Wren Games

Pilfering Pandas
Competitive Rules

2-4 players	15-30 mins	ages 10+

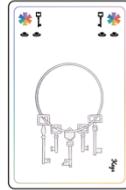*You're a busy group of pandas planning your escape from the zoo but you'll need help. You have been rummaging and pilfering food from all the other animals but the Zoo Keeper is onto you so you must be fast. You must quickly trade all the food you have pilfered with the nefarious Meerkats who have promised to help one panda to escape.*

Panda Cards (5)

Every panda is special and is good at a particular thing that makes the Meerkats more likely to help them and gives them a bonus at the end of the game if their objective is met.
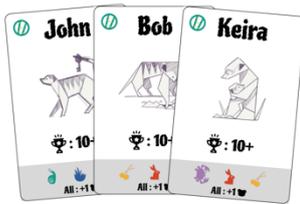
Key Cards (4)

Keys are highly useful, enabling you to spruce up undesirable food bundles.
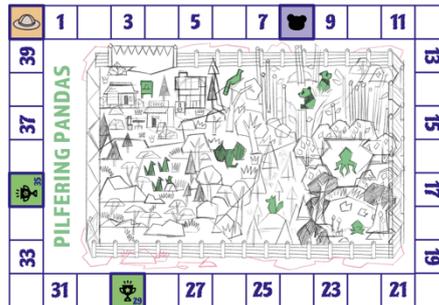
Loot Cards (45)

The pandas are pilfering food from the other animals to trade with the meerkats who have promised to help one of them escape if they find enough food for them. The Loot Deck is all the food you are yet to pilfer from the animals at the zoo.
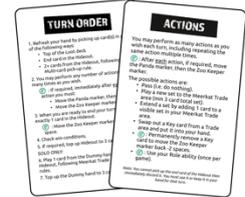
Meerkat Cards (5)

The Meerkats have a nefarious trade circle and will happily trade your bundles of food to help you get the right supplies for your escape. The more you give them, the more chance they will choose to help you.
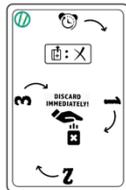
Turn Order / Action Cards (4)

Each in a different colour to match the player markers.

Escape Track (1) & Panda Markers (4)

The Escape Track and the player markers keep a record of the pandas individual progress towards escaping compared to the other competing pandas.

Timer Card (1)

When someone has too many supplies, suspicion is at an all-time high so they cannot revisit the Hideout until the Zoo Keepers attention is directed elsewhere.

MULTI-CARD PICK-UP

If you pick-up 2+ cards from the Hideout you must follow these rules before continuing your turn as normal.

1. Choose the card you want to pick-up from. This card must be used during this turn.
2. Starting with the end card in the Hideout and moving from right to left, pick up all cards between this card and your chosen left-most card.
3. Take the Raised Suspicion card, if you already have it, flip it over unless it is already on the +4 side.
3. Take the Timer card. You cannot do a Multi-Card Pick-up until this card is no longer in front of you.

Player Aid (1)

RETURN TO BOX

Raised Suspicion	ZOO KEEPER MOVEMENT	PANDA MOVEMENT	Foiled Plans
+2		**New Sets:** Total number of in set.	**Back Door Trade**
	−2 per Key card discarded to box.	If the set uses the last card in a Meerkat area, add its to your total points value.	
	+2 per Key card in set.	*Note: You must play a minimum of 2 cards to creating a minimum 3-card set.*	Choose a Meerkat.
	+1 end of every turn.		The next set played must be placed to the LEFT of their Trade area.
	+4 per Multi-card pick-up.	**Extending Sets:** Number of on new card only.	
	+1 per set below Meerkat limit.		
	+3 per set with all cards above Meerkat limit.		

Raised Suspicion card (1), Zoo Keeper and Panda Movement player aids (2) and Foiled Plans cards (7)

Cards should always be placed with their competitive side face-up during setup and gameplay.

= Cooperative component   = Competitive component

OBJECTIVE

You must trade the most food with the Meerkats to ensure that they help *you* to escape the zoo before anyone else does.

EXAMPLES are shown in blue boxes. The card colour coding is as follows:

- Red cards indicate those left in the Hideout.
- Grey cards indicate cards played on a previous turn to a Meerkat Trade area.
- White cards are the cards in your hand, being played or picked-up this turn.
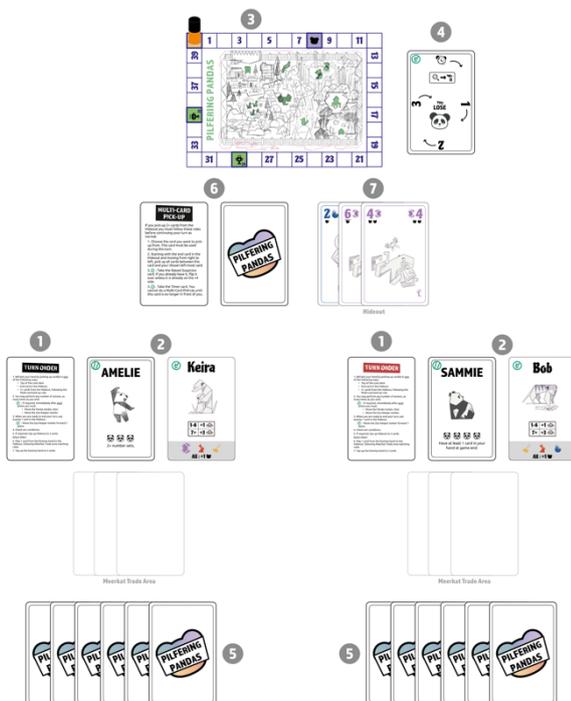
SETUP

Before starting setup, return the Raised Suspicion card (1), Foiled Plans cards (7) and the Panda and Zoo Keeper Movement player aids (2) to the box.

The competitive version can be played as a single game or as multiple consecutive rounds. Agree the number of rounds before you start (1,3 or 5 recommended). The game should be fully reset between each round.

Set up the play area as shown in the diagram opposite by following these steps. Double sided cards should be placed with the (!/) icon face-up.

1. Each player takes a Turn Order player aid and matching colour Panda marker.
2. Shuffle the Panda cards and Meerkat cards separately, then deal 1 of each type to every player.
3. Place the Escape Track at the top of the play area with all of the chosen Panda markers placed on the 0-space.
4. Next to the track, place the Timer card.
5. Shuffle together the Loot cards with the Key cards to create the Loot deck, then deal each player 6 cards.
6. Place the remainder of the Loot Deck below the Escape Track and place the Multi-Card Pick-Up player aid to the left of the deck.
7. Create your Hideout by placing the top 3 cards from the deck as shown in the diagram.
8. The player with the Meerkat card whose name starts earliest in the alphabet starts the game.

You're now ready to play!

ORDER OF PLAY

Players take turns, following this order of play:

1. Refresh your hand
2. Perform any action(s).
3. End of Turn
   - Check win conditions.
   - Discard 1 card from your hand to the end of the Hideout.
   - Top up Hideout.

Play then passes to next player clockwise.

Each of these steps are explained more fully in the following sections.

Tip: If playing with less experienced players, see the 'Error! Reference source not found.' section to see how used to better balance the game between players.

1. REFRESHING YOUR HAND

If you have the **Timer card**, rotate it 90-degress clockwise then refresh your hand by picking up card(s) in ONE of the following ways:

- 1 card from the top of the Loot deck.
- 1 card at the end (right) of the Hideout.
- 2+ consecutive cards from the Hideout (see Multi-Pick Up Rule).

There is no hand limit, so you may pick-up as many cards as you choose during a multi-card pick-up.

The Hideout Explained

The Hideout is where you stash all of the pilfered food that you and the other pandas are not ready to trade yet. You may collect the pilfered food from the Hideout but each time you do this you'll attract unwanted attention from the Zoo Keeper.

Cards in the Hideout are fanned so all players know exactly what it contains.

If you pick up a **single card** from the Hideout, it must remain in your hand or be used as part of one of your sets this turn (i.e. cannot be immediately returned to the Hideout).

Each time a player picks up **2 or more cards** from the Hideout, the Zoo Keeper's suspicion about this player is increased.
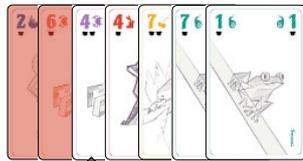
This is the **Multi-Card Pick-Up Rule** and the following rules must be immediately followed:

1. Choose the card you want to pick-up from. You must play this card to a Trade area this turn, or if it is a Key card, you may permanently discard it.
2. Pick up all cards between the right-most card in the Hideout and your chosen card.
3. Take the Timer card and place it in front of them with the ⏰ at the top.

Once you have completed the above, move onto the next step in the order of play.

> EXAMPLE: If I pick up from the green-1 to the purple-4 in the example shown below, I must pick up all cards shaded white.
>
> At the end of my turn, the purple-4 cannot be in my hand or in the Hideout; I must have played it as part of a set to a Meerkat Trade area.
>
>
>
> *You must use this card this turn*

The **Timer card** is activated when a player does a multi-card pick-up from the Hideout.

This card acts as a reminder that this player cannot do another multi-card pick-up until either:

- Another player does multi-card pick-up from the Hideout.
- 3 turns have passed measured by rotating this card at the start of each of their subsequent turns, discarding it at the start of their 4th turn.

2. PERFORM ACTION(S)

On your turn, you may perform multiple actions, including repeating the same action multiple times.
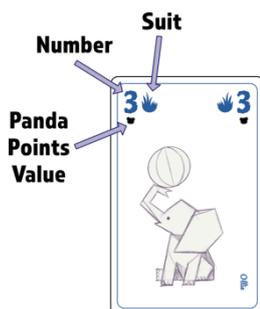
The possible actions are:

- **Create a new set** by playing 2 or more Loot cards to your Meerkat Trade area to create a new 3+ card set.
- **Extend a set** in your Meerkat Trade area by adding 1 Loot card to the right-most (end) set.
- **Swap out a Key card** in any Meerkat Trade area with the Loot card it represents.
- **Pass** and move to the next step in the turn order.

If an action requires your Panda to be moved, do this immediately after each action.

Loot Cards

The Loot deck has 5 suits, each representing the food that animal eats. Each Loot card has a Panda Points value (1 or 2), a number and a suit.

The Panda Points determines the number of spaces your Panda marker will advance along the Escape track when played in your sets. It is also the penalty you will receive at the end of the game if the card is still in your hand (see Final Escape Check). The number and suit are used when creating sets.

Creating Sets

Sets are created in your hand and then played individually to your Meerkat Trade area.

New Sets

New sets must have a **total of 3 or more Loot cards**. Sets can be created in one of the following ways:
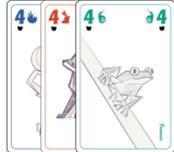
1. Ascending consecutive run in the same suit.
2. Descending consecutive run in the same suit.
3. Matching numbers in different suits.

+3 Panda Points — *Ascending Run*

+3 Panda Points — *Matching Numbers*

+4 Panda Points — *Descending Run*

+5 Panda Points — *Matching Numbers (4-card set)*

 For completely new sets, the number of spaces your Panda tracker advances is calculated only from the Panda Points on your newly played cards. Do not include Panda Points from any cards already in your Trade area.

Alternatively, you may **re-use the last Loot card at either end in your Meerkat Trade area** by playing 2 or more cards to create a new set consisting of a total of 3 or more cards.
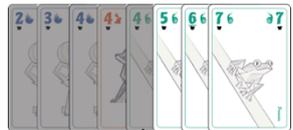
 Your total Panda Points (🐾) will include the Panda Points of the end card in addition to any new cards you played that turn. No other card's Panda Points should be added.

Part of new set to make a 3-card set, with the green-4 being counted in the total Panda Points.

Part of new set to make a 4-card set, with the green-4 being counted in the total Panda Points.
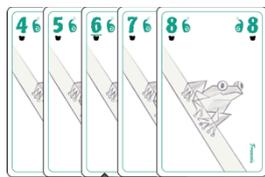
+3 Panda Points

Only the Panda Points of the green-7 is included in the new set.

Tip: To maximise points, 5-card sets should be split into two separate 3-card sets, re-using the end card in the second set.

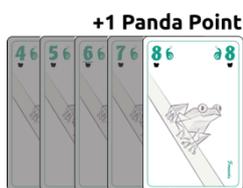> EXAMPLE: To maximise points, you should play a run of 5 cards as 2 separate sets, creating 2 runs of 3 cards.
>
> In this example the 6 is re-used in the second set meaning it's Panda Points are counted twice giving a total Panda Points of 6.
>
> *Run can be split into two 3-card sets with the value of the 6 being counted twice*
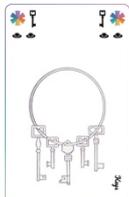
Extending Sets

You may **add 1 card to extend an existing set** that is at either end of your Meerkat Trade area.

+1 Panda Point

Only the value of the new card advances the Panda marker

The number of spaces your Panda tracker advances is calculated only from the Panda Points on your newly played card. **Do not include Panda Points from cards already in the Trade area.**
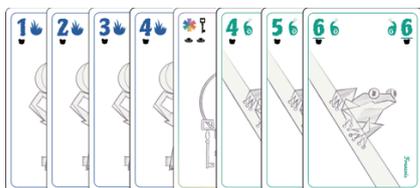
Key Cards

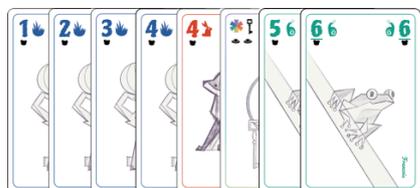Key cards are **wild cards.** They can represent any card not in the same set as them.

A Key card has a value equivalent to 2 🐻.

You may **swap out a Key Card** from any player's Meerkat Trade area with a legal card. Add the Key card to your hand or immediately play it as part of a set.

> EXAMPLE: In the example below, you may replace the Key card with a red-4, purple-4 or a yellow-4.
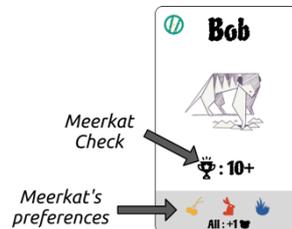>
> However, in the next example below, it may only be replaced with a green-4 to ensure both the 4-4-4 set and the 4-5-6 set remain valid.
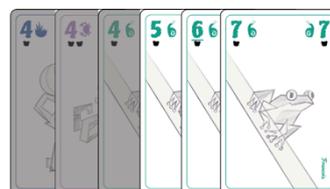
Playing Sets

Sets (food bundles) are traded with Meerkats by placing them in a **Meerkat Trade area**.

Sets can only be played to your Meerkat Trade area. Cards of any suit can be included in sets.
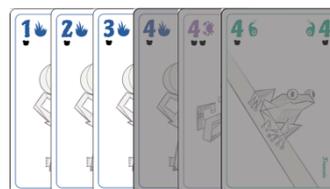
Bob

Meerkat Check → 🏆 : 10+

Meerkat's preferences → All : +1 🐻

If a number set contains all 3 of the Meerkat's preferences, you gain a bonus +1 🐻.

Cards played to the Meerkat's Trade area can be played from left to right or from right to left, with new cards always being added after the end card on either side.

Playing cards to the right end

Playing cards to the left end

When creating completely new sets, the first card in a new set **must match either the number or the suit of the end card** in the Meerkat's Trade area that it is being placed next to.

Suit *matches end card allowing the new set to be played.*

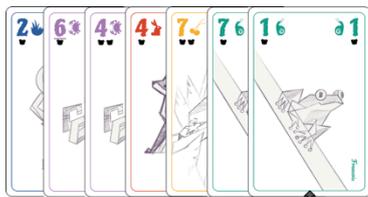**Number** *matches end card allowing the new set to be played.*

You can never play a set that would leave you with less than 2 cards in your hand as you must be able to discard 1 card at the end of your turn, unless you have met also met the Meerkat Check in your Trade Area and you plan to go out an initiate Final Escape Scoring.

3. ENDING YOUR TURN

When all actions have been completed follow these steps to end your turn:

1. **Stash 1 card in the Hideout:** Put 1 card from your hand at the end of the Hideout.
2. **Win Conditions Check:** If met, you *must* proceed to the Final Escape Check.
3. **Top-up Hideout:** If the Hideout contains less than 3 cards, top it up from the Loot deck.

Cards during this step are always played to the end of the Hideout. **The end card in the Hideout is the right-most card.**

End card in the Hideout

The Hideout must always have at least 3 cards in it at the end of a turn and is topped up from the Loot deck.

ENDING THE GAME

The winner is the player with the **most Panda points** at the end of the agreed number of rounds.

The game ends when either:

- A player has zero cards in their hand. AND
- This player has met or exceed their Meerkat Check Value.

OR

- You cannot draw a card from the Loot deck when you need to.

When either of these game end conditions have been met in full, the game immediately ends and the Final Escape Score is calculated.

Final Escape Score

The Final Escape Score is calculated as follows:

- Advance your Panda marker equal to the number of 🐻 on your Panda card if you have met the requirement.
- Move your Panda marker back a number of spaces equal to the number of 🐻 on the cards remaining in your hand.

This is your Final Escape Score. If playing multiple rounds, make a note of your score and add it to any previously earned scores to calculate your overall total score.

When the agreed number of rounds has been completed, **the player with the highest total score wins**.

BALANCING GAMEPLAY BETWEEN NOVICE & EXPERIENCED PLAYERS

If one player has significantly more experience in playing Pilfering Pandas or in traditional set collection card games compared to other players, it is recommended that some or all of the following modifications are used to more evenly balance gameplay.

Reducing difficulty for Novice players:

- Start with their Panda marker on the number 3-space on the Escape Track.
- The player with least points chooses whether they want to go first in the next round (after setup is complete).

Increasing difficulty for Experienced players:

- Increase their Meerkat check value by +2.
- Deal 1 less card to their starting hand.
- A card in the first set played must contain at least one card in their Meerkat preference suits.
- Impose a hand limit of 10 cards.

Alternatively, play the cooperative mode until the less experienced player feels confident in playing Pilfering Pandas and set collection strategies.

CREDITS

Game Design & Development: Janice & Stu Turner

Art: Gianfranco Campos

Graphic Design: Nik Bauer, Charlotte Williams & Janice Turner

Art & Graphic Design Consultant: Barb Allen

FAQs

Q. Can I continue playing if I have zero cards in my hand?

No. You must either immediately initiate the Final Win Scoring with play stopping for all players or you may never play a set which would leave you with 1 card or less in your hand.

Q. Does the first player to go out get a bonus?

No. There is no bonus for the first player that goes 'out'. It only triggers the immediate end of the round.

Q. When adding new cards to an existing run, do I add all the cards in the run to my total number of points for that set?

No. Only the last card in the Meerkat Trade area that is included as part of a new set can have its Panda Points added to the total set value, even if it forms a longer set.

Q. If I re-use a Key card when creating a new set, do I get its Panda Points added to my score again?

Yes. Advance your Panda marker as you would normally when using a Key card in a new set.

Q. Can I play cards that are not one of the Meerkat preferences to their Trade area?

Yes. Meerkat preferences have no impact on what cards you can play to your Trade area unless their bonus condition is met.

Q. Can a Key card duplicate a card that is in the Meerkat Trade area but not in the same set?

Yes. It's too much admin to check this every time so you only need to consider the set it is contained within.

Q. Do I have to state what the Key card represents when I play it?

No. But it must be a legal play when another card is placed next to it, i.e. a set cannot contain 2 identical cards.

Q. Can a player have zero cards in their hand without meeting the Meerkat Check Value?

No. A player cannot play sets that would leave them with zero cards in their hand without meeting the Meerkat Check Value.

Q. Is it possible to get a negative final score?

Yes, negative scores are possible.

Q. Should a new Panda and Meerkat card be allocated when setting up for a new round?

Yes. Fully reset the game for each new round.

Q. How many Key cards should there be in the Loot deck?

Shuffle all 4 Key cards into the Loot deck during setup.

Q. What should I do if I get to the end of the track but haven't met the win conditions yet?

Continue round the track again.