

Settings:

Playing on a huge map usually means:

- The next civ is at least 20 tiles away,
- Exploring and contacts with other civs take much longer. You will probably contact some civs only during the Middle Ages (after Navigation).
- All Empires will have 30+ cities (except on a small isolated continent),
- The AI will fill any empty terrain anyway.

You can be picky: take your time to choose the best spot and space your cities as far apart as possible. You can be assured that there is plenty of space enough and that nobody will attack you for the next 40-50 turns (unless...).

Specificities:

Actually, the map size makes not the difference in game play. It's the number of civs that makes games on huge maps different. Good diplomacy is much more important. You don't want 10 or more AI civs to gang up against you. The likelihood to get good resource or luxury deals also sinks drastically, because the landmasses are bigger and it's harder to gain a monopoly.

The biggest difference between a 16-civ huge map and an 8-civ standard one is that corruption is much less of an issue. Your civ is roughly the same size in absolute terms unless and until you start conquering other civs, but the corruption rates make allowance for building a significantly bigger civ. Of course, AIs also benefit from the lower corruption, which can result in AI armies' tending to be significantly bigger relative to the size of the civs than on standard maps.

In general, the lower corruption rates may tend to make earlier GAs more profitable on huge maps. On a standard map, waste and corruption eat away a lot of benefit from a despotic GA and a pretty good chunk from an early Monarchy or Republic GA if there aren't lots of courthouses in place yet (of course, the flip side is that a GA can help build courthouses). But with waste and corruption lower in the early game, the degree to which those factors undercut the GA's value would tend to be lower.

Best civs to play:

On huge maps (maybe except archipelagos, but they have their own rules anyway), Commercial is definitely an awesome trait. You can settle/conquer gigantic empires and suffer remarkable less corruption than the others. Expansionist is also a very useful trait, along with Industrious. The former is the better, the larger your landmass is and the less civs are on it. The latter is the better, the younger the map is (in terms of 3,4,5 billions years). This puts Civs like France, Carthage and England ahead. These civs are completely missing in the below analysis.

Militaristic is a mediocre trait on huge maps, especially when the map is undercrowded (less than, say, 12 civs). This vastly increases the distance between the different theatres of warfare and makes the usage of troops less efficient.

Religious and Scientific are still good traits, but hardly reach the importance of the top 3. Scientific is additionally hampered by the presence of many civs. This means

increased research cooperation and tech whoring, which leads to a general devaluation of techs as a whole. There's just too many ways to keep up even without or with low research.

The French are a great early wonder machine – not only can you begin the Pyramids right away if you choose, but with Masonry as a starting tech, you have immediate access to a palace pre-build.

China, A+ Arguably the best civ in the game for a huge map. We all know "the virtues of being industrious," and for those of you who don't know the virtues of amassing 12+ riders to annex other civs as soon as you get Chivalry, you should try it once. These riders can be unstoppable. They trigger the GA at just the right time (to get Sun Tzu's, Sistine, Leo's, JS Bachs... hereafter referred to as the "Big 4"). During your GA, build the Big 4 and whatever else you need, and more riders. With their 3 movement rate, they'll put you in a position to double or triple the size of your empire. Your industrious workers will handle the rest. By the time your GA ends, you ought to be unstoppable!

One exception: if you are stuck on an island, unless you want a challenge, quit and start again! Here your riders will not help you much.

Ottomans, A After China, probably another favourite, and for the same reason. They are industrious, with the added benefit of scientific, which can give your early REXing a boost when you slay your citizens building libraries to keep your culture up to par. Unfortunately, their UU cannot come at the same time as the Chinese riders, but c'est la vie... they still completely kick ass if you have wars to wage by the industrial era... and the chances are, unless you really cleaned up with your knights, you do!

Iroquois, A- It's always a risk playing as an expansionist Civ, but assuming you start on the biggest continent, your Mounted Warriors can trigger you a GA at a great time (late ancient/early med. age) and do a lot of conquering to put you in a good position to dominate in the middle ages.

Don't miss your window of opportunity with the MWs! Use them when you're about to build, say, the HG, or the GL, and expand, expand, expand. When feudalism comes into play, the MWs lose a lot of oomph (although you can use them up until Nationalism).

Mongols, B This really depends on your location, and your early scouting. It's a real bummer not having cheaper temples or libraries, but if you can secure your early position, the Keshik is a good unit to conquer with, trigger your GA and acquire the big 4.

Greeks, B+ Any civ with the commercial trait stands to profit on a huge map. Frankly, any civ without the commercial traits won't do as well as one with it on a huge map. After a certain point, conquest is no longer that profitable (except to acquire resources or wonders, obviously) unless you can keep corruption down.

The Greeks can do that - and they can defend themselves quite well in the ancient age, without irritating upgrading until Gunpowder.

If the clever player can trigger an attack on his/herself as the medieval age is

beginning, the Greeks can be in a position to truly dominate.

Of course, the destiny of any Mediterranean power depends upon how well the Carthaginians are doing. THE CARTHAGINIANS MUST BE CHECKED AT ALL COSTS!!! On a huge map, a Carthage that isn't crippled is just too powerful - and aggressive - to deal with!

Romans, C Other players might disagree, but the Romans are one of the worst choices for a huge map. Sure, if you rock early on, later in the game you can build a truly massive empire. But rocking early on could be difficult. The Carthaginians alone are bad enough, but your Legionaries aren't going to do much damage against NMs - OR- Hoplites. Your best bet is to cripple EARLY... destroy Utica, Elephantine, etc ... REX like crazy, and get into a war during the early medieval era. At this point, use 1 Legionary to trigger your GA, and besides that, forget the damn things!

If you can overcome the early hurdle, and "box in" your potentially well-defended neighbours, then you can move on in a meaningful way.

Spanish, B Also a tough civ to get started as, though not as hard as the Romans. Surrounded by generally 3 expansionists, and potentially more, the Spanish are likely to fall behind in the tech race unless they send out plenty of warriors, get good terrain and do a lot of trading. That, and the lack of a good UU to trigger a GA, hold the Spanish back somewhat. Other than that, however, a great civ to play with. The commercial trait allows for a great empire, and the religious trait makes it easy to quickly subdue conquered cities.

Vikings, C- Unless you're a master technician, skip the Vikings. Sure, you can get a whole continent to yourself after wiping out the opposition, but then you'll be left behind in the science race, likely. On a large continent, you better be ready to conquer. Over REXing will leave you exposed to numerous enemies, and if you're near the Celts (and they have iron), forget it!

Even if you're crafty enough to come up from behind and conquer wonders that your more-likely-than-not more-advanced-than-you neighbours have built with horsemen or swordsmen, you'll most likely achieve only a slight edge. The Berserker comes too late to trigger a GA in time to get the big 4, and even then, as awesome as it is, you can only fit 2 in a galley! The expansionist trait can rock, but then again, with the English and Russians around most of the time, it can also prove a waste.

Diplomacy

Diplomacy is crucial. You must think long term on a huge map. Build those relationships. Be honourable, never actively make them hate you. Sooner or later you will have something they don't have and they will slowly become annoyed.

You should spend a lot of time on diplomacy. Try to trade something at least every other turn with almost every civ. It is a chore but it lets you notice trends in AI behaviour and attitude. You should initiate the formation of alliances with groups of civs that for obvious reasons should be allied. Geography dictates a lot of your choices. Also choose the alliance members based on what resources they control and on the natural affinities of the civs involved, (referring to ethnic affinity). If one or more civs are becoming a problem you have the mostly sure way of controlling the

situation, wars by proxy. They are tool of choice for keeping the AI occupied while you prepare your own offensive.

The thing that you should try is to plan an outcome early. Start the diplomatic efforts early. Have a goal in mind when dealing with any other civ (about 100 to 300 turns into the future). Everything you do should be geared toward the decided upon goal for that civ. Whether that goal is to use that enemy civ as a tool to keep a resource out of some other civs hands, or to destroy that civ completely. Don't just make plans for yourself, plan what you want to accomplish with the other civs as well. Bend them to your will. It can be done. In fact, it's the description of another aspect of the process of gaining Ultimate Power.

Espionage is your friend. You have lots of opponents. You must find out what they are up to. Plants spies, keep trying. Get a spy in every opponent's capital.

Information is power. If at all possible, establish embassies with rival civs as soon as practicable – not only does it give you a view of their minimap locations, it also enables: (1) knowledge of capitol city productivity possibilities (if you see 5 cows on grassland, you know you're never going to outrace that particular city to a wonder without a substantial tech lead); (2) specific city investigation; and (3) diplomatic agreements and alliances.

Diplomacy (in the sense of relations / attitude, etc. leading to a UN vote) is more challenging, if only because you've got to keep your eye on XX civs instead of X civs.

Trading and resources

The difference in tech trading is one of the most interesting things about a huge map. For example, on a game with 24 civs on Marla's World Map, there is no such thing as a tech leader in the world. With so many civs trading and researching, getting techs is far too cheap to really fall behind. What does become a problem is resource availability, which can be great. Nothing quite like invading the South Pacific islands for some much needed rubber...

Gaining a monopoly is harder, yes. But that cuts both ways. With 15 AIs out there, some of which will be much, much weaker than others, it should be actually easier to work trades by keeping the weak, poor civs up to date in tech in exchange for their luxuries/resources.

Luxuries come in bunches on map editor generated maps. Groups of a single type of luxury concentrated in relatively small areas. It seems that the width on these groups of luxs is maybe 10 squares, a 10x10 area of map squares with a single luxury type covering 6 to 10 of those squares.

In other words, it is very probable that most civs will get monopolies very early. Sometimes they will get a monopoly on more than one luxury. This makes it profitable to keep weak civs around longer than you would otherwise as long as they don't share a border with your empire.

Certain luxuries will be on one continent but not on the other. For example,, on a continent with no more than three large landmasses, the luxuries will be split

between the continental landmasses. This forces everybody to trade for what they want. Now remember this is on randomly generated maps.

Trading skills (resources) are better tested on huge maps. Securing the land necessary to obtain local and exportable sources of 4+ luxuries (let alone 8) is a bigger enterprise. One's ability to trade luxuries, and to a lesser extent, strategic resources, will be more important than on smaller maps – smaller maps seem to offer opportunities for quick and more efficient seizures of desired resources.

On the other hand, it is harder to gain control of all the luxuries. That means you have to trade for them. Then again, since there are so many more civs, and often the smaller ones fall behind in tech, you can often trade outdated tech for the luxury you want. So it's not that bad. Strategic resources could be an issue as well.

Governments

Monarchy is much more preferable. Republic would work best if you can wipe out enemies in one or two turns. If you can't, then stick with Monarchy...

However, Democracy seems to be the finest government form by the industrial era.

Game playing

Huge maps are really not that much of a challenge. Unless a truly Killer AI appears (not very likely, given there is so much room to expand into and neighbours are so far away), it is relatively simple to just become dominant in your corner of the world and build, build, build until a peaceful victory is achieved.

Peaceful "building" works better on larger maps. Related to all of the above -- with much less pressure to aggressively take land from rivals in order to assume a leadership position, war becomes even more of an option as opposed to a near requirement. War on a huge map must offer as many, or nearly as many, rewards as war on a standard map, but peaceful playing doesn't demand as many concessions regarding one's leadership position as a smaller map does.

Again related to the above – a later game peaceful approach seems to be easier than on smaller maps. IMHO, during the age of rifleman and infantry, you can usually count on at least several wars among the AIs, including the AI leaders. Since the AI is so very bad at Industrial Age warfare, these wars essentially offer the player who opts for peace to skate along at the lead while the closest challengers attrite themselves into backwardness. With 12 – 14 AI civs, instead of 5 – 7 AI civs, you can pretty much be sure that much of the world will descend into fruitless warfare – you can join in and take spoils (unlike the AIs) or you can remain neutral and research at 4 – 7 turns while the AIs' research engines stall.

Micromanagement

Because of the increased importance of trade / diplomacy / "peaceful warfare," micromanagement is a greatly increased burden. At or near a tech lead, trying to strike the most advantageous series of tech trades to the AI civs is time-consuming

process – so much so that many people frequently don't bother to do it "the right way" – they would just sell a tech to the 2, 3, or 4 closest competitors one after the other and then make the rounds of more distant competitors and sell them some outdated techs.

Warfare

The other thing to point out is that, with enemy civs so much bigger, wars tend to take a longer time to build up to, fight, and wind down from. This means WW becomes more of a factor and therefore Republic and Democracy are less suited for fighting Total War than on smaller maps.

Say you face an enemy on a certain number of fronts. On any, you can mass troops to take out the cities on that front in one turn. But on a larger map, you're much more likely to have to face cities BEYOND that front... not to mention if you let settlers "slip through" and found weird cities in the middle of nowhere in the mid-early game... and who doesn't? You're likely to have more of those on a huge map than on smaller ones, where land is more limited, and you must divert troops to face those cities, lest they launch small forces to screw up your infrastructure or genuinely threaten you.

Generating Great Leaders seems easier, because of the sheer number of units involved in warfare. The counterbalance to that effect, however, is the scale of wars has a tendency to slow them down unless you have overwhelming force. It is also easier, once you have established yourself as a world power by taking out a couple of neighbours, to sit back and watch the rest of the world go to hell in a hand-basket post-nationalism (MPPs).

On standard maps, it's possible to play straight builder until the era of cavalry if you have plenty of room for REXing and you don't have a UU that's begging to be used earlier. The basic premise is that if you can use peaceful expansion to build up a major tech lead, you can do more conquering during the era of cavalry than you could in the entire game up until then, if you fought with less potent units. And by focusing on building and researching, you can get to the era of cavalry faster, with a bigger window to use them before Nationalism cuts into their advantage. (Cavalry work a lot better for conquering large amounts of territory without serious war weariness problems than slower units do.)

But then there comes the time when your bigger, more productive cities have pretty much built what they need to build prior to the industrial age. At that point, they can start pre-building for cavalry; if the strategy is working perfectly, you'll have Leo's and have deliberately avoided getting Chivalry so you can build and upgrade massive swarms of horsemen. Then you can unleash your cavalry and conquer civ after civ until your prospective targets start getting Nationalism. That gives you the size and industrial base to do rapid research in the industrial and modern eras; without conquest, four-turn modern research is rarely if ever possible on a crowded map.

The reason for going straight from horsemen to cavalry if the situation lets it is that you can build about twice as many horsemen as you could knights for the same shields. (Knights cost a little over twice as much, but horsemen are likely to average higher wastage due to cities' producing more shields than are actually needed.)

Rush building costs four gold per shield. In contrast, with Leo's, upgrading horsemen to cavalry costs only one gold per shield. So you can get an excellent return on your investment leaving your less productive cities building improvements while your more productive ones (which are already fully improved or close enough to it) focus on horsemen. To get the same number of knights, you would have to put a lot more cities on troops at the expense of their ability to catch up on city improvements.

On a standard map, a cavalry war you start with horseman upgrades almost invariably involves over forty cavalry and on rarer occasion as many as sixty or more. With that kind of invasion force, distance and Nationalism are the only limiting factors in how fast and far your conquest can reach. On a huge map, you'd probably want about twice the cavalry strength to get the same kind of decisive overkill if you're taking on a major power, especially one with musketeers. (Note that this is for Emperor level; smaller forces should work at lower levels.) And a hundred horsemen, give or take a bit, are a lot easier and cheaper to build than a hundred knights!

One other reason you should avoid fighting with knights is that they don't generally seem to move fast enough to take out entire civs (even on standard maps) without war weariness starting to become an issue under Republic. And dropping out of Republic to fight with knights would cause unacceptable delays in obtaining Military Tradition (of course, Riders and Ansars don't have that speed problem).

A lot has to do with the pace of research. In the games where you wait until Military Tradition to do serious fighting, you are researching faster than Emperor-level AIs can (If you can't research that quickly, you need to fight earlier to get more space). That leaves you with a lot less time to build whatever it is you're going to build before Chivalry becomes available. In a game like that, the only way you could build twenty or more horsemen for upgrade to knights would be to cut seriously into your construction of city improvements. Also, the goal of getting knights as early as possible in the hope of fighting spears and the goal of getting Leonardo's to make the knight upgrades cheap are somewhat at odds with each other. Even with a perfectly timed pre-build, you need both Chivalry and Invention before you can do a Leonardo's-powered upgrade. That puts you only a tech away from Gunpowder, and your adversaries only a tech plus whatever lead you have away.

As for why so many cavalry, you want to be able to take multiple cities per turn, with fresh troops always ready to take over the attack while earlier waves heal. That calls for a whole lot more forces than the bare minimum needed to defeat a single neighbour. But it also allows conquest of an entire continent relatively quickly, thereby making the most of the window of opportunity between the time you get Military Tradition and the time AIs start getting Nationalism.

You should never pass up the opportunity for a Knight war ESPECIALLY on huge maps. Use a Ralping city placement on huge maps, with the military camp cities almost exclusively producing horsemen. Like others, go builder in the ancient age to take advantage of the REXing space. However, do hoard a lot of horseman by the beginning of the medieval period, say 20-30. Then always go for Leo's which makes the upgrades much less a pain on the wallet. With 30 knights you can go berserk on your strongest neighbour. You win. Then try to get in as many wars as possible before gunpowder, even after that you should try and kill other civs that don't have saltpetre. If necessary, you'll have to go through a gruelling war with knights vs. musketeers but will usually wait till cavalry and go on the rampage again. By the

industrial age you should be usually able to conquer your continent, or most of it in case it is particularly big.

A good approach is to go 1 civ at a time, and only rarely on a total warmongering spree with multiple civs (and if you do, the main axis of attack is unleashed upon one civ only). For this, Knights are the best choice despite waiting for a Leo upgrade because of this.

Also take into account that:

- 1) your enemy might not have saltpetre and if it does, might be severed.
- 2) your enemy will not upgrade immediately (\$\$).

By the time you finish your knight wars, you'll be in a position of dominance which is practically a game-winner in a silver plate. Even if you don't conquer the entire continent (which in huge is a chore) you'll win anyway, so what's the point of actually doing it? If you want to conquer it for... ehem... personal warmongering reasons... you can wait till tanks and bombers when your civ will be cranking them out at 2 turns even without mobilization. More fun IMO than cavalry wars.

Warfare - archipelago

Depending on how the map is generated, on an archipelago map it can take 12 turns or higher in some cases to move your forces onto enemy territory by sea. This will force you to build large numbers of units and have enough gold on hand to do an instant upgrade, say horseman to knights, or cavalry, the moment you get the technology, and load them onto the ships. This may be stating the obvious, but with the lag time your units are forced to spend at sea, and the way the AI swap techs - and even at the normal rate of AI research - much can change unfavourably by the time you get to foreign shores in both tech, and enemy unit numbers. Not using this tactic, taking the extra time to build units, instead of upgrade, can made you pay a steeper price than you should have.

But it probably comes down to play style and set up. Because usually you play with no more than 10-11 civs, and build a solid infrastructure before going to (a planned) war, there are inevitably large, sprawling powerful AI civs when they dust settles from the big fish eating the little. And many times, they share the same continent with you.

So my strategy, when map generation allows, is to take a large island(s)/small continent(s) from the weakest opponent that owns one. Preferably one that occupies it alone. You get your extra cities without the costly expense of going toe to toe with a neighbour with a large production capacity. If an overseas war goes unexpectedly poorly, or you face hostile trouble at home, cut it off and sail back. If a war with a bordering neighbour goes poorly, or another jumps in the fray, it is far more costly.

Once you have a productive overseas territory (now even more so after reading a **great** thread on palace moving), use it to pump out units, and whatever sea units that you need for the invasion. Once ready, launch a massive two front sea and land invasion against opposite sides of your neighbour's nation - with the sea portion coming a few turns after the land begins to give the AI time to move towards your cross border land incursion. Finally, squeeze them down to a manageable size, sue

for peace to take whatever you need from them, and then destroy them once the 20 turns expire.

Tech research and Wonders

A huge map implies that you will make contacts with other civs much later in the game. If you are on a continent or archipelago, most likely after Map Making or even after Navigation!

Therefore, the strategy of putting the Science bar to 0 or 10%, cash in and buy the techs is not really a valid option, you'll fall to far behind. Then, of course, once you make the first contacts you realize that all other civs have at least contacted 2 or 3 more civs, and that they all researched different techs, and that they had already traded them, and you are still farther behind.

Tech leads to better units, improvements and wonders. So, which one to choose? Consider the following:

- You are not going to war any time soon, so forget Bronze and Iron Working, the Wheel, Warrior Code and Horseback Riding.
- If you are on an island/continent, you NEED Map Making for the Great Lighthouse, or you might get stuck like myself until Navigation.
- You should increase your Gold for fast research and for all improvements.
- If you are isolated, you need the Great Library.
- You should have some 'valuable Tech' (meaning more advanced) to trade with 2-3 other 'lesser' techs.

Therefore, you should research as follows:

- Pangea: Literature, then Republic, then Construction, then Currency.
- Island/Continent: Map Making is your 1st priority, then as above.
- Archipelago: sacrifice even the Pyramids for the Great Lighthouse.

Don't forget that you have good chances to get Bronze and Iron Working, Pottery, Ceremonial Burial etc. from goodie-huts.

Even if you discover Iron and Horses late, it will take your worker only a couple of turns to link them, since your road network will already be well established.

Of the Ancient Times wonders, the most important is probably the Pyramids, since it will fuel your expansion, and you need to build anything between 30+ cities.

Feel like Robinson Crusoe? Go for the Great Lighthouse asap.

No water in sight? Go then for the Great Library, if only to prevent another civ to grab it.

One thing you should keep in mind is that "empire-wide" wonders like Sistine's, Bach's, Adam Smith, Hoover, etc. seem to have a magnified impact in a Huge game. To have something that pays for every marketplace, bank, stock exchange and commercial dock in an empire of 60 cities is a GIGANTIC advantage. Doing whatever is necessary to get to those techs and wonders first is, much more important than on a standard game.

Effectively "breaking" wonder cascades at the right times is critical to your ability to claim certain wonders for yourself.

The AI's weakness in tech trading is, the single biggest weakness in its peaceful game-play. Relatively simple human research and trading patterns can significantly set back your foes. This weakness is almost as glaring as the AI weakness at tactical warfare in its warring game-play.

Tech research / leadership positions are surprisingly easy to secure. You can secure a tech leadership position in the early middle ages -- well before you even had the FP built. Your AI competitors often had solid start positions and even greater REXing results, but in a game you play entirely you can secure enough land to be a "world power." You should not even imagine securing a tech lead on a standard map with less than the number of cities required for an FP build -- simply unthinkable.

One other point about huge maps: civs can't research nearly as fast in the early game, while the rate of techs unleashed on the world by huts is almost certainly higher unless playing with no barbarians (and hence no huts).

Forbidden Palace

An early Forbidden Palace can do wonders for an empire.