

At the Gates of Loyang – House Rules

Betsy & Chuck Berry – May 3, 2020

These ideas can make this pretty game flow more quickly and smoothly.

Score Audit. We often need to reconstruct our scores when we knock a pawn off its path.

We added some glass drops to the game and take one when we buy an *extra* point. We always buy one point per turn for 1 cash, so don't count that. But if we spend more for a 2nd or 3rd point, we're running ahead of schedule and the glass drops confirm this.

Suppose round 4 has just ended (I can verify this by the 4 empty places in my original field). If I have only bought one VP per round, my scoring marker should be on space 5 (1 where I started before the game, plus 4). If I've also paid for an extra point, my marker should be on space 6 ($= 1 + 4 + 1$) and I have a glass drop to document it.

Extra Resources. Like too many games, at the maximum player count there may not be enough of some kinds of vegetables. There aren't even the clunky “x3” markers to set resources on.

We made some little colored squares of heavy cardboard to use when we need them. They are not as pretty as the wooden vegetables that came with the game, but at least they are functional. We leave them in their bag unless they're needed.

We also happen to have some Japanese coins that even have holes in the centers. Although they are 5 yen, we use them for 10 cash and most people don't know the difference. These help with large sales toward the end of the game, and are simply fun to use.

Loan Chips. Instead of taking an additional card when we get a 5 cash “loan” we put a red plastic Bingo chip with our cash supply. These are easy to see and count, take a little less space, and we enjoy using them. We got a big tub of them in many colors and have added them to several other games as well.

Deflating Field Prices. Additional fields are worth more early in the game than later; on the final round they might not be worth anything at all.

We play that during the first three rounds, these extra fields cost 3 cash, the normal 2 cash in rounds 4 to 6, and just 1 cash in the final three rounds. We also use these prices for the Tenant Farmer who lets us take one of our private fields early.

More Cooperative Play. The rules have a fiddly mechanic where four players split into two pairs based on the order in which they went out the previous round. It is especially awkward when pairs are sitting across the table from one another in both directions. It is frustrating if one of the other two players has the vegetable or card I need. And we simply like to have everyone involved rather than breaking into two mini-games each round.

We usually play fairly cooperatively. For example, I won't steal someone else's helper or take a vegetable that they need themselves. So we pretty much play “group solitaire” and only use the “attack” cards (with the purple balloon in the top left corner) near the end of the round and with permission and with the other player involved. We play that the Deliveryman does not change the time a Regular Customer will be at another player's shop. If we both sell, we both receive the same price and the vegetables stack on the same spot; the order does not matter. The shop owner who does not satisfy the Customer still incurs a penalty for not serving them, even if I do deliver what they want.

While planning my turn, if I need to know whether some resource will be available to me later, I can ask and set this up with another player in advance. We might both benefit if we trade or sell the vegetables in our market stalls before they refill when we swap them. With these understandings, all four players are involved with one another all the time.

We'd love your comments. Thank you! BGG User = BetsyChuck BetsyChuck@gmail.com