = 366$$

$$\text{Australia: Fremantle: } 37\$ / 0.1\$ = 370$$

$$\text{Middle East: Abadan: } 15\$ / 0.04\$ = 370$$

$$\text{Africa: Dar-es-Salam: } 11\$ / 0.03\$ = 366$$

$$\text{Europe: London: } 44\$ / 0.12\$ = 366$$

$$\text{North America: Houston: } 52\$ / 0.14\$ = 371$$

$$\text{Central America: Puerto Barrios: } 15\$ / 0.04\$ = 375$$

$$\text{South America: Salvador: } 26\$ / 0.07\$ = 371$$

## Buy oil tanks

I haven't found a good use of oil tanks yet. Comments are very welcome.

## Cargo:

Author: Shrek - Portugal

There are 3 ways of transporting cargo:

**1st:** you buy products available in the harbour from a kind that your ship can carry; in this case, just travel to another harbour that has demand for these products and sell them

**2nd:** someone gives you a task named "freight business". this is the easy one because your ship will be loaded and unloaded automatically. just make sure you can get to the destination on time, or they will not accept the cargo anymore and will force you to pay a fine.

**3rd:** someone gives you a task named "forward business". at this one, you will have to buy the product they are asking (it doesn't matter where you get it) and put it in a warehouse at the destination harbour. just make sure you have the right quantity and at the date they asked for it. when the scheduled day arrives, they will take the cargo from the warehouse and will pay you the money.

## Ballast:

Consider filling your ship with ballast, if you are not transporting any other goods. This will secure your ship a little better in case of bad weather. An empty ship will take more damage than a filled one.

## Oil:

When you buy your first oil tanker, make sure the hold of the ship is larger than, say, 70.000 tons. The margin on oil is at best around 90\$ per tonne, so the quantity has to be large, before it is worthwhile. Also keep in mind, that this type of ship can only transport oil, so you will always be traveling with worthless ballast half the time.

It is always a good idea to refuel your ship in the port you are buying oil, as the fuel (of course) is very cheap here.

## Passengers:

Passengers are easy to handle with your Passenger ship. Just sail to the designated port, the ship will automatically load passengers for you. To get the most out of this ship, make sure to sail between some of the most important ports in the world.

## Resources:

### Fuel:

Always remember to refuel your ship, or at least check the distance it can travel, and how far away the destination is. This will save you lots of money and time, when you avoid being slowly transported to the nearest port.

### Speed:

Enter the engine performance in percentage. The slower the pace the further the ship can travel.

Author: Guest

I make a mathematical expression to foresee the time expend in the travel.

The expression are below:

$(\text{Range}) * (\text{diesel use}) / (\text{diesel fuel}) = \text{speed (nm/day)}$

In this expression you will find the speed in "nautical miles/day" in differents percents of speed.

So, I make the list contends this information and the range:

for example:

Large Freighter

100% - 360 nm/day - 8183 nm

90% - 324 nm/day - 9511 nm

80% - 288 nm/day - 11115 nm

70% - 252 nm/day - 12827 nm

60% - 216 nm/day - 14400 nm

50% - 180 nm/day - 15553 nm

When I analyse a contract, I go to the map and see the distance between the ports. So I divide the distance for the time avaiable to finish of the contract, and compare this result with the above list, and choice the best speed to travel.

### Repair:

This screen gives you the option to either repair the haul of the ship, the engine and both.



## Map:

This is where you chose where to sail your ships. This screen shows a world map with all the available ports in the game. You can use the icons in the bottom to access a list of ports on each continent.

You also have the option of getting information of the amount of goods in a given port, by clicking the information icon, after you have selected it.

## Telephone:

### Bank:

You have 3 options in the bank:

- 1: Borrow money at the cost of an annual interest
- 2: Repay your loan, before it is due
- 3: Make money investments, also for an annual interest

It is pretty safe to borrow money to buy more ships, as the income easily overcomes the interest rate.

I personally don't do money investments, as the money is better used on buying more expensive goods. But the investment is very safe, as you cannot lose the money.

### Stock Market:

Author: another\_guest – Belgium

However buying shares can generate some income while you're saving up for a new ship and you don't use the cash to buy cargo. Suppose you have \$ 10 million that you don't use but you need 40 million to buy the ship you want. This means that you can speculate with those \$ 10 million for the entire time it takes you to save up the other \$ 30 million. Get an advisor (\$ 80,000 per month) then buy stock that's nicely going up. Even with costs and all deducted you can have a net interest of a few % per month. It's not huge but it helps a bit in the early stages of the game.

But yes, the profit to be made on the stock market is negligible compared to the money you make off trading.

### Office:

In here you can load, save, view high scores, change options, view State of Play, view Income and costs, view Company Development, and exit the game.

### Insurance:

You can buy 2 types of insurance: Ship and cargo.

In the beginning of the game, I don't spend the extra money on insurance, but as soon as you buy new ships and start transporting the more expensive goods, you cannot afford not to insure both the ships and the cargo. You never know when a major event like collision or really bad weather sinks your ship, and it is not good for your business to lose for instance 50.000.000\$ worth of cargo and the ship as well.

### Ship-Yard:

In the ship yard, you can order the plans of a new ship. You start by selecting the type of ship you want, then the maximum speed, the ship can sail. Now you select either the load of goods or the amount of passengers the ship can carry. The final property is the range, the ship can sail.

After you have specified all these properties, you can place an order for the plans of this ship. The size of the fee you have to pay for the plans of the ship is depending on the type and the properties you have chosen.

You will receive the plans for the ship after a few months and up to 2 years. Again, this depends on the size and type of ship.

### Ship Broker:

In here you can view your ship plans and buy a new ship made from these, buy used ships, if any are available, sell your current ships or buy a 'standard' ship.

The advantage of buying a used ship is you get access to the ship immediately, but make sure to check the properties first:

Type of ship: Can the ship transport the goods you need?

Range: Can the ship make the distance needed?

Size of haul: Is the ship able to contain sufficient goods?

Speed: Is the ship fast enough?

Age: How old is the ship? The older the more maintenance is needed

Condition: Should you add immediate maintenance to the initial cost of the ship?

The standard ship requires no plans, but still takes a number of months to complete.

## Gameplay:

### Artificial canals:

Each time you pass one of the canals between either Panama or Suez, you will automatically be billed for the handling of your ship through the canal. The costs depends on the size of the ship that passes through. Make sure you transport goods with a high enough margin, so the extra cost is worthwhile.

### Tax:

Once a year you will be paying taxes of your income. This money will automatically be calculated and withdrawn from your account 1st of January each year.

### Minor events:

#### Port Strike:

When the dock workers go on strike, it can take up to a month before the strike is over. Until then you cannot buy or sell goods in that port.

#### Trade embargo initiated by the U.N.:

You cannot access the involed port for around a year.

#### Fire:

Fire destroys your warehouses and the goods stored within them. Consider warehouse insurance.

#### Quarantine:

Your ship will be in quarantine for about 1 week. During this time, you cannot acces your ship and therefore not sell your goods or refuel it. No further impact.

#### Engine break down:

Your ship will be transported to the nearest port, and you will be billed for it.

#### Dumping ship waste:

Once in a while your ships will be caught in dumping ship waste and you are fined for it. Unfortunately there is nothing you can do about it, but pay the fine. The size of the fine depends on the size of the ship.

### Major events:

#### Ship colliding with another ship:

This can be disastrous for your ship and it may sink. If you are lucky it will 'only' take major damage and the ship and cargo is saved. Remember to repair it when it arrives at the designated port.

#### Ship sinking due to bad weather:

I have never experienced ships sinking due to bad weather if they are in a better condition than 70%. This is the reason why, I recommend always repair your haul and engine the second the condition level hits 70%.

## Routes:

Of course there is almost an unlimited number of routes, so I just want to share some of my favorites:

Hamburg -> Rio de Janeiro, transporting grain (margin around 50\$ / ton)

Rio de Janeiro - Hamburg, transport coffee or cacao (margin around 200\$ / tonne)

You can do a similar route to Africa (Abidjan, Accra and other ports in that area)

Shanghai -> Sydney, transporting oil seed (margin around 160\$/tonne)

Sydney -> Tokyo, transporting coal (margin around 150\$ / tonne)

Tokyo -> Shanghai, ballast only (no margin)

Fremantle -> Shanghai, transporting grain (margin around 150\$ / tonne)

Shanghai -> Fremantle, transporting coal (margin around 70\$ / tonne)

Author: Another\_Guest - Belgium

I like coal from Sydney - iron from Tokyo (or what was the "grey" metal again?), doesn't run out if you don't use too large ships.

Also nice: coal from Sydney - machinery (the green things) from Tokyo - Hong Kong. Then back to Sydney with whatever Hong Kong has available.

Quite profitable: machinery or cars from Western European harbours to West Africa, then haul cotton or fruits back. Just change African ports quite often to keep some availability.

Wood from Halifax to some Eastern USA harbours, take iron on the way back.

There's also a route between 2 Eastern USA harbours that involves the yellow-grey and red metals (don't remember by heart what those are called) one way, and iron the other way.

Very profitable using bulk freighters: rice from Brazil to Hamburg (Hamburg pays quite a high price for rice).

You can switch to coffee and/or cocoa whenever the rice availability would be too low.

Linseed oil (or something to that extent) from Brazil to Rotterdam. The same oil also works well from Chinese ports to Sydney.

Rice from China to some of the ports North of Australia, then take oil from there to Sydney.

## Types of ships:

There are 9 different types of ships. The freighters can transport most of the goods found in the ports, except oil, foods, and

### Costal Freighter

A short distance ship, with a small load size. Can transport most of the goods.

### Freighter

A medium sized ship, able to transport most goods.

### Large Freighter

Same a freighter, only larger.

**Refrigerator ship**

Can transport goods requiring cooling.

**Bulk goods ship**

Good for transporting minerals, like coal and iron ore. Long distance and big load

**Container ship**

Can transport all manufactured products, except for foods.

**Tanker**

Oil, big load, long distance.

**Super Tanker**

Same as tanker, only bigger

**Passenger ship**

Author: another\_guest - Belgium

Passenger ships are awesome once you manage to buy them...

You can easily get over 10-15 million income from 1 trip. Just make sure to transport passengers over the longest possible distance:  $\text{income} = \# \text{ passengers} * \text{distance}$

Maintenance costs and times are huge though, so keep some other ships to keep your cash flow steady during these maintenance intervals.