

Gong Zhu

4 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Avoid the Pig and Hearts while capturing the Sheep.

SETUP

- 4 players, deal 13 cards each.
- Optionally expose special cards for doubled values.
- Player with 2 of Clubs leads.

SCORING

- Pig (Q Spades) = -100, Sheep (J Diamonds) = +100.
- Hearts = -10 to -40. Transformer (10 Clubs) doubles total.

Tip: Only expose the Sheep if you have a solid plan to capture it.

ON YOUR TURN

- Follow suit if possible.
- Highest card of led suit wins.
- No trumps.

Gong Zhu (Chase the Pig) is a Chinese Hearts variant with both positive and negative point cards. The Pig (Queen of Spades), Sheep (Jack of Diamonds), and other special cards add layers of strategy beyond standard Hearts.

Objective

Avoid penalty cards (Hearts and the Pig) while trying to capture bonus cards (the Sheep and the Transformer). Score the fewest penalty points.

Setup

1. **Players:** 4 players.
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck.
3. **Deal:** Deal all 13 cards to each player.

Gameplay

1. **Step 1:** Before play, players may expose certain special cards face-up for doubled point values.
2. **Step 2:** The player with the 2 of Clubs leads the first trick.
3. **Step 3:** Players must follow suit if possible. The highest card of the led suit wins (no trumps).
4. **Step 4:** Special cards: Pig (Q Spades) = -100, Sheep (J Diamonds) = +100, each Heart = -10 to -40 based on rank, 10 of Clubs (Transformer) doubles your score.

Scoring

- Hearts are worth -10 (for low cards) to -40 (for Ace of Hearts).
- Pig (Queen of Spades) = -100. Sheep (Jack of Diamonds) = +100. Transformer (10 of Clubs) doubles your total.
- Collecting all penalty cards (shooting the moon) reverses all penalties to bonuses.

Variations

- **No Exposure:** Skip the exposure phase for simpler play.
- **Team Gong Zhu:** Play in partnerships with combined scoring.

Tips and Strategies

- Expose the Sheep if you are confident you can capture it for +100 (doubled to +200).
- Avoid the Pig at all costs, especially if it has been exposed for -200.
- The Transformer is dangerous, only capture it if your score is already positive.

Tips & Strategy

The exposure phase is critical. Expose cards only when confident in your plan. The Transformer can make or break your round.

Exposing the Sheep is a bold move that signals confidence. Other players will try to prevent you from capturing it, making the game intensely interactive.