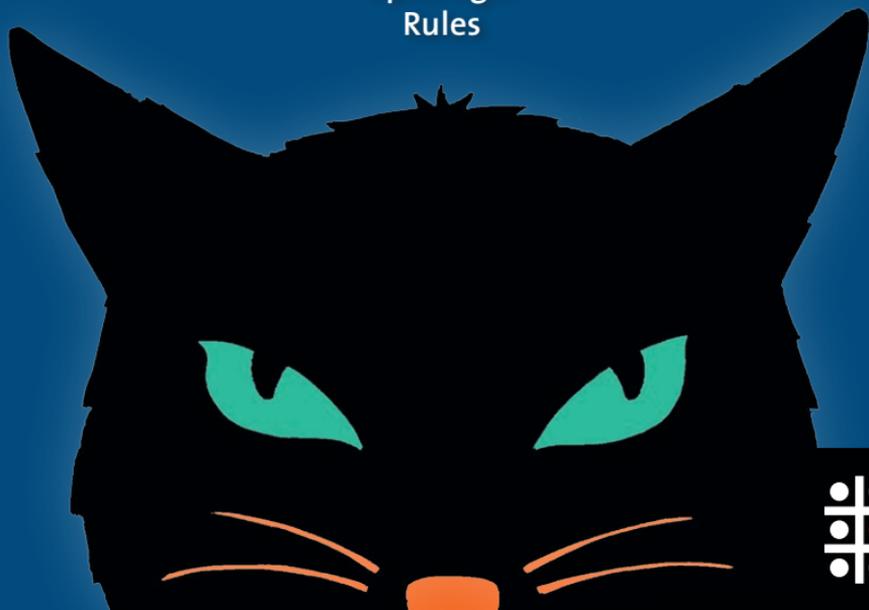


Steffen Mühlhäuser

SCHWARZER KATER

Spielregel
Rules



BLACK CAT

Memo game for 3–9 players age 5 years up
by Steffen Mühlhäuser

Game components

5 black hats



5 pieces to seek:

1 large piece of cheese



1 small piece of cheese



1 piece of chocolate



1 piece of bacon



1 black cat



8 coloured mice



40 bits of cheese



Preparation

To play "Black Cat" you need a flat game surface measuring about 50 x 40 cm.

One player acts as the game master. He gets the five pieces to seek, the five black hats and the 40 bits of cheese.

Each of the other players chooses one coloured mouse and receives from the game master three bits of cheese to start with.

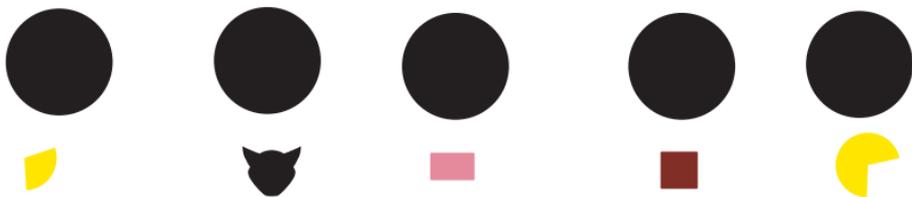
The game master sits on one side of the game field opposite the other players who form a semi-circle.

One match of "Black Cat" consists of four rounds. Therefore, the game master can set up his traps four times.

During play the game master poses as the cat and is also referred to below as the cat. All other players act as mice and are also called mice in these instructions.

HOW TO PLAY

The cat sets its trap



The cat lays out both pieces of cheese, the bacon, the chocolate, and the black cat in a line with sufficient gaps between them so that all mice have a clear view of their order. The cat places one of the black hats behind each of the pieces.



The shell game

When the mice have thoroughly memorized the position of the five pieces to seek, the cat covers all of them with the five hats. Next, it moves **two** of the five hats. (Or, perhaps even three – see “Hints for cats” / “Degree of difficulty”)

After the cat has moved both hats, it asks the mice about **one** of the objects.

The cat may ask about the small or large piece of cheese, the chocolate or the bacon. (The cat never asks the mice about itself!)

The cat must ask the mice **immediately** after moving the hats.

A hat may be moved between two other hats or beside the line-up.

When moving the hats, the cat must keep in mind the following rules:

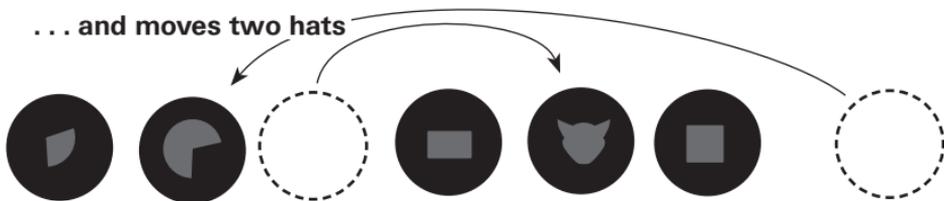
1. The cat may only use **one** hand to move one hat after another. The other hand is kept under the table.
2. The hats may not be moving too fast. All mice must be able to clearly follow the moved hat at all times!

(see example next page)

The cat covers the pieces . . .

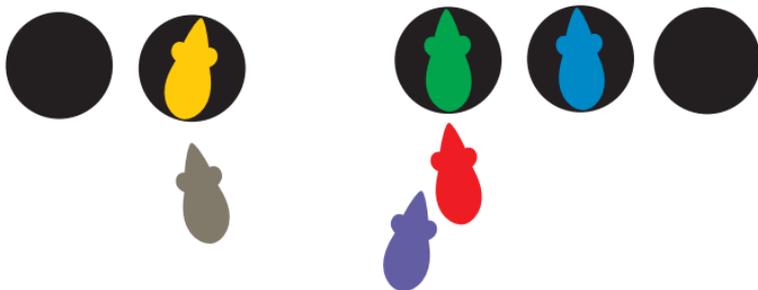


. . . and moves two hats

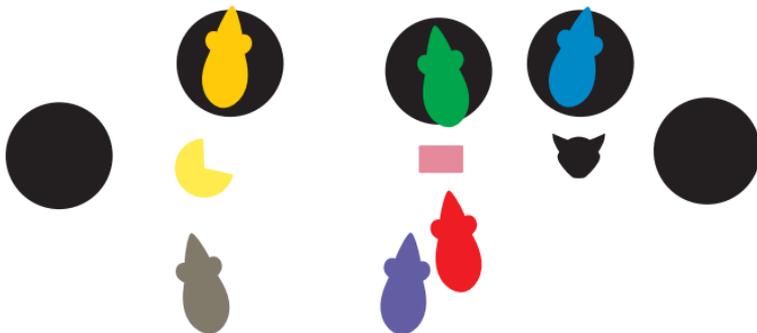


Mice on the search

As soon as the cat has asked about one of the items (e.g. “where is the bacon?”), the mice may start running and sit on top of the hat which they think hides the bacon. Only one mouse can sit on top of the hat at any one time – the mouse that made the fastest decision. If several mice are of the same opinion, the slower mice can just sit in front of the relevant hat. When all the mice are in position, it can look like this:



The cat lifts the hats



- **All the mice that made the right choice get a piece of cheese from the cat's supply.** The mice were looking for the bacon, so the green, violet and red mouse each get one bit of cheese.
- **All the mice sitting in front of a wrong hat must give the cat a piece of their cheese.** The yellow and grey mouse are not sitting by the bacon and each have to give up one piece of cheese.
- **Any mouse sitting in front of the black cat has to give it two pieces of cheese.** The blue mouse is unlucky and loses two pieces of cheese.

Once all the pieces of cheese have been handed out, the cat also lifts the hat that no mice chose. All five items are now visible again and the mice return to their positions.

Rounds two, three and four

The position of the items changes when the hats are moved. The new order is the starting set-up for the next round.

The game is played in the same way: the mice try to memorize the new positions, the cat covers everything, moves two of the hats and asks again for one of the items.

It pays to be quick!

The following rule is added after the second round: The mouse that is sitting on the (correct) hat gets more cheese than the mice sitting *in front of* the hat.

In the second round, this mouse gets two pieces of cheese. In the third round, the fastest mouse gets three pieces of cheese. In the fourth round, this increases to four pieces.

All the other mice sitting in front of the correct hat always get a single piece of cheese – whatever happens...

Eaten

Once a mouse has lost its last piece of cheese, the cat is allowed to 'eat' it (i.e. the token is removed from the game).

End of play

The mouse with the most cheese after the fourth round wins the game. If two or more mice have an equal amount of cheese, they can face each other in a fifth round 'play-off'.

In the next match a different person can play the black cat.

Have fun with "Black Cat"!



Hints for cats

Atmosphere

Black Cat is about memorizing objects as well as about playing a role. Therefore, the game strongly relies on the atmosphere between the mice and the cat. It is very important that the game master (the cat) tries to create this atmosphere. A simple sentence at the beginning of play, for example, “I am the cat, you are mice, and with this nice trap I will try to catch you all!” imme-

diately creates suspense and attracts the mice’s attention.

But keep in mind that smaller children may even be frightened of a wooden black cat that hides under one of the hats. The game master should get a feel for the situation and for how much suspense is needed.

Overview

Basically, the cat has quite a simple task because the player actually does not have to remember which item is hidden under which hat after he has moved them. However, it is recommended that the cat at least knows the position of the object in question and the position of the black cat.

This is especially important when the mice are sitting on different hats: the suspense instantly disappears if the first hat, which the cat lifts up, conceals the item in question – all the other players know that they are sitting in a wrong position.

Furthermore, for the hats with mice the cat should always...

... first lift those hats under which there are the wrong objects,
... then lift the hat where the black cat is hiding,
... and only lift the correct hat at the very end.

Degree of difficulty

If you want to make the game more challenging, the game master can move three instead of two hats. When more than three hats are moved, most players can no longer keep track of the movements.

When playing with smaller children, it might be sufficient to move only one hat. And to make the game easier, you can also reduce the number of hats to four or three.

Spielidee und Gestaltung:
Steffen Mühlhäuser

Graphische Arbeiten:
Steffen Mühlhäuser,
Bernhard Kümmelmann

Spielmaterial: Hauck

Fertigung: Ludofact

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Zum Spielplatz 2
56288 Krastel

www.steffen-spiele.de
post@steffen-spiele.de

