

Ursuppe

Designed by Doris Matthäus and Frank Nestel
A strategy game for 3 to 4 players of 12 years or older.
Duration: 2 hours.
Translation: John Webley
Small Format: Idris Hsi

Contents

- 1 *Game Board* (the Primeval Soup with compass and scoring ladder)
- 28 Amoebas in 4 different colors and 4 different shapes. (Before the first game, you have to build the amoebas by carefully hammering one stick into each amoeba)
- 37 *Biological Points* (BP), 30 small disks (1 pt) and 7 large disks (5 pts)
- 25 *Damage Point* (DP) beads.
- 220 *Foodstuff* cubes, 55 in each of 4 different colors.
- 4 Score markers in 4 different colors
- 33 *Gene cards*, with capabilities for the Amoebas. (3 Blank Cards)
- 11 *Environment cards* (each showing an ozone layer thickness and a current direction)
- 2 Dice
- 4 Reference cards (References the game phases and the Gene cards)
- These Instructions

Overview

Each player controls a tribe of primeval Amoebas, at a time in the earth's history, when there were no higher forms of life. At the start of the game, the Amoebas can feed, multiply, and move in an uncoordinated fashion. By buying Gene cards, players can extend the capabilities of their amoebas, changing the way that the game's rules operate on them, and so influencing the development of their tribe. Obviously though, it isn't always so easy, but the more living amoeba that you have, and the greater their capabilities, the greater the advance of evolution, which is the way to victory in this game.

Preparation

The *Game Board* should be placed in the center of the table.

Each player chooses a color and takes all the amoebas in that color and 4 *Biological Points* (BP) for themselves.

Place two *Foodstuff* cubes of each color in play, onto every space of the board. The remaining *Foodstuff* cubes should be placed next to the board.

Separate the Gene cards out based on the number of players if necessary. If there are only 3 players, only the Gene cards with a 3 in the bottom right hand corner should be used.

Shuffle the *Environment* cards and place one, face up, on the *Compass*, in the center of the board. The two dice pictures are only there to show you how the card should be oriented.

Determine Starting Player

Players roll two dice to see who goes first. The player who rolls highest, places their Score marker on any one of the spaces marked 1-4 on the board. (With three players, used one of the spaces marked 1-3). The player with the second highest roll chooses a space and so on. Only one Score marker may be on each space at a time.

Placing Amoebas

In *Ascending Order* (i.e. starting with the player who placed their marker in the 1 space), each player places one of their amoebas onto an empty space on the board. Each amoeba also receives one *Damage Point*. If there are only three players, the amoebas don't receive a damage point. Players may use any of their amoebas regardless of number. Then, in *Descending Order*, each player places a second amoeba, this time without damage points. At the end of the setup phase, no space on the board may contain more than one amoeba.

Course of Play

The game is divided into Rounds. Each round consists of 6 phases, which are carried out in the order given.

Phase 1: Movement and Feeding

Players play in *Ascending Order*. Each player handles each of their amoebas in numerical order. Each Amoeba has two options.

1. The Amoeba Drifts

The Amoeba drifts one space in the direction shown by the *Environment* card currently face up on the compass. If there is an obstacle (*Edge of Board, Compass*) in the way, the amoeba stays put. Other amoebas are not obstacles.

2. Move Using Its Own Strength

If the amoeba hasn't yet acquired the genes for movement, the player pays 1 *Biological Point* (BP) and rolls a die. The amoeba then moves one space in the *Direction* shown by that die roll on the *Compass* (1 is West, 2 is North, etc.) On a 5, the amoeba stays where it is. A 6 allows the player to choose the direction. The amoeba cannot hit an obstacle through movement.

Feeding

After movement, the amoeba tries to feed. An Amoeba needs to eat three cubes per turn but never one of its own color. In a four player game, it eats one cube of each of the other three colors. In a three player game, it eats one of one of the two other colors, and two of the third color. The player may decide which color is eaten once and which is eaten twice.

Excretion

If an amoeba finds enough food, the food it has eaten is replaced by two cubes of the amoeba's own color.

Food Shortage and Starving

A *Shortage of Food* occurs when there aren't enough cubes off the board to replace the *Foodstuff* that was eaten. If this happens, the cubes are not replaced.

An amoeba that does not find enough food, *Starves*. They don't eat anything, don't place any replacement cubes, and receive one *Damage Point*.

After each amoeba for a particular player has moved and eaten (or failed to), the next player in *Ascending Order* takes their turn.

Phase 2: Environment and Gene Defects

The old *Environment Card* on the *Compass* is removed, and a new one put on the *Compass*. *Gene Defects* do not occur during the first round.

Gene Defects

In subsequent rounds, each player adds all the *Mutation Points* on their *Gene Cards* together. If the total is greater than the *Ozone Layer Thickness* as shown on the current *Environment Card*, face up on the *Compass*, then they must balance the difference. They can do this by giving up *Gene Cards* or by *Biological Points* (BP). *Gene Cards* which have been given up count as the number of mutation points on them, each BP counts as 1. If the only way to balance the difference is by giving up more points on gene cards than is necessary, the player loses the extra points.

Genes returned to the gene pool in this manner are available for sale again.

Phase 3: New Genes

In *Descending Order*, each player can use BPs to buy new *Gene Cards*. Each player in turn has one chance to buy the card or cards they want and can afford. If the Gene card is not available because other players purchased them in previous rounds, the player has to wait until the gene is returned to the gene pool.

The rules on the Gene cards override the standard rules whenever there is a difference.

Phase 4: Cell Division

In *Descending Order*, each player gets 10 BPs. Using these, plus any that they may have saved from earlier rounds, they may cause their amoebas to divide. At a price of 6 BPs per amoeba, one or more new amoebas with no damage points may be placed on the board.

New amoebas must be placed in a space that contains no amoeba of the same color but that borders (horizontally or vertically but not diagonally) a space which already contains an amoeba of the same color, including amoebas that have just been placed.

If a player only has one amoeba on the board, they may place a second amoeba anywhere on the board, but they must still pay the normal cost.

Phase 5: Deaths

Amoebas that have 2 or more *Damage Points* die a *Natural Death*.

If an Amoeba dies, it is removed from the board, and replaced by two *Foodstuff* cubes of each of the colors in play. In the course of the game, this may lead to a *Shortage of Food*.

Amoebas that have died may be used again.

Phase 6: Scoring

In *Descending Order*, the players' Score Markers are moved.

The *Advance* of a player's marker up the *Scoring Ladder* is determined by the number of live amoebas they have on the board and the number of Gene cards they possess.

Amoebas	0-2	3	4	5	6	7
Spaces	0	1	2	4	5	6

Gene Cards	0-2	3	4	5	6+
Spaces	0	1	2	3	4

Note: *Advanced Genes* (e.g. ENDURANCE, MOVEMENT II, AGGRESSION, ARMOR) count as **two cards** on the advance table. The Gene RAY-PROTECTION does not count towards the advance.

Spaces on the ladder which are occupied are not counted when working out how far a marker should advance, so that there is only ever one marker per space on the ladder.

Game End

If, after all markers have been advanced, one or more markers have reached the dark *Finish Zone* at the end of the Scoring ladder, the game ends. The player whose marker is furthest along the Scoring ladder wins the game.

Otherwise, the game enters another round, starting with Phase 1.

The Encyclopedia of Primeval Soup

Advance – Advance Table: During the scoring phase (Phase 6), the player advances their Score marker up the Scoring ladder according to the tables in the instructions for Phase 6. If the space on the Scoring ladder is already occupied, it is skipped and the marker is placed one ahead of that space.

The Advance of a player's marker up the Scoring Ladder is determined by the number of live amoebas they have on the board and the number of Gene cards they possess.

Advanced Genes (e.g. ENDURANCE, MOVEMENT II, AGGRESSION, ARMOR) count as two cards on the advance table. The Gene RAY-PROTECTION does not count towards the advance.

Advanced Gene Cards – An Advanced Gene card requires a price in BPs and the normal Gene Card associated with the Advanced Gene. As long as a player has an Advanced Gene, they may not buy the normal Gene Card used to purchase it. Advanced genes count as two cards on the Advance Table.

Ascending / Descending Order – Where the players play a phase in Ascending Order, the player whose marker is lowest on the scoring ladder plays first and the other players play in order until the last player (highest on the ladder) is reached. Descending Order, as one might expect, does the reverse and starts with the player who is highest on the ladder.

Biological Points – The Biological points (BP), represent the measure of the vitality of a tribe of amoeba. They enable a player to improve the Capabilities of their amoebas, to allow the amoebas to divide, to make a Movement, or to use the special capabilities that the amoebas may possess.

BP – An abbreviation for Biological Points.

Capabilities – An amoeba-tribe gains an extra Capability that helps it to survive and prosper when it gains a Gene card.

Compass – The Compass in the center of the board converts a die roll into a specific direction of movement for the amoebas. A roll of 1-4 gives a specific direction, 5 says the amoeba fails to move, and 6 means that the player has a free choice of direction. The compass also shows the current Direction of Drift.

Damage, Damage Points – Each amoeba collects Damage points (DP) during the game. A new-born amoeba has no damage points, an unmutated amoeba dies in the round that it collects a second damage point.

DP – An abbreviation for damage points.

Death – The death of an amoeba during Phase 5 is a natural death, whether it is caused by an accumulation of DPs or through the action of the Gene card, AGGRESSION. The amoeba is removed from the board and returned to its owner. It is replaced by two Foodstuff cubes of each color. In contrast to a Natural Death, amoeba may also die a Violent Death. This takes place during Phase 1 and is the result of the action of another amoeba that possesses the capability STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL. Here too, the amoeba is removed from the board, but it is only replaced by one cube of each color, since the attacking amoeba has already fed on its victim.

Descending order – See Ascending Order

Direction – There are 4 basic directions in Primeval Soup; North, South, East, and West. Amoebas may only move in one of these directions, they may never move diagonally. The four directions are printed on the compass in the center of the board, numbered 1 to 4.

Drift – The opposite of active movement. An amoeba that doesn't actively move in Phase 1 drifts in the direction of the prevailing current.

Environment Cards – There are 11 Environment Cards in the game. Each card shows two things: the Direction of the Drift and the Ozone Layer thickness.

Excretion – After feeding, an amoeba excretes two cubes of its own color.

Feeding – An amoeba without any special capability eats 3 foodstuff cubes per turn, but never one of its own color. With 4 players it eats one cube of each of the other 3 colors. With 3 players, it eats 2 cubes of one color and 3 of another. An amoeba that can't find enough to eat, or not the right combination of colors Starves and gets a damage point.

Finish Zone – The final 10 spaces of the Scoring Ladder, printed in a darker color than the rest. The game ends at the end of the round in which one or more markers reach the finish zone.

Foodstuff Cubes – Each amoeba requires a sufficient amount of foodstuff cubes to survive and excretes more foodstuff cubes, which can be used by other amoeba. If an amoeba dies, it frees the foodstuffs from which it is made.

Game Board – The Board includes the following features: The Primeval Soup comprising 19 spaces. An island in the center with a Compass on it, which shows the direction of Drift during that round. The island is out of bounds to amoebas. Around the edge of the board runs the Scoring Ladder which decides the state of the game.

Game End: Winner – The game ends after the scoring phase (Phase 6) in which one or more markers reaches the dark colored Finish Zone of the Scoring Ladder. Alternatively, the game ends after the round in which the last environment card is turned over. The player whose marker is furthest along the Scoring Ladder is the Winner of the game.

Gene Defects – If the sum of the mutation points on the cards that a player possesses, exceeds the Ozone Layer thickness printed in black on gray in the current Environment Card, then the player must repay the difference, either by giving up Gene Cards or by paying in BPs.

Gene, Gene card – Each Gene Card has several features: Each gene card gives all the owning player's amoeba an extra capability. For these amoeba, the normal rules are superceded by the rule on the gene card. The various capabilities are more closely described in the Reference cards of these rules. Each card has a price, payable in BPs that a player must pay before they can take the card. Each card also has on it a Mutation sensitivity. The sum of these sensitivities must be less than the current ozone layer thickness or else Gene Defects will occur. Since most genes are in short supply, no player may buy a second copy of a gene card that they already possess

Movement – The opposite of Drifting. It is an active movement by an amoeba. It costs 1 BP and the direction of movement is determined by a die roll (see *Compass*).

Movement order – Given by the order of the player's markers on the scoring ladder (see Ascending/Descending order).

Mü – The unit of measurement that the amoeba use to indicate their size on their identity cards. Often falsely written as Mu or μ .

Mutation / Mutation Sensitivity – A negative property that an amoeba gains along with a Gene card.

Natural Death – Any death of an amoeba in Phase 5. (See *Death*)

Numerical Order – In any phase in which the amoebas come into play, the amoebas move, die, divide, etc. in numerical order from 1 to 7. Amoebas that aren't on the board don't count. When placing an amoeba on the board, a player may use any available amoeba regardless of number.

Ozone Layer Thickness – The thicker the Ozone layer, the lower is the risk of unwanted Gene Defects. The thickness of the layer changes from round to round and is given by the value printed in black on gray on the current Environment Card.

Scoring – Scoring takes place according to the *Advance* tables, and is carried out on the Scoring Ladder.

Scoring Ladder – Each player has a Score marker on the Scoring ladder that runs around the edge of the board. Only one marker may be on any space at a time. The position of the markers determines who is leading, and who is last, at any one time. This further determines the order of play in the various phases of the game. (See Ascending/Descending Order). The movement of markers up the scoring ladder is governed by the Advance tables. If a marker reaches the dark zone of the scoring ladder, the game finishes.

Shortage of Food – The total amount of Foodstuff cubes in the game is limited. If there is an insufficient number of cubes off-board to replace, for example, a dead amoeba, then the cubes that are lacking are not replaced with another color, and the space does not then have as many cubes in it as would otherwise be the case.

Starve, Starvation – An amoeba that does not find enough Foodstuff cubes in Phase 1 of a round, or that does not find the right combination, starves. It eats nothing, excretes nothing, and gets one Damage Point.

Winner – (see Game End)

Thanks to all the people mentioned in the German rules. Special thanks to John Webley for doing the main part of the translation. Final mistakes added by Doris & Frank during typesetting.

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The Amoeba Genome Project

All genes are in short supply, no player may buy a second copy of a Gene card that they already possess. The number of cards in the game depends on the number of players, shown in the corresponding columns.

Price	MPs	Name of Gene	# Cards for 3	# Cards for 4	Description
2	3	Intelligence	1	2	Unfortunately useless in the primeval soup but does help amoeba Advance.
3	2	Movement I	2	2	In Phase 1, the player rolls 2 dice rather than one and chooses the direction from those on offer. Movement cost doesn't change.
3	3	Spores	1	1	During Division in Phase 4, the new amoeba may be placed on any space that doesn't already have an amoeba of that color on it.
4	3	Speed	1	2	In Phase 1, the amoebas may move twice. The second movement begins where the first ended. A new direction is chosen for the second movement. An amoeba may not <i>Drift</i> twice, neither may an amoeba mix <i>Drift</i> and movement. The second movement does not cost any BPs. The amoeba only feeds once after its complete movement.
4	4	Defense	1	1	Attacks by other amoebas in Phases 1 or 5 can, on paying 1 BP, be converted into a fight. Attacker and defender both roll a die. The higher die roll wins. Reroll on a tie. If the attacker wins, they eat the defender. If the defender wins, the attacker <i>Starves</i> .
4	4	Escape	1	2	Amoebas can attempt to avoid an attack during Phase 1 or 5 by moving away. Escaping amoebas may use all its genes (Movement I/II, Speed, Streamlining, Tentacle) even in Phase 5. This movement costs 1 BP.
If a player possesses both Defense and Escape , they may use both against the same attack, in any order. But they may only use each once per round.					
4	4	Substitution	1	1	During Phase 1, amoebas may eat one less color of foodstuff cube, but must then eat one cube more than otherwise. In a 4 player game, they eat 2 of 2 colors instead of 1 each of the 3 colors (not their own). In a 3 player game, they eat 4 of 1 color instead of 2 of 1 color and 1 of another.
Alternative feeding genes (Frugality, Substitution, and Parasitism) can, but need not, be used at any time. If a player possesses both Frugality and Substitution , each amoeba has 5 different possible feeding methods (1:1:1, 2:2:0, 1:1:0, 2:1:0, 3:0:0) and more if it also has Parasitism .					
5	-2	Ray Protection	1	2	Gives Double Protection against Gene Defects in Phase 2.
5	4	Streamlining	1	1	Movement (also Escape), with or without a gene card, is free (no BPs).
5	4	Tentacle	1	2	If an amoeba moves or drifts during Phase 1, it may take up to 2 foodstuff cubes with it in a 3 player game and 3 in a 4 player game. Has two functions: 1) During Phase 1, amoebas may choose not to drift and stay put. 2) If amoebas move away from the same space as an amoeba with Holding , that amoeba may choose to move with it. The second amoeba can decide whether to go with the moving amoeba after the moving amoeba has decided on a direction of movement. The second amoeba can also wait to decide which foodstuff cubes to bring if the moving amoeba has Tentacle .
5	5	Life Expectancy	1	2	In Phase 5, amoebas only die if they have 3 DPs.
6	5	Frugality	0	1	In Phase 1, amoebas eat one less foodstuff cube. Excretion is normal.

The Amoeba Genome Project

All genes are in short supply, no player may buy a second copy of a Gene card that they already possess. The number of cards in the game depends on the number of players, shown in the corresponding columns.

Price	MPs	Name of Gene	# Cards for 3	# Cards for 4	Description
2	3	Intelligence	1	2	Unfortunately useless in the primeval soup but does help amoeba Advance.
3	2	Movement I	2	2	In Phase 1, the player rolls 2 dice rather than one and chooses the direction from those on offer. Movement cost doesn't change.
3	3	Spores	1	1	During Division in Phase 4, the new amoeba may be placed on any space that doesn't already have an amoeba of that color on it.
4	3	Speed	1	2	In Phase 1, the amoebas may move twice. The second movement begins where the first ended. A new direction is chosen for the second movement. An amoeba may not <i>Drift</i> twice, neither may an amoeba mix <i>Drift</i> and movement. The second movement does not cost any BPs. The amoeba only feeds once after its complete movement.
4	4	Defense	1	1	Attacks by other amoebas in Phases 1 or 5 can, on paying 1 BP, be converted into a fight. Attacker and defender both roll a die. The higher die roll wins. Reroll on a tie. If the attacker wins, they eat the defender. If the defender wins, the attacker <i>Starves</i> .
4	4	Escape	1	2	Amoebas can attempt to avoid an attack during Phase 1 or 5 by moving away. Escaping amoebas may use all its genes (Movement I/II, Speed, Streamlining, Tentacle) even in Phase 5. This movement costs 1 BP.
If a player possesses both Defense and Escape , they may use both against the same attack, in any order. But they may only use each once per round.					
4	4	Substitution	1	1	During Phase 1, amoebas may eat one less color of foodstuff cube, but must then eat one cube more than otherwise. In a 4 player game, they eat 2 of 2 colors instead of 1 each of the 3 colors (not their own). In a 3 player game, they eat 4 of 1 color instead of 2 of 1 color and 1 of another.
Alternative feeding genes (Frugality, Substitution, and Parasitism) can, but need not, be used at any time. If a player possesses both Frugality and Substitution , each amoeba has 5 different possible feeding methods (1:1:1, 2:2:0, 1:1:0, 2:1:0, 3:0:0) and more if it also has Parasitism .					
5	-2	Ray Protection	1	2	Gives Double Protection against Gene Defects in Phase 2.
5	4	Streamlining	1	1	Movement (also Escape), with or without a gene card, is free (no BPs).
5	4	Tentacle	1	2	If an amoeba moves or drifts during Phase 1, it may take up to 2 foodstuff cubes with it in a 3 player game and 3 in a 4 player game. Has two functions: 1) During Phase 1, amoebas may choose not to drift and stay put. 2) If amoebas move away from the same space as an amoeba with Holding , that amoeba may choose to move with it. The second amoeba can decide whether to go with the moving amoeba after the moving amoeba has decided on a direction of movement. The second amoeba can also wait to decide which foodstuff cubes to bring if the moving amoeba has Tentacle .
5	5	Life Expectancy	1	2	In Phase 5, amoebas only die if they have 3 DPs.
6	5	Frugality	0	1	In Phase 1, amoebas eat one less foodstuff cube. Excretion is normal.

Price	MPS	Name of Gene	# Cards for 3	# Cards for 4	Description
6	4	Struggle for Survival	2	2	In Phase 1, if there is insufficient food for an amoeba, and it would otherwise starve, it may attempt to attack another amoeba in the same space. The attack costs 1 BP and is always successful unless the defending amoeba possesses Defense, Escape, or Armor . If the attack is successful unless the other amoeba possesses Defense, Escape, or Armor . If the attack is successful, the other amoeba is removed from the board. The attacker eats but does not excrete as normal. Instead, one foodstuff cube of each color is placed in that space. An amoeba may attack another amoeba of its color.
6	5	Parasitism	0	1	If during Phase 1, an amoeba is in the same space as an amoeba from another player who still has BPs available, the amoeba needs 1 less foodstuff, but the owner of the other amoeba pays 1 BP to the Bank. There is no defense against Parasitism . The amoeba may parasitize, even if there is sufficient foodstuff available. If there is a choice of amoebas, the player may decide which to parasitize.
6	5	Division Rate	1	2	In Phase 4, division only costs 4 BPs instead of 6 BPs.

Advanced Genes

To buy an Advanced Gene, the player must give up a specific lower gene. They must also pay the normal cost for the card. They must have possessed the lower gene for at least one round meaning that they can't buy the lower card and immediately trade it for the Advanced gene. Advanced Genes given back during Phase 2 are immediately available to other players. Players are not allowed to buy the corresponding lower gene if they already possess the Advanced Gene. Advanced Genes count as two cards on the advance table.

Price	Give Up	MPS	Name of Gene	# Cards for 3	# Cards for 4	Description
4	Speed	4	Persistence	1	2	Allows player with Struggle for Survival, Defense, Aggression , to make a second free attempt to use these Genes if the first attempt fails.
5	Movement I	5	Movement II	1	2	In Phase 1, the player chooses the direction of movement rather than rolling the dice.
5	Struggle for Survival	5	Aggression	1	1	During Phase 5, after any natural deaths, one amoeba from another player in the same space as the amoeba with Aggression may be killed after the attacker pays 1 BP. The dead amoeba is replaced by 2 foodstuff cubes of each color. This attack may only be used once per round. Defending amoebas with Armor , don't die but get a DP.
6	Defense or Escape	6	Armor	1	1	Protects the amoeba in Phase 1 and Phase 5 from enemy amoeba with Struggle for Survival or Aggression . In Phase 1, the amoeba can't be attacked. In Phase 5, the amoeba attacked with Aggression survives but gets 1 DP. This may then cause the amoeba to die a Natural Death.

Criticisms, Suggestions, Variants, and Praise to:
Doris Matthäus and Frank Nestel,
Obere Büch 24, 91054 Buckenhof
Tel.: 09131/55045
Fax: 09131/55085

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6	6	Division Rate	1	2	In Phase 4, division only costs 4 BPs instead of 6 BPs.

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