

COOPERATIVE VARIANT FOR HANAMIKOJI (v1.1)

This cooperative variant is based on the standard Hanamikoji rules (it also adds 2 optional rules specifically created for cooperative play). It can be played at two levels: beginner or normal:

The beginner level uses a set of simple cooperative win conditions. It is mainly designed to help players familiarize themselves with a new way of playing Hanamikoji. It offers also several options to adjust the difficulty level. It is recommended to play this cooperative variant at the beginner level to start with, especially for new or occasional Hanamikoji players. However, **if you already know Hanamikoji well, it's perfectly fine to skip the beginner level and start directly at the normal level.**

The normal level gives a lot more options than the beginner level in terms of difficulty and replayability. It introduces also a new 5th Action that works well with this cooperative variant. This new action is very simple, but it has not been included at the beginner level to allow players to first get used to playing Hanamikoji cooperatively with the usual set of 4 actions.

BEGINNER LEVEL

1/ Aim of the game

Thematically, the beginner level of this cooperative variant is about two friends helping each other to win the favor of their respective 3 favorite geishas. The players need to cooperate to make sure that not only do they win a Victory Marker for their own 3 favorite geishas, but also that their game partner wins a Victory Marker for his/her 3 favorite geishas.

To win the game, the players must fulfill all win conditions below:

1. The players must bring the Victory Marker on their winning side for a randomly generated set of 3 favorite geishas. The 3 favorite geishas for one player are all different from the other player's 3 favorite geishas. Each player must win the Victory Marker for his/her 3 favorite geishas.
2. The Victory Marker for the remaining 7th geisha must be in a neutral position.
3. The players must fulfill the first two win conditions after 1, 2 or 3 rounds of play maximum.

Please note that this last 3 rounds max win condition can easily be modified if you want to give yourself more time to fulfill the first two win conditions.

2/ Set-up

The set-up is exactly the same as in the original game. However, before setting up the game, the players must first pick randomly their 3 favorite geishas (which will determine the win conditions for the game). This is my suggestion for a simple random selection process:

Introduction / easy win conditions: Take the 7 geisha cards face down, give them a good shuffle and place them (still face down) into 3 small piles: the first pile contains geishas #4 and #5, the second pile contains the two #3 geishas and the third pile contains the three #2 geishas. Then each player draws randomly one card from each pile. This set of 3 cards determine the 3 favorite geishas for each player.

Easy / normal win conditions: Same process as above, except that now only 2 piles of face-down geisha cards are formed : 1st pile with #4 and #5 geishas, and the second pile with the other five geisha cards. Each player draws randomly one card from the first pile, and two cards from the second pile. This set of 3 cards determine the 3 favorite geishas for each player.

More challenging win conditions : All 7 geisha cards remain face down in a single pile. Each player draws randomly a set of 3 cards from this single pile, which determine their 3 favorite geishas for the game.

After this selection process, the players show each other their 3 favorite geishas. They also turn over the last remaining face down geisha card. They now have the win conditions for the game : they know which geisha must be won by which player and which geisha must be in a neutral position to win the game. They're ready to play and can now set up the game as usual.

I recommend using the "Introduction / easy win conditions" for your first game with this coop variant, just to get the hang of how the coop mode works. Then you can step up the difficulty level for your next games.

Please note that the difficulty level given above is just an estimation. It can vary a lot depending on the luck of the draw during the game. For instance, an "easy / normal win conditions" game might be extremely easy to win sometimes, and quite difficult to win some other times.

Option to increase difficulty

For players who find the "more challenging win conditions" not challenging enough, there is a simple way to make it more difficult : each player draws only 2 favorite geisha cards instead of 3, the remaining three geishas having to be in a neutral position to win the game.

3/ Play

The sequence of play is the same as usual (1. Deal, 2. Action. 3. Scoring and update), and the "Deal", "Action", "Scoring and update" phases remain also exactly the same.

Optional "Neutral Victory Marker" rule

There's an optional rule for the last "Scoring and update" phase that you might want to try that is called the "Neutral Victory Marker" rule. Here is how the "Scoring and update" phase works with this rule: the players compare the total number of the Item Cards on each side of the geisha card to determine the player who won this geisha for this round. The Victory Marker is then moved according to the following rules:

- If the Victory Marker is already on the winning side : no need to do anything.
- If the Victory Marker is in a neutral position : it is moved to the winning side.
- **RULE CHANGE**: If the Victory Marker is on the current losing side (the player who won this geisha card in the previous round now loses it), the Victory Marker is moved to the neutral position instead of being moved all the way to the winning side like in the standard rules,.

The rationale behind this rule is to make it more flexible for players to fulfil the "7th geisha neutral position" win condition. Otherwise, as soon as the Victory Marker would be moved to any winning side for this 7th neutral geisha, it would become impossible for players to win since they would never be able to bring the Victory Marker back to a neutral position. Besides, at the advanced level, it is possible to have win conditions requiring several geishas to be in a neutral position in order to win the game. In that case, this "Neutral Victory Marker" rule becomes even more helpful (if not necessary).

4/ Communication limits

It is strongly recommended that players do not exchange any info about their hands at any time during the game. Maybe the only exception would be when playing with children or complete beginners for the first time, if you want to help them understand how cooperative play works for this game.

NORMAL LEVEL

1/ Cooperative objectives

The basic principle of this cooperative variant is to use a set of common win conditions which define a cooperative objective that the players must fulfill together

in order to win the game (preferably within a given number of rounds). The beginner level described in the first part gives an example of a simple cooperative objective based on the favorite geisha principle. But it is possible to come up with all kinds of other cooperative objectives if you're looking for more variety and/or more difficult challenges. Here is just a sample of different cooperative objectives you might want to try:

- **Each player must win exactly 2 geishas, regardless of their color or number**
- **Each player must have a number of Charm Points lower than 7 (or 6, 5, ...)**
- **At least 4 geishas must be in a neutral position (or 5, 6)**
- **The players must win the same number of Charm Points**
- **Each player must win a specific number of charm points (e.g. player1 must win 6 CP and player2 9 CP)**
- **The total number of Charm Points won by both players must be greater than 16 (or 17, 18, ...)**
- **For each geisha, the Charm Points difference between each player must be at least 2**
- **Specific pattern: No geisha in neutral position. Player 1 wins the first geisha in the geisha card line, Player 2 wins the next one, Player 1 wins the next one and so on ...**
- **Specific pattern: one geisha won by either player, one geisha in neutral position, one geisha won by either player, one geisha in neutral position and so on...**

A set of cooperative objective cards have been specifically created for this cooperative variant. They are available as free print-and-play cards on boardgamegeek in the Hanamikoji file section. They offer a wide range of cooperative objectives inspired from the list above, with 3 levels of difficulty. It is recommended to play with Level 1 cards for your first games, and as soon as you win too easily at that level, you can step up the difficulty and play with Level 2 and Level 3 cooperative objectives (it may take many attempts to achieve these more difficult objectives).

You can play with any of these cooperative objective cards with the standard Hanamikoji rules, without any special set-up or preparation required. However, whenever one or several geisha(s) need to be in a neutral position to win the game, it

is recommended to use the optional Neutral Victory Marker rule (see Beginner Level section 3/) to have more flexibility to fulfill your objective.

The maximum number of rounds allowed to fulfill a cooperative objective is 3, unless the win conditions on the card define another value. However, for the most difficult objectives, you can play in training mode by giving yourself more rounds to achieve the objective. This might help you to find a strategy to win with the 3-round max limit. Alternatively, you can also play just for fun at any level and use the maximum number of rounds that suits you best in terms of challenge, play duration and enjoyment.

Some objectives require one player to play as "Player 1" and the other player to play as "Player 2". These roles should be assigned before the players look at their cards.

For players who enjoy longer game sessions, there's another original way to use the cooperative objective cards: first choose a level of difficulty and take all the cards for that level (face down). Draw randomly 2 cards, reveal them and place them side by side. The goal is to fulfill the objective of the first card, and when it's done, to carry on playing to fulfill the objective of the second card, without resetting the victory markers to a neutral position after achieving the first objective. You might want to use a limit of 4 or 5 rounds max for this "double objective" variant (or even more if you play with difficult objectives).

2/ New 5th Action: "Exchange"

To help the players tackle more challenging objectives, and also to facilitate cooperative play during the game, it's possible to play with a new 5th Action. This new action is completely optional and the players decide before starting the game if they're going to use it or not. It is different from the other 4 usual actions in the sense that it is a "once per round common action" agreed upon and performed by both players at the beginning of any player's turn (which means that players don't need an individual action marker for this action). This 5th Action, called "Exchange", simply consists in exchanging one face down card from your hand with one face down card from the other player's hand. Then the play resumes as normal (use any method you like to keep track of the fact that this Exchange action is no longer available after you performed it).

This 5th action can certainly prove very helpful / powerful during the game, but it might also work against the players if they are not on the same wavelength when they use it. If you find it too powerful, you can always choose to do it only "once per game" instead of "once per round".