A CARD GAME BY
PANICZONES

NOT THIS PENGUIN
RULEBOOK



NOBODY DREAMS OF READING A RULEBOOK.
SCAN FOR A HOW TO PLAY VIDEO.
THE FULL RULES LIVE IN HERE WHENEVER YOU NEED THEM.

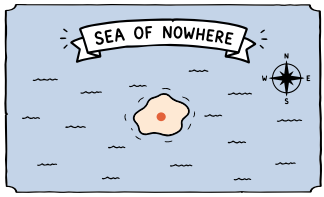
WEBSITE: WWW.PANICZONES.COM
FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA: PANICZONESOFFICIAL PANICZONESOFFICIAL PANICZONES

3-8* PLAYERS | 10+ AGES | 25 MIN

*TEAMS MODE: 4-6-8 PLAYERS

YOU'RE ALL PENGUINS NOW!

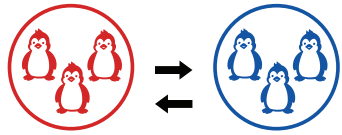
Hi there. Welcome to **Penguin Cove**, an island in the middle of nowhere. Don't worry about your penguin form; it will only last while you're on the island. This guide will show you how to survive.



PENGUIN COVE (YOU ARE HERE)
DEAD CENTRE OF NOWHERE. LOVELY SPOT, REALLY.

Not This Penguin is **primarily a team game** with **exactly two teams: two rival colonies.** You'll split between them, then follow the way of Penguin Cove: **passing penguins to each other.**





COLONY A COLONY B

PENGUINS FLOW BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE TWO COLONIES.

The bad news? Only one team gets off this island. Most penguins are harmless and cute, **except one.**

MEET THE HANGRY PENGUIN

"I am hungry and I am angry. Whoever holds me when the round ends owes me a fish. You'd better have one, or your whole colony feels my wrath."

OBJECTIVE OF THE GAME

EACH ROUND, SCHEME, SABOTAGE, AND BLUFF TO GET THE HANGRY PENGUIN TO THE OTHER TEAM.

FREE-FOR-ALL VARIANT

Teams Mode is recommended whenever there is an **even number of players.** With an **odd number,** or just to mix it up, the **Free-For-All variant** is a great way to play too: your goal is to get the Hangry Penguin to **any opponent.**

SETTING UP

We'll teach the **teams game**, the best way to learn Not This Penguin. **The Free-For-All variant** uses the **exact same rules** unless otherwise stated.

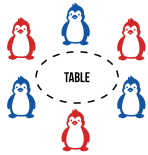
LEARN WHILE PLAYING: Whenever you see a green ✓ DO THIS NOW box across the rulebook, stop reading and **apply the steps right then.**

✓ DO THIS NOW

Form your colonies

Form **two equal teams** and sit so that every player has an **opponent on their left and on their right.**

SIT IN ALTERNATING TEAMS
(6-Player Example)



FREE-FOR-ALL VARIANT
Seating is flexible. Sit in any order you like.

There are **5 components** in the box. Work through them in this order:

1 PLAYER GUIDES 2 FISH TOKENS 3 PENGUIN CARDS 4 TRACKING TOKENS 5 PANIC CARDS

1 PLAYER GUIDES *(×8 guides)*

List of **Penguin Cards** and **Strategic Tips** for each player as they learn the game.

✓ DO THIS NOW



Hand a Player Guide to each player.

2 FISH TOKENS *(x10 tokens)*

Your lives: feed one to the Hangry Penguin if it bites you.

✓ DO THIS NOW

How many fish?

3-5 PLAYERS? 2 fish each

6-8 PLAYERS? 1 fish each

3 PENGUIN CARDS *(x92* cards)*

The **main deck** you play from every round:

1 Hangry Penguin



x1*

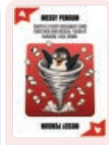
7 other types of penguins (91 cards)



x14



x12



x10



x14



x14



x14



x13

Get it to the other team.

Use their powers to get the Hangry Penguin to the other team.

*Spare Hangry Penguins are separately provided in case of wear and tear

DO THIS NOW

Complete these 6 steps in order

1



Set the **Hangry Penguin aside.**

2



Shuffle the other 91 Penguin Cards.

3



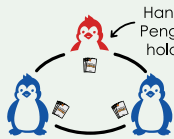
Extract from those 91 cards a **deal pile** with **as many cards as specified above.**

4



Add the Hangry Penguin to this deal pile and shuffle it.

5



Deal 5 cards per player and ask the Hangry Penguin holder to **reveal themselves.**

6



Place the remaining Penguin Cards face-down as the **draw pile**, and leave room for a **discard pile.**

4 TRACKING TOKENS *(x8 tokens)*

Markers to **keep track** of **who gets the last turn** each round and **who avoids receiving any cards** (more on each token later in this rulebook).

DO THIS NOW

1. Last Player Token (x1): give it to whoever is holding the Hangry Penguin right now. This token will move to other players during gameplay.



2. Bouncy Tokens (x7): set all 7 aside in a pile everyone can reach. They will be used later, in the Action Phase.



5 PANIC CARDS *(x24 cards)*

A deck that brings **chaos** each round, and sometimes **a comeback** to the player who just fed the Hangry Penguin.

DO THIS NOW

Shuffle the Panic Cards and place them **face-down** on the table, with room for a discard pile.



You should now each have your **fish token(s)** and **5 Penguin Cards.** Everyone should know **who holds the Hangry Penguin,** and that player should have the **Last Player Token** in front of them.

GAMEPLAY

Every round, you each pick **one card to pass** to the player on your left. But before the cards move, **everyone gets the chance to move them around**: swap them, shuffle them, bounce them, all to decide who gets stuck with the Hangry Penguin. This plays out in **3 phases**:

PHASE 1 - GIVEAWAY PHASE

Everyone **secretly chooses one card** from their hand as their **giveaway card.**

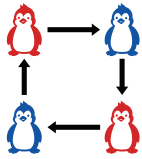


YOUR HAND GIVEAWAY CARD

PLAYER DECISION
Which giveaway card to choose.

PHASE 2 - ACTION PHASE

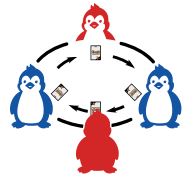
Each player gets a turn to play **up to two Penguin Cards**, using card powers to help get the Hangry Penguin to **the other team.**



PLAYER DECISION
Which Penguin Cards to play.

PHASE 3 - RESOLUTION

Giveaway cards **pass to the player on your left**. Whoever ends up with the Hangry Penguin **loses a fish token** and draws a **Panic Card**. Then **everyone draws a Penguin Card**.



YOUR GIVEAWAY CARD

Although chosen in Phase 1, your giveaway card is **not passed until Phase 3**, and Penguin Cards played in Phase 2 **may swap, shuffle, or bounce it**. Passing a card never triggers its power: powers fire **only when cards are played.**

PHASE 1 - GIVEAWAY PHASE

Each player picks any card from their hand as their **giveaway card**, and places it face down. Giveaway cards will be passed to the next player in Phase 3.

DO THIS NOW — Everyone at once, order doesn't matter

1 Select your giveaway card

Pick One



YOUR HAND

Hangry Penguin or any other Penguin Card you're willing to give up.

2 Place it face-down in front of you



GIVEAWAY CARD

Your giveaway card is no longer in your hand and stays face down.

ONCE PLACED, IT'S LOCKED

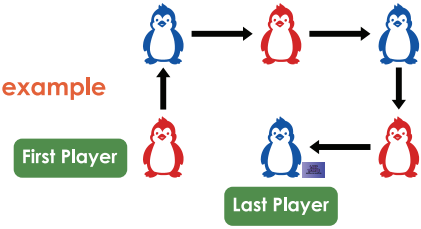
You **can't change** your giveaway card (unless a played Penguin Card says so) **or peek** at it, and it **can't be stolen** or **played**.

PHASE 2 - ACTION PHASE

This is where the panic begins. The player to the **left of the Hangry Penguin holder goes first**. On your turn you may play **1 or 2 Penguin Cards** (or pass) to control where the Hangry Penguin ends up, hoping it lands with the other team.

1 turn per player	1 or 2 cards per turn	Clockwise turn order	Last Player Token holder goes last

Sample turn order: 6-player example



WHO GETS THE LAST PLAYER TOKEN?

Whoever ended the **last round with the Hangry Penguin now holds the Last Player Token**. First round? it goes to the player who was dealth the Hangry Penguin.



THE ONE EXCEPTION: SLEEPY PENGUIN

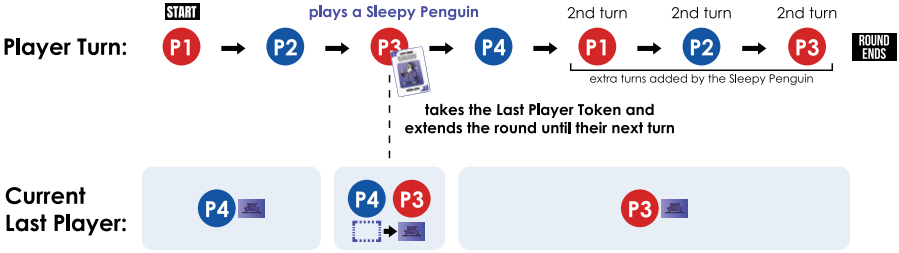
"As Penguin Cove's leading expert in procrastination, I delay everything, including the end of the round. When you play me, **take the Last Player Token.**

The round is now **extended until your next turn,** and you go **last**.

Use me to **grab the last move** and control where the Hangry Penguin lands."

SLEEPY PENGUIN EXAMPLE:

Player 3 plays **a Sleepy Penguin** on their turn in a 4-player game to **extend the round** until their next turn and gain the last player advantage. **Turn order this round:**

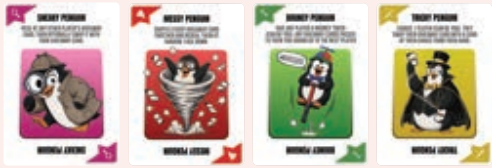


ON YOUR TURN: PLAY 1 OR 2 PENGUINS, OR PASS

Penguin Cards fall into **two families,** and card details can be found **on the cards** themselves and in your **Player Guides.**

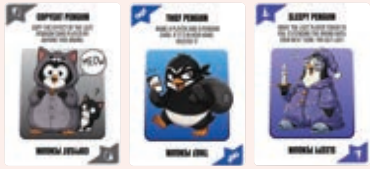
A GIVEAWAY MANIPULATION

Change the position or routing of one or more **giveaway cards.** Will you move the **Hangry Penguin?**



B TACTICAL PLAYS

Copy or **steal** other penguins or **extend the round** for a last move advantage.



⚠ TABLE TALK: KEEP YOUR BEAK SHUT

THE RULE (EXPERIENCED PLAYERS)
You **may not disclose** anyone's giveaway or hand cards, including yours. Bluff with your face, not the facts.

EXCEPTION FOR BEGINNERS
Still learning the game? **Talk freely** about everything until every penguin in the colony feels confident.

✓ DO THIS NOW

1. Ask all players to **read their Player Guides** and keep them handy to understand **what each Penguin Card does** and get a few strategic tips.

2. Play out the Action Phase with all players, then **move to Phase 3: Resolution** once done.

PHASE 3 - RESOLUTION

In this phase, the round **wraps up in 4 steps.**

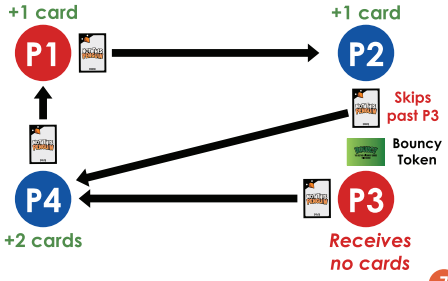
✓ DO THIS NOW

Complete each step below **as you reach it.**

❶ PASS GIVEAWAY CARDS

All players pass their giveaway card to the next player on their left who doesn't have a Bouncy Token, and **add** any giveaway cards they receive to their hand. A player only holds a Bouncy Token **if someone played a Bouncy Penguin** on them this round. Once passing is done, all active Bouncy Tokens **go back to the shared pile**: each token protects for one round only.

Example: Giveaway card routing with active Bouncy Token



In this example, **P1**, **P2** and **P4 each receive the giveaway card** from the player on their right as they normally would.
P3 has an **active Bouncy Token**, so the giveaway card from P2 **bounces off** them and **goes to P4** instead, as a second giveaway card.

❷ FEED THE HANGRY PENGUIN

Whoever now holds the Hangry Penguin identifies themselves. **They lose one fish token** and also take the **Last Player Token** for next round.



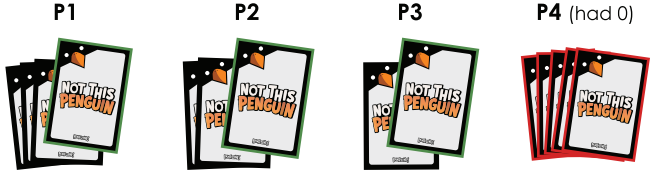
❸ DRAW A PANIC CARD

The player who just lost a fish also **draws one Panic Card**, reads its effect out loud, **applies it immediately**, then discards it.

> ⚠ **STAY ALERT!**
> Some Panic Cards, like Penguin Pose, require **quick reactions.** When a Panic Card is drawn, all penguins are advised to **sit up and pay attention.**

❹ DRAW PENGUIN CARDS

All players draw 1 new Penguin Card from the top of the Penguin deck and **add it to their hand.** If any player has **0 cards** in hand right before drawing, they **draw 5** instead.



Have cards? Draw 1. Otherwise, draw 5.

> ⚠ **DECK RUNS OUT?**
> If the Penguin draw pile is ever empty, **shuffle the Penguin discard pile** to make a fresh draw pile and **carry on.**

GAME END

A player is eliminated when…

They end up with the Hangry Penguin and **no longer have fish to feed it.**



… and the game immediately ends

Teams Mode:
The **other team** survives and **wins the game.**

Free-For-All:
only the eliminated player loses, everyone else survives... for now.

YOU'RE NOW READY FOR NOT THIS PENGUIN!

Keep going through the 3 phases each round **until the game is over,** and come back to this **rulebook, the FAQs,** and your **Player Guide** whenever questions pop up.

MEET THE PANIC CARDS



x2 - Penguin Control
Next round only, each player may play at most 1 Penguin Card on their turn, or pass.



x2 - Penguin Tax
All other players immediately discard half their cards before drawing (rounded down). You discard nothing.



x2 - Forced Tribute
Each other player holding 2 or more cards gives you 1 card of their choice.



x5 - Fortune Pack
You draw 5 Penguin Cards this round instead of 1.



x5 - Penguin Pose
All other players quickly strike a penguin pose, arms out. The slowest of them discards half their cards, rounded down.



x2 - Migration
Choose any 2 opponents. They swap seats until the end of the game.



x2 - Penguin Ban
You choose any one of the 7 penguin types. No one may play that type next round.



x2 - Not Mine
Transfer any card you choose from your hand to any other player's hand. You still keep the Last Player Token next round even if you give the Hangry Penguin.



x2 - Kit Reveal
All other players reveal their hands to everyone for a few seconds.

FAQS - "WAIT, WHAT ABOUT... ?" (1/2)

Q Must I pass the Hangry Penguin if I have it?
A: No. You can keep it in your hand and choose a different giveaway card. Just don't be holding it when the round ends.

Q Can the Thief steal my giveaway card?
A: No. Your giveaway card is out of your hand and can't be stolen.

FAQS - "WAIT, WHAT ABOUT... ?" (2/2)

Q Can the Thief steal the Hangry Penguin?
A: Yes, if it's in a player's hand. No, if it's already placed as a giveaway card.

Q Can I look at my giveaway card after placing it?
A: No, not even after a Sneaky, Tricky, or Messy moves it. Face-down stays face-down.

Q How many is "half your cards, rounded down" if I have an odd number of cards?
A: With 7 cards you discard 3, with 5 you discard 2, with 1 you discard 0, and so on.

Q What if every player holds a Bouncy Token?
A: All Bouncy Tokens immediately cancel out and are removed. The Action Phase continues as normal.

Q Can I play a Sleepy Penguin if someone already played one this round?
A: Yes, with the exact same effect, even if it results in any players playing more than 2 turns this round.

Q What if Copycat is the first card played in a round?
A: Nothing happens. There is no Penguin Card to copy yet, so it's played with no effect and discarded.

Q Can Copycat copy another Copycat?
A: Yes. It copies the effect of the previous valid Penguin Card as if you just played it.

Q I had an empty hand. When do I draw 5 cards instead of 1?
A: Only if you still have 0 cards after every Panic Card effect has resolved. Check at the draw step, not before.

Q What if the Penguin deck runs out?
A: Shuffle the Penguin discard pile to form a new Penguin draw pile and keep playing.

CREDITS:

Game Designers
Patrick Saber, Ryan Chedrawi, Anthony Attieh, and Edmond Rizk

Illustrator
Helena El Jamal

Graphic Designers
Helena El Jamal and Patrick Saber

Special Thanks
To everyone who helped bring Not This Penguin to life, including the Panic Squad community members.



NOT THIS PENGUIN

PANIC ZONES

More games, expansions, and tournaments at paniczones.com
paniczonesofficial paniczonesofficial PanicZones
NOT THIS PENGUIN ·ZONE: PENGUIN COVE ·A PANIC ZONES GAME
© 2026 Panic Zones. All rights reserved.