ELITE DANGEROUS

TRADING GUIDE

Trading is one of the three archetypal pilot roles in Elite Dangerous. Traders, commonly referred to as space truckers, are the conduits through which the interstellar economy flows. To be a successful trader, one must be pragmatic, knowledgeable and cautious. In the merchant game, bigger is *almost* always better. Just be careful not to attract too much of the wrong kind of attention.

Trading can be broken down into various sub-roles:

- Courier
- Merchant
- Miner
- Passenger carrier
- Salvager
- Smuggler

You can increase your trader rank by selling commodities for profit, either legally or through smuggling, or by completing trade missions.

WHAT YOU NEED

WHAT KIND OF SHIP?

The bigger, the better. You'll need as much space as you can get to fill with goods to trade. The more goods you can transport, the more profit you can make. You'll also want a good frame shift drive so that you can expand your reach. You'll want to limit your trading options as little as possible. To maximize speed and agility, install the lightest modules where you can spare it.

Ship recommendations:

Hauler, Type-6 Transporter, Keelback, Cobra Mk III, Type-7 Transporter, Python, Type-9 Heavy, Type-10 Defender, Anaconda, Imperial Cutter

Core internals:

A-rate the frame shift drive. D-rate life support and sensors. Everything else is up to personal preference.

CARGO RACKS & PASSENGER CABINS

You can't carry commodities without cargo racks so you'll need as many as your ship can ideally hold. Whatever optional internal slots are available should be used for cargo.

Instead of commodities, maybe you're wanting to transport people. Become a taxi, luxury cruise liner or rescue vessel by installing various passenger cabins. Remember that if you want to fare more well-to-do passengers, they'll want nicer, more-spacious cabins.

FUEL SCOOP (Optional)

For those trading long distances, especially across uninhabited space, installing a fuel scoop is probably in order. A fully-loaded cargo hold will also have great fuel requirements. Nothing worse than stranding yourself in an anarchy system with a cargo hold full of precious metals.

WEAPONS & ARMOR (Optional)

Although your ship should be primarily outfitted for trading, the ability to defend yourself is never a bad thing, especially when you can't escape an ambush. Pulse lasers, multi-cannons, chaff launchers, heavier bulkheads, shield boosters and hull reinforcements all go a long way to protecting your profits and, more importantly, your survival.

Be mindful, equipping weapons and countermeasures require power and equipping armor will weigh down your freighter, reducing its thrusters and jump range.

WHERE TO GO

Pretty much all trading happens at the countless commercial hubs found across human-occupied space. But how to go about finding the right ones?

SEARCHING FOR STAR SYSTEMS

Ideally, you'll want to seek out star systems experiencing a "Boom" state which denotes economic prosperity and high standards of living. Booming economies offer better deals and rewards. This also means you want to avoid star systems experiencing a "bust" or "famine" state which denotes extreme scarcity. It's also a good idea to search for star systems with higher populations and security. More people means more goods and opportunities and higher security means less piracy and more protection from the local authorities.

STARPORTS, OUTPOSTS & SETTLEMENTS:

Once you get to a promising star system, you'll want to find the largest starport. These are city-sized structures in space that offer a wider range of goods, missions and services. Starports are also preferable because they accommodate ships of all sizes. They come in different variants such as Coriolis, Ocellus, Orbis and Asteroid Bases.

Smaller outposts tend to be more remote and less accommodating of larger ships while planetary landing is a time-consuming inconvenience to be avoided if possible. That being said, they aren't devoid of value. They occasionally offer unique markets within a system that could be worth looking into. Additionally, lower security makes outposts ideal hubs for more criminally-minded entrepreneurs. Outposts come in different variants such as civilian, commercial, industrial, military, mining, scientific, and unsanctioned.
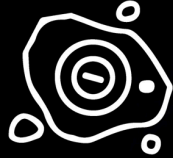
ELITE DANGEROUS
STATIONS

OUTPOST
NO LARGE PAD

ASTEROID BASE

MEGASHIP

SURFACE PORT
PLANETARY

CORIOLIS

ORBIS

OCELLUS

FLEET CARRIER

COMMODITIES MARKETS

Screen labels: RORSCHACH HORIZONS — LARGE POPULATION HIGHTECH AND REFIN... | BUY/SELL PRICE | BEST TO SELL | BEST TO BUY | MORE OPTIONS AVAILABLE | INFORMATION ABOUT SELECTED COMMODITY

ECONOMY TYPE TELLS WHAT TYPE OF GOODS ARE IN DEMAND AND WHAT IS PRODUCED NOW THERE ARE MIXED ECONOMY TYPE STATIONS LIKE THIS ONE IS HIGHTECH AND REFINERY. LARGE POPULATION MEANS HIGHER CHANCE TO FIND GOOD DEALS.

INDIUM — METALS

	SELL TO MARKET	BUY FROM MARKET
	5,468 CR	5,547 CR

Indium, In, atomic number 49. Melting point 429K. Used industrially and high tech for a wide range of alloys, including superconductors, sensors and holo projectors.

SUPPLY 117,452
CARGO -
IMPORTED FROM WOLF 561

WHAT TO BUY AND WHAT TO SELL

You only need to watch SUPPLY and DEMAND columns, GALACTIC AVERAGE is also a good indicator but higher the supply number is – lower the price will be, same goes for selling – higher demand and lower amount available at the market means higher price.

Buy what is in MED or HIGH under SUPPLY column and is available in big numbers and sell what is in MED or HIGH under DEMAND column and is in low amount available.

Also trading more expensive commodities can give bigger income, just never spend all your money – always leave 10% for ship insurance and some amount of credits for worst case scenarios.

NOTE: ship mass affects jump distance, so when you fill your cargo bay or buy new weapons and modules maximum jump range will decrease.

| GOODS	SELL	BUY	CARGO	DEMAND	SUPPLY	GALACTIC AVERAGE
WINE	260	-		21,330 LOW		318 CR
				280,813 MED		260 CR
				13,383 LOW		625 CR
				8,450 LOW		372 CR
AGRI-MEDICINES	1,010	1,039			2,191 LOW	1,148 CR
BASIC MEDICINES	274	293			65,289 LOW	389 CR
PERFORMANCE ENHANCERS	6,921	7,021			50,455 LOW	7,025 CR
PROGENITOR CELLS	6,821	6,920			992 MED	7,025 CR
METALS						
ALUMINIUM	295	310			15,164 LOW	406 CR
BERYLLIUM	9,002	-		27,901 HIGH		8,543 CR
COBALT	720	-	-	303,376 LOW		817 CR
COPPER	441	462			105,968 LOW	564 CR
GALLIUM	5,843	-	128	228,773 HIGH		5,421 CR
GOLD	10,358	-	-	141,152 HIGH		9,737 CR
INDIUM	5,468	5,547	-	LOW	117,452 HIGH	6,170 CR

EXIT | LAUNCH

So you've made it to one of these bustling altars of capitalism. Now what? The Commodities Market would be a good start. You can access the market through starport services after you dock at a station.

When you enter the market, you can see what commodities can be bought and sold and for how much. The basic principles of supply and demand are at play here: buy low and sell high. If a particular commodity is in short supply or high demand, the price will go up. If the supply is in abundance or the demand is low, the price will go down.

The price can also be affected by regular player activity (like trading and piracy) as well as what type of economy you are dealing with and even the goings on between various factions as their power ebbs and flows. For example, factions at war will demand the sale of battle weapons to their stations.

Remember, your ship has to have cargo racks installed before you can purchase commodities. Before you can uninstall a cargo rack, the cargo must be sold or otherwise offloaded.

MISSION BOARDS
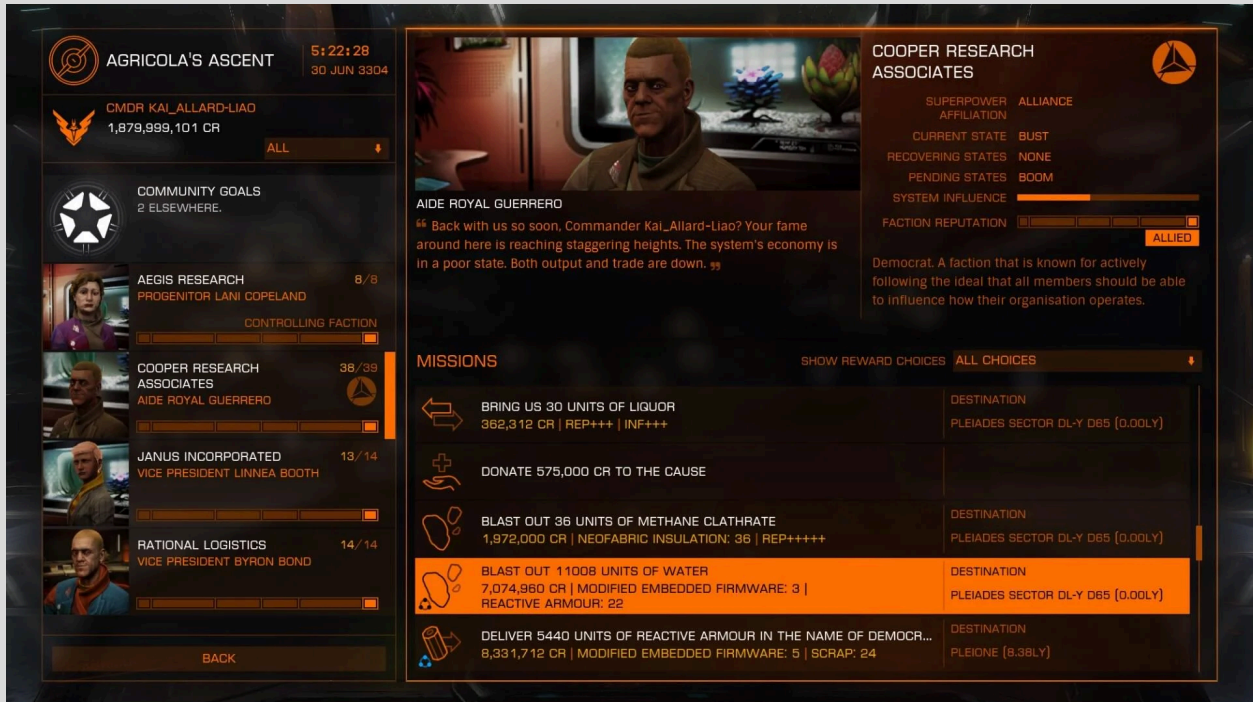
Another option for trade opportunities is the Mission Board. Also found in starport services, you can view and accept jobs from various factions present at the station. While these missions can range from simple data courier missions to dangerous political assassinations, you can filter missions to show only ones involving trade. Some will provide you with cargo to be transported to another location. Some will request that you procure a certain amount of a particular commodity on your own and bring it back (called "sourcing").

Many factions will require you establish a good reputation with them before they offer certain missions to you. Make sure you review the parameters of the mission carefully before accepting. Some missions will send you deceptively great distances or involve other elements that you might not be equipped to handle.

ECONOMY TYPES

Extraction

- Imports - Consumer Items, Food, Explosives (chemicals), Mineral Extractors (machinery), H.E. Suits (technology), Basic Medicines (medicines)
- Exports - Minerals group, some Metals group, hydrogen fuels (chemical group)

Refinery

- Imports - Consumer Items, Food, Minerals, Microbial Furnaces (machinery), H.E. Suits (technology)

- Exports - Metals, Industrial Materials, hydrogen fuels (chemical)

Agriculture

- Imports - Consumer Items, crop harvesters (machinery), agri medicines (medicines), pesticides (chemicals), biowaste (waste) [most other systems export this, it's cheap & plentiful]
- Exports - Food, Textiles

Industrial

- Imports - Food, Metals, auto fabricators & robotics (technology)
- Exports - Machinery, Consumer Items, food cartridges (food), computer components (technology), scrap (waste)

High Tech

- Imports - Food, Machinery, Metals, superconductors (industrial materials)
- Exports - Technology, consumer tech (consumer items)

Terraforming

- Imports - High demand for general goods
- Exports - Hydrogen fuel, biowaste

Tourism
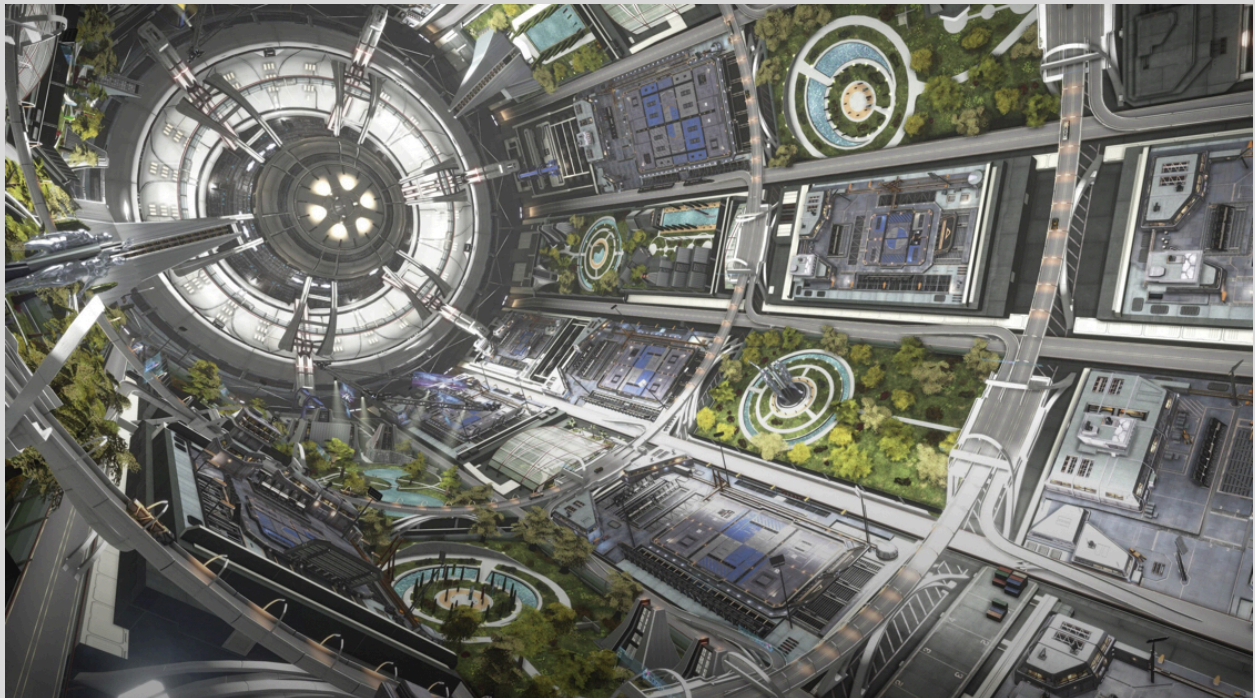
- Imports - High demand for general goods.
- Exports - Hydrogen fuel, biowaste

Service
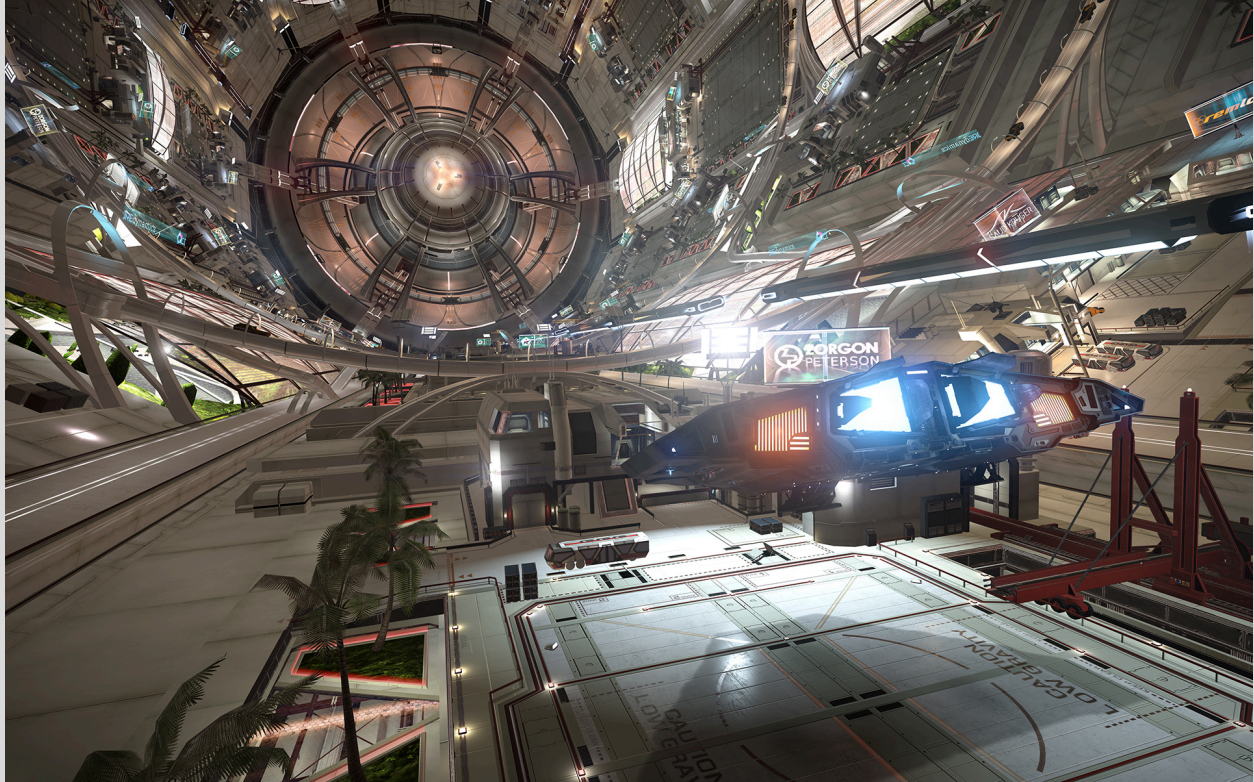
- Imports - Various goods
- Exports - Service economy does not produce items for consumption.

Military

- Imports - Aluminum, H.E. Suits, Polymers, Thorium, Titanium
- Exports - Hydrogen Fuel, Scrap, Robotics, Advanced Catalysers, Non-Lethal Weapons

Colony

- Imports - Cobalt, Rutile, Pyrophyllite, Clothing, Grain, Surface Stabilisers, Water Purifiers, Thermal Cooling Units, Power Generators
- Exports - Hydrogen Fuel, Biowaste, Limpet

Prison
Does not have commodity markets

Rescue
Only rescue stations have this type of economy.

- Imports - Liquid Oxygen, Water, Evacuation Shelter, Basic Medicines, H.E. Suits, Natural Fabrics

- Exports - rescue economy does not produce any items

Damaged

Only damaged stations have this type of economy.

- Imports - Liquid Oxygen, Water, Evacuation Shelter, Basic Medicines, H.E. Suits, Natural Fabrics
- Exports - Damaged economy does not produce any items

Repair

Only repairing stations have this type of economy.

- Imports - Auto-Fabricators, Robotics, Polymers, Palladium, Lithium, Rutile, Conductive Fabrics
- Exports - Hydrogen Fuel

Private Enterprise

Only Drake-class fleet carriers have this type of economy.

These privately-owned vessels do not generate commodities for export or request commodities for import on their own. Their owners can place potentially lucrative purchase orders for specific commodities that visiting pilots can fulfill, and also set tariffs on commodity purchases and sales.

MORE TRADING TIPS:

Take minerals from Extraction to Refinery.

Take metals from Refinery to Industrial or High Tech.

Take machinery from Industrial to High Tech or Agriculture.

Take technology or consumer items from High Tech to Agriculture or Industrial.

Take food from Agriculture to any other system type.

Take biowaste to Agriculture systems and take scrap to Refinery systems. These are widely available, and cheap, but won't deliver much profit in absolute terms.

ENCOUNTERING PIRATES

Pirate ships prowl along trade routes and anarchy systems hoping to prey on a lonely freighter and steal their precious cargo. The most common method is to pull ships out of supercruise using a frame shift drive interdictor. However, some pirates will use more deceptive means such as sending out fake distress signals and ambushing whatever good samaritan shows up.

Interdiction

Pretty much all pirates are equipped with frame shift drive interdictors. These devices are able to intercept ships and yank them out of supercruise into normal space. It is then that they will have the opportunity to attack their victims and solicit their cargo.

What do you do if you are facing interdiction?

Resist:

When you are interdicted, an escape vector will begin swaying around the screen and you will begin a tug-of-war with your attacker. To escape interdiction you must keep the reticle of your ship centered over the escape vector. If you can follow it long enough, you will escape and only the interdicting ship will be dropped from supercruise. You can see who is winning the interdiction by looking at the blue and red bars that appear on your HUD.

Should you attempt to escape and fail, however, you will pay the price. The cooldown for your frame shift drive will last significantly longer, giving your attack more time to deal damage. While you wait, divert power to SYS and deploy whatever countermeasures you have to minimize damage. Once the cooldown is completed, re-engage your frame shift drive and get out of there.

Submit:

Rather than fight the interdiction, you can choose to submit by throttling down to zero. You will be pulled out of supercruise into normal space and confronted by the pirate. However, the benefit of submitting is a significantly

shorter cooldown period for your frame shift drive, which will afford your attacker less time on target. While you wait, divert power to SYS and deploy whatever countermeasures you have to minimize damage. Once the cooldown is completed, re-engage your frame shift drive and get out of there.

In rare instances, the pirate may be willing to spare you should you agree to surrender some of your cargo. That is largely up to the both of you to decide so use your best judgment.

Self-defense
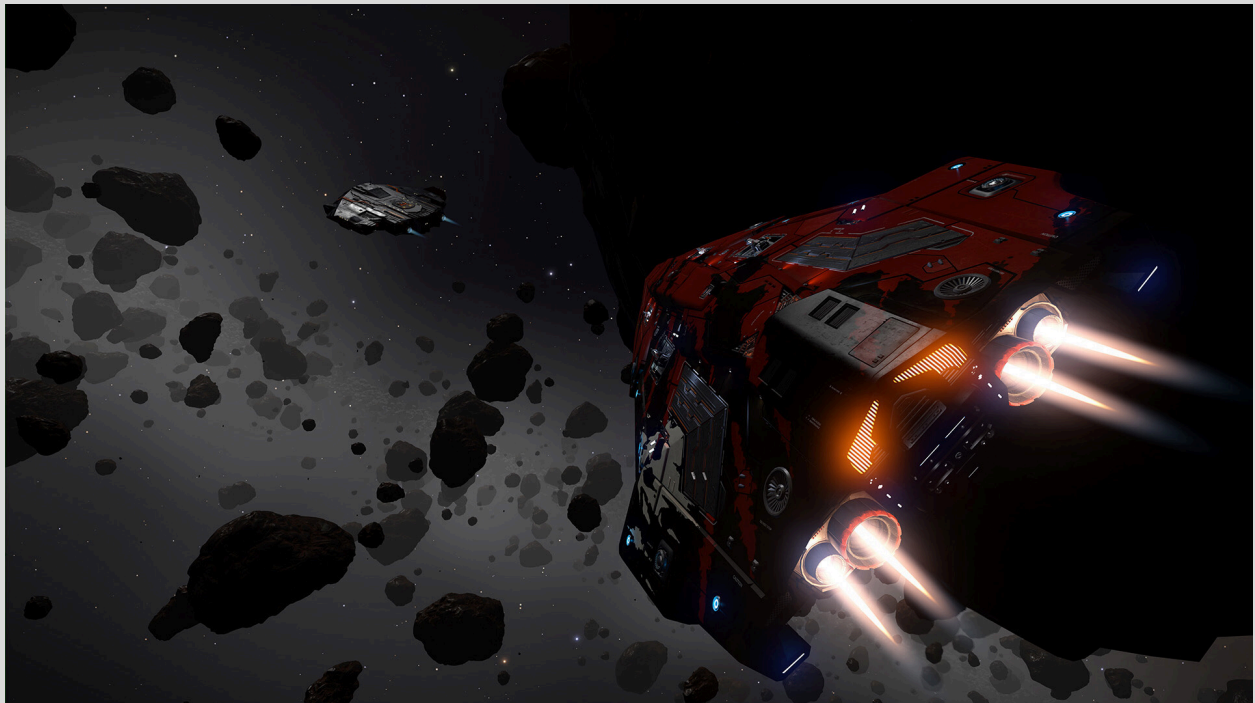
Cargo holds full of valuables tend to attract unsavory attention. Pirates stalk trade routes across the galaxy, hoping to make a quick buck by preying on lonely freighters. Ideally, if your ship gets interdicted, you'll want to avoid conflict as much as possible. You're a merchant, not a bounty hunter, and pirate ships will be built for combat.

However, there are a few potential solutions should escaping not be a realistic option. Roll deep in a convoy or be ready to defend yourself. You can equip your freighter with some basic weapons and countermeasures for self-defense. You could even install a fighter bay if you were really paranoid. Alternatively, you could reinforce your ship's hull and shields to the point that your attackers can't make a serious dent before you disappear into hyperspace.

NEVER FLY WITHOUT A REBUY

As with any role in Elite Dangerous, this is one of the most universal rules of the galaxy. With trading in particular, you'll be tempted to spend every last credit filling up your cargo hold with gold or progenitor cells to maximize your profits. Don't do it.

Prudent traders will never spend more than 50-60% of their credits on any one cargo run, just in case they get into trouble. It could be a persistent pirate or even just a docking accident. If you fall victim to bad luck, you could be left not only without the extra cash reserves needed to invest in more commodities but, even worse, you could lose your most valuable commodity of all: your ship.

MINING

Mining is for the blue-collar workhorse who loves blowing stuff up and getting rich. Assuming you know what you're doing, that is. Mining is worth a guide all on its own but it's worth dipping a toe in here. Here are the cliffsnotes to mining:

What you need:
- Mining hardpoints (required)
  - Mining laser
  - Abrasion blaster

- - Sub-surface displacement missiles
    - Seismic charge launcher
- Refinery (required)
- Cargo racks (required)
- Collector limpets (highly recommended)
- Probing tools (highly recommended)
  - *Detailed surface scanner*
  - *Pulse wave scanner*
  - *Prospector limpets*
- Fuel scoop (optional)
- Defensive weapons (optional)

Where to mine (in order of recommended):
- Planetary rings
- Asteroid clusters
- Planetary surfaces (SRV)

How to mine:
- Search for a viable mining site at planetary rings or asteroid clusters. Metallic asteroids are most profitable.
- If you want, you can use various scanning tools such as the detailed surface scanner or pulse wave scanner to better locate mining hotspots.
- Use mining hard points to extract minerals from the asteroids. Surface mining is easier but deep core mining is more profitable.
- Collect minerals by guiding them into your cargo scoop or using collector limpets.
- Collected fragments are automatically deposited into your refinery to be processed. You can manage the contents of your refinery using the inventory tab of the internal panel.
- When you collect enough of a particular ore, the refinery will generate a sellable commodity and store it in your cargo hold.
- Sell minerals at commodities markets (industrial economies are ideal).

SALVAGING

The space version of dumpster diving. Ships across the galaxy fall victim to circumstance all the time and they often leave behind valuable salvage. Might as well be yours.

Where to look for salvage:
- Signal sources
    - Degraded Emissions
    - Encoded Emissions
    - High Grade Emissions
    - Combat Aftermath
    - Salvageable Wreckage
    - Debris Field
    - Weak Signal Source
- Points of Interest on planet surfaces like shipwrecks
- Inside docking bays of damaged starports
- Any location that has "Search and Rescue" as an activity

What you can expect to find:
- Commodities
- Manufactured materials
- Black boxes

- Wreckage components
- Escape pods (occupied/unoccupied)
- Personal effects
- Hostages

Once the cargo is loose, you can gather it by guiding it into your cargo scoop or using collector limpets to do the work for you. Once you've loaded up your cargo you can sell the commodities at markets or turn it in at a Search and Rescue contact, if applicable.

More salvaging tips:
- If you want to get serious about salvage, you'll want plenty of cargo racks and collector limpets to make the process easier.
- Keep in mind that you're not the only one out there. Debris fields could attract search and rescue ships, or even worse, pirates.
- Also remember that some salvage is illegal and getting caught by the authorities with it in your cargo hold will net you a hefty fine. You can identify the legality of the cargo by targeting it.

SMUGGLING
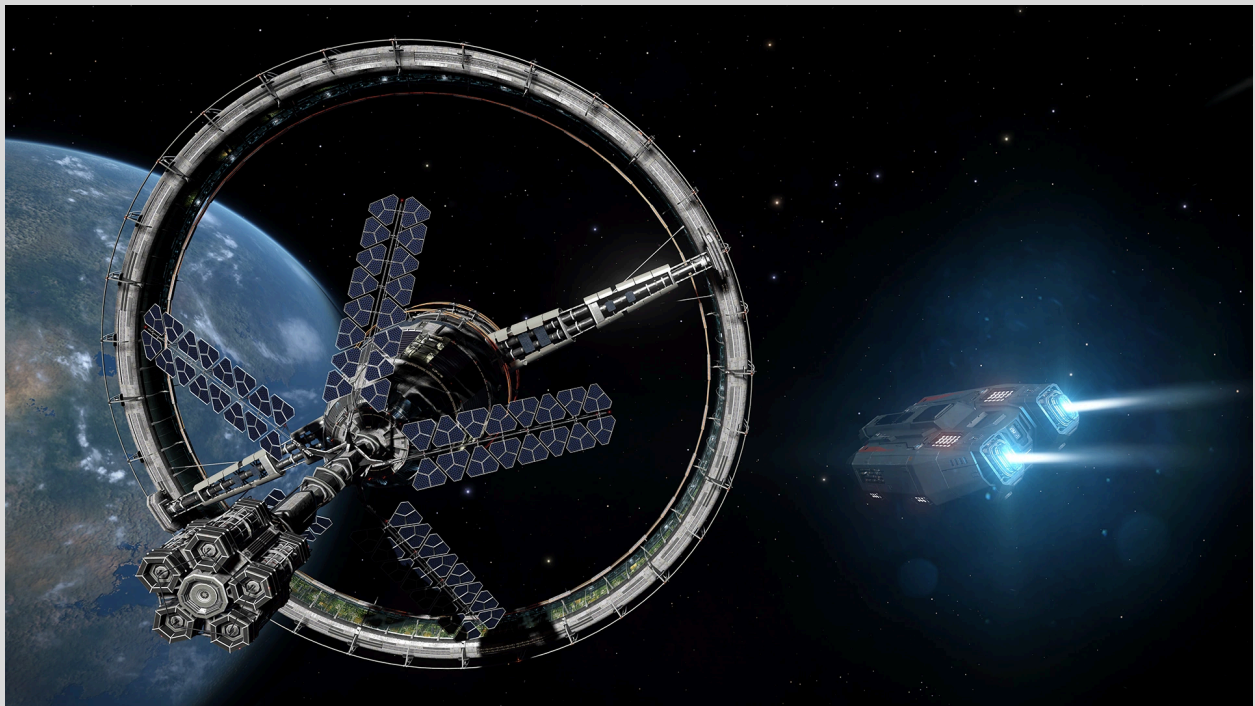
For those who are trying to obtain more illicit goods, they turn to smugglers. These are traders who specialize in sneaking illegal cargo into stations to sell on the black market. Which goods are illegal depends on the system you're in and what faction controls it. For example, imperial slaves are a popular commodity for smugglers outside of Imperial-controlled space where slavery is generally illegal.

What you need:

Just like a regular trader, you'll need cargo racks, a good frame shift drive and maybe some defensive measures. However, with smuggling, there are additional considerations.

Ship scans and heat signatures:

Your goal as a smuggler is to transport your illicit cargo inside the station without the authorities catching on. It is common when approaching a starport to be scanned by local system authority vessels. These scans will reveal to them the illegal contents of your cargo hold. If you are caught, you could be in big trouble.

To avoid being scanned, you must reduce your heat signature below 20% which reduces the range at which ships can scan you. This is easier to accomplish in smaller ships as they naturally have smaller heat signatures.

To reduce your heat signature, you should:
- Use a heat efficient ship like an Asp Explorer, Diamondback Explorer or a Python.
- Equip a heat efficient power supply, with A-rated power plants being the most heat efficient.

- Engineer your ship to reduce your thermal load such as clean drive tuning or shielded frame shift drive.
- Equipping the lowest-powered shield will allow your ship to run cooler.
- Disable non-essential ship modules.
- Deploying a heatsink will significantly reduce your heat signature for a brief time.
- Engage silent running.

Silent running:

A mode that can be enabled with Circle + R1 or via the ship tab of the internal panel. When activated, your ship's shield generator is shut down and the cooling vents close, preventing heat from escaping. This drops your ship's heat signature dramatically, making it easy to avoid being scanned and detected. However, you cannot sustain this for long as the heat building up inside your ship will begin to rapidly deteriorate your internal modules and hull.

You can temporarily delay this by deploying a heatsink. When activated, the heat of the ship's cooling system is flushed into a heatsink, an expendable unit which is then ejected from the ship. This provides a brief window where your internal temperature drops dramatically. Silent running combined with other heat-mitigating measures can make your ship virtually or completely undetectable. Once you are safely docked inside the station, you can disable silent running and offload your illegal cargo at the black market.

RESOURCES

Third-party tools and resources.

ELITE DANGEROUS DATABASE (EDDB):

If spending 30+ minutes meticulously researching market prices across systems on your own doesn't sound like a good time, you can always visit the Elite Dangerous Database (EDDB) where the work has already been done for you. This third-party, user-driven website allows you to search for whatever you need to find in the galaxy. From systems, stations, economy types, commodities, market prices, etc. It's all here. Don't be afraid to use it.

Link: https://eddb.io

TRADER'S BIBLE:

TRADER'S BIBLE

AN IMPORT / EXPORT GUIDE FOR ELITE: DANGEROUS

ORIGINAL INSPIRATION: HTTP://REDD.IT/2NCFA2

DESIGNED BY: CMDR WARPSPIDERX   DATA BY: CMDR PROMETHEUS DARKO
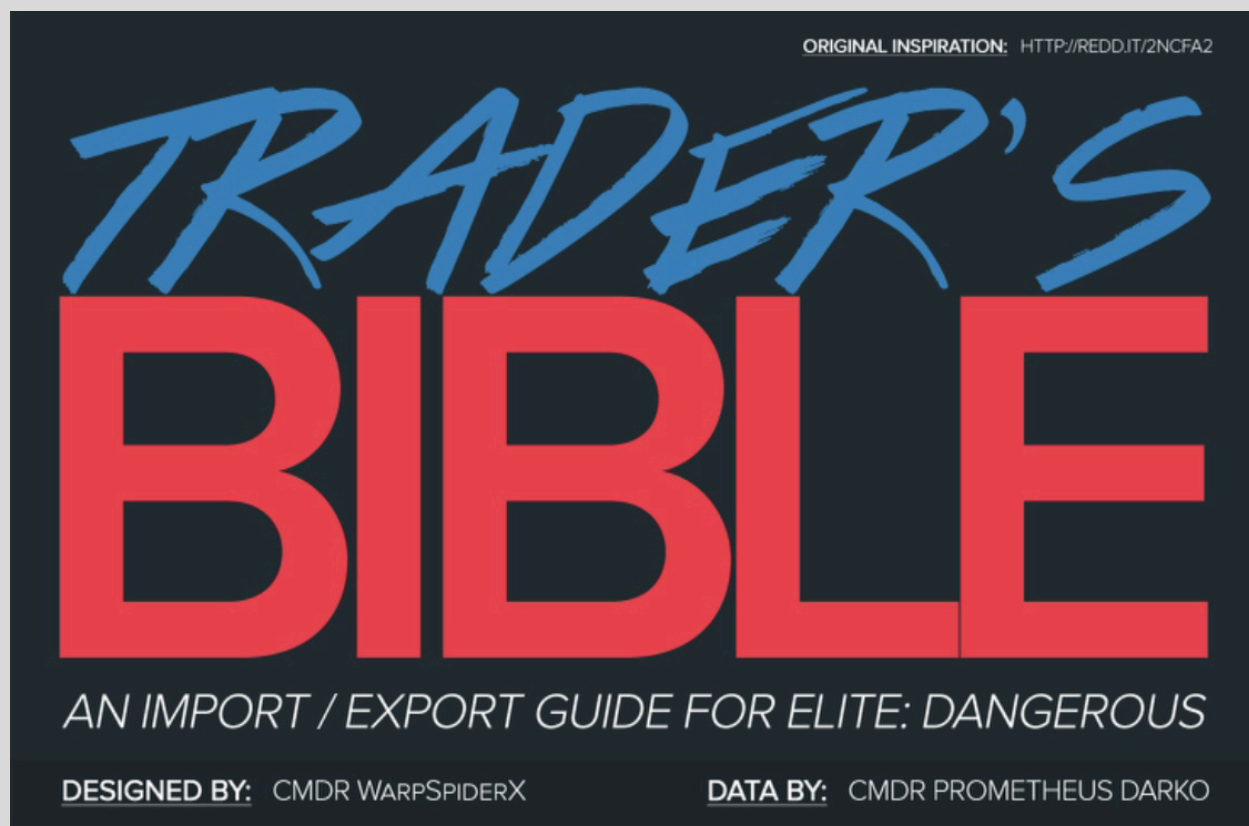
This lengthy infographic visualizes the supply and demand relationship between different commodities and different types of economies.

Link: https://i.imgur.com/QsxScn1_d.webp?maxwidth=640&shape=thumb&fidelity=medium

OTHER RESOURCES:

There are a variety of places online where you can discuss the game with other players in the community such as the Elite Dangerous subreddit or the forums on the Frontier Developments website.