

Animal Poker Rulebook

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Number of players: 3-6

Length: 30-45 minutes

1 Overview

Animal Poker is a game for 3–6 players. The object is to guess the best Set you can make each round among the Animals players will secretly decide to play that round. The catch is, the Animals you play give you various special effects, and so you have to work out based on these effects which Animals are likely to be played.

2 Components

- 33 Animal Season cards: 4 each of Mouse, Rabbit, Snake, Cat, Ape, Dog, Goat, Horse and 1 Elephant
- 6 sets (one in each color) of 9 Animal player cards
- 6 sets (one in each color) of Guess Boards and 3 pegs for each Board
- Coins in various denominations

NOTE: The following rules explain the game for 3–4 players first. The rules changes for 5–6 players are explained afterwards.

3 Set-up

For 3–4 player, the Ape is not used. Thus make 8 piles in the center of the play space for the Animal season decks, in order of Animal rank (Mouse, Rabbit, Snake, Cat, Dog, Goat, Horse, Elephant). Shuffle these decks.

Have each player choose a color and then give each player the 8 Animal player cards (leaving out the Ape) and the Guess Board and pegs of his color.

4 Gameflow

The game is played over a series of rounds. At the beginning of a round, turn over the top card of the Season decks of each Animal. Then add one coin to the pot for each player.

Players simultaneously and secretly choose which Animals they wish to play and their Set guesses by placing the appropriate cards facedown in front of them and marking the appropriate positions in their Guess Boards. Then, all choices are revealed and

players make the best Sets they can among Animals played. The player who makes the best Set wins the pot.

4.1 Submission

Each round, all players select:

- Two *different* Animal player cards to play. **HOWEVER, in a three player game (and only in a three player game) each player selects three different Animal player cards to play.**
- A Set guess on their Guess Boards.

A Set guess consists of:

- A Guess Type: either Herd or Chain;
- A Guess Size: 2–9;
- A Guess Animal.

A Herd is a collection of multiple copies of the kind of Animal, and a Chain is a collection of different Animals in consecutive order. The Animals, in order from lowest to highest, are:

- Mouse
- Rabbit
- Snake
- Cat
- Dog
- Goat
- Horse
- Elephant

An example of a Set guess is:

- Guess Type = Chain;
- Guess Size = 3;
- Guess Animal = Cat.

This means a Chain of 3 to the Cat and corresponds to a Set of one Rabbit, one Snake, and one Cat. The smallest Set guess size allowed for a Herd is 2 and the smallest Set guess size allowed for a Chain is 3. Note that Chains do not wrap around; so Chain of 3 to the Rabbit is not a valid Set guess.

Sets are ordered first by Type and Size, and then by Animal. The order of Type and Size is:

- Herd of 2
- Chain of 3
- Herd of 3
- Chain of 4
- Herd of 4
- Chain of 5
- etc.

So a Herd of 3 Cats is better than a Chain of 3 to the Elephant, but a Chain of 3 to the Elephant is better than a Chain of 3 to the Horse.

4.2 Resolution

During Resolution, players make the best Sets they can based on their guesses and all the Animals that were played. In general, players can only make a Set they guessed, and can use any of the Animals played by any of the players to make these Sets. The Animals a player plays may affect which Sets he can make and how he can make them.

The player who makes the best Set wins the pot. Multiple players can tie for the win; in this case, split the pot as evenly as possible among all players who won and leave whatever coins remain in the pot for the next round. However, if no player makes a Set, then no one wins and all the coins remain in the pot for the next round.

Finally, put the Season card of all Animals on the bottom of their decks face-up. Over every four rounds, each Animal should go through each Season exactly once; when you go through four rounds, reshuffle the Season decks for the next round. Note that, however, the Elephant only has one Season card that is always its effect. Then move on to the next round.

5 Animal Effects

The Animals that players play greatly affect the resolution of a round. The Season the Animal is in indicates what effect playing that Animal will have on the game. In general, an Animal a player plays only effects (and benefits) him. The animal effects are as follows:

5.1 Mouse Effects

- Winter Mouse: You also guess all Herds of Rabbits, Snakes, and Cats (of any size 2 or greater).
- Spring Mouse: You also guess all Herds of 3 and Chains of 4 (of/to any Animal).
- Summer Mouse: You also guess all Chains to the Dog, Goat, and Horse (of any size 3 or greater).
- Fall Mouse: You also guess all the Set guesses of other players.

Note: You still submit a Set guess when you play a Mouse and the Mouse does not replace this guess.

5.2 Rabbit Effects

- Winter Rabbit: Every two Rabbits count as three Wilds for you.
- Spring Rabbit: All Rabbits count as two Rabbits for you.
- Summer Rabbit: Rabbits counts as Wild for you. Players who didn't play a Rabbit can't use this Animal to make Sets.
- Fall Rabbit: You get an extra Rabbit when making Sets next round.

Note: A Wild means an Animal of any kind for purposes of making Sets.

5.3 Snake Effects

- Winter Snake: Other players can't make Herds.
- Spring Snake: Other players can't make Chains.
- Summer Snake: Other players can't make Sets better than or equal to a Chain of 5.
- Fall Snake: Other players can't make Sets worse than or equal to a Herd of 3.

Note: Snake effects only affect other players.

5.4 Cat Effects

- Winter Cat: Cats count as Cats or lower for you. Dogs count as Dogs or higher for you.
- Spring Cat: Each pair of Dog and Cat counts as two Wilds for you.
- Summer Cat: If no one played a Dog, then all Animals Cat or lower count as Wild for you.
- Fall Cat: This Animal counts as a Dog and a Cat for you.

Note: “Cats count as Cats or lower for you” means Cats count as any Animal Cat or lower for the purpose of making sets for that player.

5.5 Dog Effects

- Winter Dog: Cats count as Cats or lower for you. Dogs count as Dogs or higher for you.
- Spring Dog: Each pair of Dog and Cat counts as two Wilds for you.
- Summer Dog: If no one played a Cat, then all Animals Dog or higher count as Wild for you.
- Fall Dog: This Animal counts as a Dog and a Cat for you.

5.6 Goat Effects

- Winter Goat: You win if no one makes a Set.
- Spring Goat: You win if no one played a Mouse or an Elephant.
- Summer Goat: You win if no one else played a Goat.
- Fall Goat: You win if someone else submitted exactly the same Set guess as you.

Note: If a player wins a round from a Goat effect, other players dont win (unless they also win from a Goat effect).

5.7 Horse Effects

Winter Horse: You get two extra coins if you win (or tie for the win).

Spring Horse: You get two coins if someone else played exactly the same Animals as you.

Summer Horse: You can't make Sets. You get two coins.

Fall Horse: You get two coins if everyone makes a Set.

Note: When a card says you get a coin it means a coin from the store of coins outside play, not from the pot.

5.8 Elephant Effects

Elephant: You are immune to Snakes. Snakes count as Wild for you.

Note: The Elephant doesn't have Seasons; it always has the same effect.

6 Game End

The game ends at the end of a round when some player

- won or split a pot this round;
- had at least 15 coins at the beginning of the round.

The player who satisfied these conditions is the winner. If multiple players satisfy these conditions in the same round, then the player among them with the most coins wins. If there is still a tie, so be it.

7 Example Round

Ted, Sue, Jen, and Max are playing. Their first round, the Seasons of the Animals are as follows:

Winter Mouse: You also guess all Herds of Rabbits, Snakes, and Cats (of any size).

Summer Rabbit: Rabbits counts as Wild for you. Players who didn't play a Rabbit can't use this Animal to make Sets.

Spring Snake: Other players can't make Chains.

Summer Cat: If no one played a Dog, then all Animals Cat or lower count as Wild for you.

Fall Dog: This Animal counts as a Dog and a Cat for you.

Spring Goat: You win if no one played a Mouse or an Elephant.

Summer Horse: You can't make Sets. You get two coins.

Elephant: You are immune to Snakes. Snakes count as Wild for you.

The players play and guess the following:

- Ted plays Snake and Horse and guesses Herd of 4 Elephants.
- Max plays Rabbit and Cat and guesses Chain of 6 to the Elephant.
- Jen plays Rabbit and Goat and guesses Herd of 3 Rabbits.
- Sue plays Elephant and Cat and guesses Chain of 6 to the Elephant.

The resolution for each player is the following:

- Ted cannot make a Set but gets a coin.
- Max cannot make his chain thanks to Ted's snake.
- Jen does not make her guess of Herd of 3 Rabbits. Also, she does not win from Goat because Sue played an Elephant.
- Sue's Elephant makes her immune to Ted's snake, and no one played a Dog, so she makes her Chain of 6 to the Elephant.

The net result is that Ted gets a coin and Sue wins the 4 coins in the pot.

8 Rules for 5–6 Players

With 5–6 players, an additional Animal, the Ape, is used. The Ape fits between the Cat and the Dog in the Animal order, so the order, from lowest to highest, becomes:

- Mouse
- Rabbit
- Snake
- Cat
- Ape
- Dog
- Goat
- Horse
- Elephant

Thus, a Chain of 4 to the Goat is now a Cat, an Ape, a Dog, and a Goat. When setting up for 5–6 players, include the Ape Season cards and give each player 9 of the Animal player cards of his color.

The Ape effects are as follows:

8.1 Ape Effects

- Winter Ape: You're competing for the sidepot instead of the main pot. The sidepot has three coins.
- Spring Ape: You're competing for the sidepot instead of the main pot. The sidepot has a number of coins equal to the number of players who did not play Ape.
- Summer Ape: You're competing for the sidepot instead of the main pot. The sidepot has a number of coins equal to half the number of different Animals played, rounded up.
- Fall Ape: You're competing for the sidepot instead of the main pot. The sidepot has a number of coins equal to the number of copies of the most popular Animal played.

The Ape always makes whoever plays it compete for the sidepot. The sidepot is an additional pot in addition to the main pot. The Season that the Ape is in dictates

how many coins are placed in the sidepot each round. Players who are competing for the sidepot compete separately from those competing for the main pot: there will be separate winners of each. For instance, if a player wins the main pot via Goat, another player may win the sidepot by making a Set, or vice-versa. However, in respects other than winning pots, the cards that all players play still matter: a player who is playing for the sidepot can use Animals from players playing for the main pot to make Sets; Snakes affect everyone; etc.

Just like the main pot, multiple players can tie for the win of the sidepot, and in this case the sidepot is divided as evenly as possible among sidepot winners. Also like the main pot, if no one competing makes a Set, then no one wins. However, unlike the main pot, the sidepot is cleared after every round.