

Savanna Trick

A trick taking game by Hisashi Hayashi
3-4 players, 30 minutes, 10 years and up

The game focuses on the animals of the savanna. The herbivores eat the grass and the carnivores eat the herbivores. Players try to balance the herd of animals they collect on the savanna.

Components

- 42 Animal cards



- 16 Special Animal cards.
- 5 Bonus cards - Gazelle, Zebra, Gnu, Grass, and Carnivore. [The carnivore bonus card is used only in the 3 player game.]
- 4 Grass Point cards.
- 4 Cubes –for tracking grass points.

Preparation – Note: Most of the Special Animal cards are not used in the basic game.

- Each player is given a Grass Point card, which is placed face-up in front of them, and a cube which is placed on the card according to the chart below.
- The Animal cards are shuffled (along with 3 Hyena cards and 1 Elephant card) and a number are dealt to each player according to the chart below.

Grass point	Animal card
3 players 20 points	13 cards
4 players 16 points	10 cards

- Cards are kept secret, and any remaining cards are put back in the box
- Place the Bonus Cards to one side. They are only used at the final scoring.
- The player that most recently visited the savanna goes first.

Rules of the game

This is a traditional trick taking game that plays in the following manner:

1. Play a card

The start player chooses a card from his hand and places it face up on the table in front of him. The chosen animal is the 'lead' animal.

Then clockwise from the start player each other player chooses a card and places it face up on the table in front of them.

- If they have the same animal in hand, they **must** follow the card lead.
- If they don't have the same animal card in hand they can play a different card.
- Once every player has played a card the winner is determined.

2. Determine the Winner

- If there is one or more Lion cards in play, the highest Lion card wins the 'trick.'
- If no Lion cards are played, the player with the highest card of the animal lead wins the trick.

- c. The winner of the trick collects all the played cards and places them face down (they are saved for scoring at the end). The winner then loses two 'grass points' and moves their marker cube back two spaces on their Grass Card. [The cube cannot go below zero]
- d. The winner of the trick then plays the first card of the next trick. This is repeated until players have played all their cards.

Special animals

In the basic game, the Hyena and Elephant are the only special animals used and they have special rules.

Special animal cards can be played at any time, even if the player can follow the lead animal played.

If a player begins a round by playing a special animal card the next player can play any card from their hand. If they play an animal card, that becomes the lead animal. If they play a special animal card, then the third player can determine the lead animal, and so forth.

If all cards played are special animal cards, the winner is determined according to the rules below:

- **Hyena** - The player loses the trick. But if all players play a Hyena card, the player who played the first Hyena card wins the trick. If anyone plays an Elephant card then the Elephant rule comes into play.
- **Elephant** – For this trick only...the winner is the player who played the highest card. The kind of animal is not important, just the number. If there is a tie, the winner is the tied player who played later in the round.

End of the game and Animal Card Check

When players have played all their cards the game ends.

Players check the animal cards they've won, both herbivores and carnivores to see how many of them they keep.

Herbivores

- Check to see how many herbivores can eat (Elephant, Gnu, Zebra and Gazelle) which will depend on how many grass points a player has left.
- Elephants eat first and eat 3 grass points each.
- Then the other herbivores eat for 1 grass point each. The order in which they eat is determined by the number of cards of each animal a player has won. They eat in order of most-to-least cards. If there is a tie between the numbers of cards held, the animal with the highest cards will eat next. If there is still a tie, the order goes Gnu > Zebra > Gazelle.
- If the grass runs out before all the animals have eaten, any animals that didn't eat are set aside and will not count in the final scoring.

Carnivores

Check to see if all the carnivores (Lions and Hyenas) can eat herbivores.

- Elephants cannot be eaten.
- The order in which the carnivores eat is determined by the number of cards of each herbivore (not counting Elephants) a player has won. Carnivores eat least-to-most cards. So they will eat the herbivore with the fewest cards first. If there is a tie for the least cards, the lowest numbered cards will be eaten before the higher numbered cards. If there is still a tie, they are eaten in the order Gazelle > Zebra > Gnu.
- All herbivores eaten by the carnivores are set aside and do not count in the final scoring.
- If there are more carnivores than there are edible herbivores, all carnivores that didn't eat are set aside and do not count in the final scoring.

Scoring and winner

First: Players score point equal to all the numbers on their remaining herbivore and carnivore cards.

Second: Bonus points are calculated.

- 4 bonus points are awarded to the player with the most herbivore cards of each type (Gazelle, Gnu, and Zebra). [Ties are friendly. Tied players will both get 4 points if they have the same number of cards of a particular animal.] In a *3-player game*, 4 bonus points are awarded to

the player with the most Lion and Hyena cards. Tied players all get 4 points each.

- 4 bonus points are awarded to the player with the most grass points remaining. [Tied players will get 4 points each, although if no player has any grass points left, no one gets the bonus points.]

The Winner is the player with the most points!

Advanced Game

In the advanced game different special animal cards can be added to the deck instead of the Hyena and the Elephant. Players decide on ONE animal from each of the two groups:

Group A - Hyena, Golden Eagle, Chameleon or Leopard. (3 Cards each)

Group B - Elephant, Hippopotamus, Rhino or Gorilla. (1 Card each)

Group A - Special Animal Cards



Hyena - The player loses the trick. But if all players play a Hyena card, the player who played the first Hyena card wins the trick. If anyone plays a different special animal card then that cards rules come into play.

Golden Eagle – The player loses the trick. If all players play a Golden eagle the winner is the player who played the eagle with the highest number. *Additionally*, the player who played the Golden Eagle steals one of the cards from the trick, even the winning card! Exception: If a Golden Eagle is played as the first card of the trick the player may NOT steal a card. If anyone plays an Elephant or Rhino card onto a trick with just Golden Eagles, the new card rules come into play.

Chameleon - In the hand this card is a carnivore, but when it is played it copies the highest non-special herbivore card, cancelling that card and assuming its type (Gazelle, Gnu, or Zebra). When it comes to final scoring, the Chameleon is counted with a players carnivore cards for points, but it does not eat a herbivore.

Leopard - The leopard is treated just like a lion.

Group B - Special Animal Cards

Elephant – For this trick only...the winner is the player who played the highest card. The kind of animal is not important, just the number. If there is a tie, the winner is the tied player who played later in the round.

Hippopotamus – After being played, carnivores cannot be played (unless a player only has carnivore cards in their hand) and any carnivores played or already played are ignored. The Hippopotamus is treated as if it is the same as the current lead herbivore. If there is no lead herbivore it will win the trick unless a higher numbered regular herbivore is played.

Rhino - In this trick, the herbivore is stronger than the carnivore so carnivore cards are ignored. The Rhino card is like the Hippopotamus, it is treated as if it is the same as the current lead herbivore. If there is no lead herbivore it will win the trick unless a higher numbered regular herbivore is played. If all players play a carnivore (Lion, Leopard, Hyena or Golden Eagle) the winner will be the player who played the highest card.

Gorilla – For this trick only...small numbers are more powerful than bigger numbers. The winner is the player who plays the lowest card. The Gorilla is like the Hippopotamus, it is treated as if it is the same as the current lead herbivore. If there is no lead herbivore it will win the trick unless a lower numbered regular herbivore is played.