

A HELP GUIDE FOR ITALY. By A Cuthbertson.

Every game of Austerlitz will turn out different from the others, it's the decisions you make early on that will decide if Italy, one of the game's smallest nations, will still be there towards the end.

ECONOMY

Whatever plans you have for Italy you will need to have a steady economy up and running as quickly as possible. You will always want to get your ore mine, 4 factories, 4 weaving mills and around 16 sheep farms built by May or June 1808 and try to keep a minimum of 10 estates per million population. The zinc mine in the Caribbean will depend on whether you want to keep this or trade with a large nation (France for example) in return for protection against possible aggressors and a long term alliance.

BRIGADES

Italy's troops are of decent quality, slightly better than that of Naples, which could give the upper hand in early exchanges. However, cash is low to begin with so you may want to keep away from the expense of cavalry and concentrate on cheaper 'land grabbers' for your early outings into enemy territory. As the game develops and simulated battles occur you will be relying on quality experienced troops and a fine mix of cavalry, infantry and artillery. Your land grabbers are cheap and easy to replace but don't forget to raise a strong army back home where costs are at a minimum. And train them! Inexperienced troops will flee at the first sign of trouble and in the all important simulated battles experienced troops are priceless.

All of the Italian troops are reasonably quick. Musketeers are cheap and therefore valuable early on to take land and in mathematical battles to boost numbers. As time passes you should raise grenadiers and riflemen. These guys are on a par with the best infantry in the game, as long as they are experienced.

Your Kt is among the most expensive in Austerlitz. If the colonies is not part of your plans then demolish any Kt you start with. The money you pay for maintenance alone could be put to better use.

SHIPS

If your strategy is based on European domination rather than the fruits of the colonies then it is worth using your war fleet to make peace with a powerful nation in exchange for an alliance. The fleet can also be sold for around 70% of the construction cost, if you can find a buyer. Look to Spain, France, GB, Portugal or Morocco for a possible sale or France, Morocco or Holland even for an exchange for an alliance.

Keep some merchant ships for your trading purposes. War with Naples could mean quite a distance for your baggage trains to travel and your ships might be

able to reach Tunis, Rabat, Lisbon and Cairo. If you have a good relationship with France then goods can be picked up from Marseille.

STRATEGY

My theory so far has been based on a European game which I think is always best for Italy. The zinc mine in the Caribbean is hot property so even if the other empires don't seem too interested at the beginning, later in the game when the other mines have been snapped up they are sure to enquire. You can always approach a nation early on with the promise to handing over the mine rather than have someone invade and take it.

Italy may struggle to survive or compete as long as Naples is still around. An invasion into Naples is profitable in the long term but I would try and make sure that the nations to the north have no hostile intent. An early invasion will have more chance of a swift win against Naples. Capturing territory early on will reduce his economy and he will struggle to replace any losses received in combat. If you can get 3 columns of 10 brigades moving in on the same turn you can take 9 co-ordinates per turn and Naples only has 37 on his mainland.

DIPLOMACY

Italy must avoid an attack from an alliance early on to have any chance of survival. Early diplomacy is vital. Speak to as many neighbours as you can. Fortunately all of your neighbours have their own neighbours to worry about so make peace for at least a game year with most of your borders and venture into the others.