Dominions II: The Ascension Wars
Quick Start Guide

Illwinter Game Design

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1 Introduction

This guide will help you get started with your first game of the Dominions II demo.

If you would rather start with a saved game and an easy walkthrough then take a look at **http://www.illwinter.com/dom2/walkthru.html** . It makes good use of graphics in order to be as easy as possible to follow.

2 Create a New God

The first step is to create a new God; do this by clicking on *Create a New God* in the main menu. You will now be asked to select a nation for your God. Select Ulm. Ulm is a good choice for a Dominions II beginner since their troops are straightforward and reliable, and do not require many special considerations. Now select a physical form for your God by clicking on the icon representing the form you want to play. If you want to examine the stats of a physical form, right-click on the icon representing it. After you have selected your form, you need to invest design points into your God. You can customize your God by giving it increased magical powers, selecting a different castle to build, and altering its Dominion, or the impact of your God's presence on the world and its inhabitants.

2.1 Spending Design Points on Magic

Select the menu item Magic in order to increase your God's magical abilities. Increase your God's ability in a magic path by left-clicking on it; decrease the ability by right-clicking on it. You cannot decrease your level in a path below the starting value.

2.2 Spending Design Points on Dominion

Dominion is the impact of your God's presence on the world and its inhabitants. It has a strength attribute as well as a number of other factors associated with it. An example from fiction of what Dominion is intended to represent is Sauron's effect on Southern Mirkwood or Mordor in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. In the Dominion menu, you will be faced with a number of scales. These scales represent the expression of your God's influence on the world. Mouse over them to see a brief description of what they do. Left-clicking on a scale will cost design points and move your scale in a positive direction, and right-clicking will give you more points but will move the scale in a negative direction. The only exception to this rule is the temperature scale; tipping the scale in either direction will give you more points. Left-clicking on the text *Dominion Strength* will increase your basic Dominion strength, while right-clicking will reduce it. Again, you cannot reduce it below your starting value. If you, as suggested, are playing Ulm, tip the Production scale two or three steps in a positive direction. Ulm needs a high Resource value to outfit its heavily armored troops, and a positive Production scale will help with this.

2.3 Spending Design Points on Castles

When you click on the Castle menu, you will be presented with a set of different castles to choose from. Choose the Fortified City. If it is too expensive, go back and weaken your magic or some of your Dominion. In the beginning, you need not spend time on considering the different stats of the castles.

3   Create a New Game

Now you have to create a game. Do this by clicking on *Create a New Game*. Click on the text that says *Inactive* beside Ulm's name to select Ulm as the human player. The name you have chosen for your God should now replace the *Inactive* text. **Add at least one computer opponent** by clicking on the text to the right of one or more of the other nations. Otherwise, you will win as soon as the game starts. Avoid choosing Ermor, as they might pose serious problems for beginners.

When you are satisfied with the number of players, click OK and select one of the two maps available. Now you will be taken to a menu showing game setup options. Just click OK to accept the default options. The game will then take you back to the main menu. You will need to choose *Play an Existing Game* to play the game you just created.

4   Play an Existing Game

Once you have created the game, select the Play an Existing Game option, and you will be ready to play your first turn.

After a few clicks, you should reach the Map Screen. This is where you will spend most of your time while playing Dominions II.

Five boxes appear above the map. Starting from the left and going clockwise, they are: the commander box, where icons represent the leaders of your army and you give the orders; the info box, where global and regional info are displayed; the interface box, where you find filters, statistics, etc.; the province action box, where you can position your army, view province info, and recruit new units; and the structure box, where buildings and magic sites located in the selected province are displayed.

By hovering the mouse over the text in the various boxes, you can receive a brief description of their import and be informed if there are any keyboard shortcuts associated with the possible actions.

Use Page Up and Page Down to zoom in and out on the map. Use the arrow keys or hold down the middle mouse button to scroll the map.

To the left are your three commanders. The first is a military commander who leads a small army, the second one is a spy, and the last one is your Pretender God. Right-click on a commander to view his or her stats.
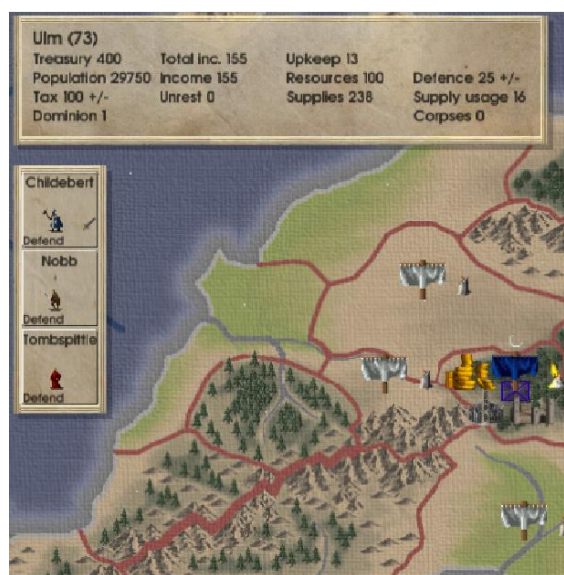

Figure 1: The Map Screen where you give orders to your commanders.

You can select another province by right-clicking on it (or command-click if you're using a one button mouse). On the first turn, however, you will not know anything about your neighbors, so they will not be very interesting to inspect for the moment.

The first thing you should do in your turn is to recruit a few more troops. Do this by left-clicking on the Recruit Unit button on the right hand side of the screen. Left-click on a unit to add it to your build queue. At the bottom of the Recruit Unit window, it will tell you how many resources and gold you have left. Add units until you are satisfied. Press backspace to remove a unit if you have changed your mind.

Use the '?' key to see available command keys and shortcuts accessible from the map screen.

4.1   Giving Orders

Give orders to a commander by left-clicking on the *Defend* order just below his icon, or hold your mouse over the commander and press space.

Movement works somewhat differently. Select a commander (his icon box will turn white) and then click on a province on the map to make him move there. It is only possible to move to neighboring provinces unless you are flying or moving inside friendly territory.

If you have a Pretender with magic skills, you will probably want him to do some magic research at the beginning of the game. To do this, give him the *Research* order and then press *F5*. Here, you can choose which school of magic you want to research. Right-click on a school to see which spells will be available to you. Most of the 'blast your enemies with fire' spells are Evocations, which should be a safe bet if you want some useful battle spells.

As part of your first turn, you should set your Pretender to Research. Move the scout to a neighboring province, and put your commander on Patrol. By patrolling, you will reduce any possible unrest and try to uncover enemy spies and scouts in the province. You won't find any enemy scouts on the first turn, but you might need to reduce some unrest caused by a random event.

4.2   The Second Turn

Once you are finished with your turn, press the *e* key or the End Turn button at the top right of the screen. Once you have exited the map screen, press Host and a new turn will be generated.

When you play your second turn, you can right-click on a province neighboring your homeland to see some info on it. If you press *i* while a neighboring province is selected, you will gain access to a rough estimate of the forces present in the province. Do this with all neighboring provinces.

Recruit more units.

Left-click the Army Setup button. At the top of a new screen, you will see the units you recruited last turn. Below them, on the lefthand side of the screen, you will see icons representing your commanders. One of these commanders will have a set of troops positioned beneath him. Choose the new troops you recruited last turn by shift-clicking on the leftmost unit and then on the rightmost. Click on one of your commanders. The units should now appear beneath your commander. Exit this screen.

One or more of the commanders visible from the main map screen should now have a sword symbol present in its box. Left-click that commander, then left-click on whichever neighboring province looked weakest. Do this with all commanders that have sword symbols present on their boxes. These commanders will now attack the province you have chosen.

End the turn.

4.3   The Third Turn

At the beginning of this turn, you will receive a battle report of the battle your troops fought during the hosting. Look at it carefully, but realize you are watching a replay you cannot affect. During the replay, you can press *space* to pause the battle and inspect your units by right-clicking on them. Press *q* to exit the battle replay or wait until the battle is won or lost.

Recruit units in your home province. Play around with giving orders to them in the Army Setup screen. Try positioning units to fully utilize their potential.

Click and look around, try the different map filters, play, learn, enjoy!