

Fruit Fraud

"Swap fast, ring first, and weed out the fakes in the chaotic fruit market."

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Theme

In a shady, fast-paced, and highly competitive midnight fruit market, opportunistic vendors are ruthlessly fighting to hoard the freshest, highest-quality stock. Players take on the role of these cutthroat fruit sellers, trying to be the first to collect a "Perfect Lot" to make a fortune while intentionally weeding out the fakes and cornering the market. In this chaotic exchange, there are no teammates—only enemies. To survive and win, you cannot trust anyone; you can only rely on your lightning-fast reflexes and sharp intuition! This is not just a test of dexterity, but a brutal psychological war. Players must use verbal interference and deception to mask their true intentions, creating false illusions of what they are hoarding to manipulate opponents into handing over the exact fruits they need. In this deceptive market, the risks are high, competition is ruthless, and a perfect box of fruit is worth more than gold itself.

Genre

The genre of Fruit Fraud is best described as a mix of real-time set collection and social deduction.

- **Party:** fast-paced, high-energy gameplay great for social gatherings.
- **Social Deduction:** players must negotiate, deceive, and bluff to influence trades.
- **Set Collection:** the core loop requires players to collect a specific set of matching cards.

Mechanics

The core mechanics of Fruit Fraud masterfully blend Real-Time Set Collection, Dexterity/Reflexes, and Social Deduction. The essence of the game lies in utilizing the continuous passing of cards and the explosive "Bell Rush" mechanic to dictate the chaotic pacing of the trades. Through our playtesting, we discovered that the game gains immense depth when players introduce psychological warfare and bluffing. During a standard 4-player game (which averages a solid 6–7 minute pace), the Bell Rush allows players to use reverse psychology and verbal misdirection. For example, if a player is secretly hoarding Apples (and already has four in their hand), they might win the Bell Rush and deliberately ask an opponent, "Do you have any Grapes?" This creates a false narrative that they are trying to collect grapes. Consequently, when the winner hands back an unwanted card (which is not an Apple), the opponents are manipulated for the next several rounds.

Believing they are stopping a win, opponents will hold onto their Grapes and instead eagerly pass away their Apples—delivering exactly what the bluffer needs. This bluffing mechanic elevates the game from a simple dexterity challenge into a deep, engaging party game full of deception, where players intentionally confuse opponents to slow down their progress.

Prep

Set Up

- **4-Player Game (Standard):** The game uses all 5 types of fruits, with 5 cards each, totaling 25 cards. The cards are shuffled, and exactly 5 cards are dealt face-down to each of the 4 players in turn order. The remaining 5 cards are placed face-down in the center of the table to form "The Orchard". The service bell is placed directly in the center, within equal reach of all players.
- **3-Player Game (Fast-Paced Variant):** Based on our playtesting, we found that 3-player games are much faster and rely more heavily on aggressive trading and stealing. To accommodate this while maintaining balance, we remove one fruit type entirely (leaving 4 suits, totaling 20 cards). Deal 5 cards to each player, and place the remaining 5 face-down to form "The Orchard". The bell remains in the center.

Rules

- At the end of any passing cycle, a player's hand size must always return to exactly 5 cards.
- The cards within "The Orchard" remain completely unknown to all players. Only the winner of a Bell Rush is eligible to interact with it, meaning players can never be 100% certain which fruit sets are possible to complete.
- When targeted for a "Forced Trade," a player cannot refuse. However, they may shuffle their hand before the winner blindly draws a card to add an element of chance.

Core Mechanic Description

The gameplay loop alternates between a methodical passing phase and an explosive race to ring the bell. Players must constantly monitor the flow of cards being passed while staying primed to seize control of the Bell Rush. Winning the bell is crucial—it allows players to seize the initiative rather than playing passively. During trades, utilizing

verbal deception and spreading false information becomes the strongest strategy to manipulate the market, confuse opponents, and secure the needed cards.

Turn Actions

1. **The Pass:** Starting with Player 1 (the dealer), they pass 1 unwanted card from their hand clockwise to Player 2. Player 2 now temporarily holds 6 cards (5 + 1), and must immediately choose 1 unwanted card to pass to Player 3. This continues clockwise until all players have returned to exactly 5 cards in their hand, at which point the passing cycle stops.
2. **The Bell Rush:** The moment the passing cycle stops, all players collectively count down "3... 2... 1...!" and race to hit the central service bell first.
3. **Winner's Action:** The first player to ring the bell becomes the active vendor and **must** choose one of the following two actions:
 - *Orchard Swap:* Take 1 unwanted card from their hand, place it into the Orchard, and blindly draw 1 new card from the Orchard to replace it.
 - *Forced Trade:* Initiate a trade with any opponent. The target opponent shuffles their hand, and the winner blindly draws 1 card from them. The winner then hands 1 card of their choice back to the opponent to complete the trade. (Once the winner's action is resolved, the round officially ends, and a new "Pass" phase begins).

Win Condition

There are no set rounds. The objective can be met at any point in time. As soon as any player collects a "Perfect Lot" of exactly 5 identical fruit cards in their hand, they must ring the bell and reveal their cards to instantly claim victory.

Objective

The objective of the game is to be the first player to collect a "Perfect Lot" of exactly 5 identical fruit cards. Once a player collects these cards, they must ring the central service bell to claim victory.

Special & Unique

The game features "The Orchard," a face-down pile of cards that ensures no one knows which fruits are impossible to collect this round. The game also introduces a "Bell Rush"

mechanic where players race to hit a bell to initiate a forced trade, adding a physical dexterity challenge. During this trade, players can use reverse psychology by choosing whether to hide the card they just received.

Research History

History, Antecedents, and Related Games

- Deduction Games: The core mechanic of not knowing the rare/impossible fruit mimics the hidden information type games, such as *Hanabi* or *Mahjong*, where the players must figure out and deduce possibilities for the limited win conditions.
- Social Deduction: The social aspect of deduction games is also a major component of these kinds of card/board games. Games such as *Coup* demonstrate the ideal psychological trading mechanics found in similar games.
- Set Collection Games: After discarding and/or passing also seen in *Mahjong* or even *Conquian*, players must start collecting sets of similar suits. These matching collections are the same main objective of the game and allow players to gain points or even win.
- General History: The setting is based on real-world street/city markets found in cities such as Mexico City, Istanbul, and Bangkok. These are influenced by the high-stakes and fast-talking atmosphere of crowded walkways and secret dealings.

Target Audience

The Target audience is from teens to adults (ages 13+) who enjoy fast-paced, social deduction party games. The game requires critical thinking, quick reflexes, and the ability to bluff under pressure. These requirements make it perfect for teens and above, but may be too chaotic and challenging for a younger audience.

We will cater to our target audience by emphasizing both the high-energy aspect of the 'bell rush' mechanic and the direct PvP confrontation of forced trading. These frameworks allow for a short, tense, and engaging gameplay loop for any type of social gathering. Additionally, the art style is a cartoon-leaning aesthetic.

Market Analysis

- Competition: Within the party game market, there is a large saturation with titles that focus on sole dexterity, such as *Jenga* or *Twister*, or sole deduction, such as *The Resistance* or *Secret Hitler*. However, Fruit Fraud offers the best of both disciplines

with its dexterity mechanics of ringing the bell and the social deduction mechanics of hidden information and set collection. The closest competitor would be games such as *Pit*, which offers the same features of set collection and trading, but Fruit Fraud differentiates itself with the 'Orchard' element and targeted/forced trading.

- Marketing: To reach our target audience, Fruit Fraud would be advertised through short clips on TikTok or Instagram and sponsored gameplay videos on YouTube. This would influence and expose Fruit Fraud to the mass audience of the creators' fans and general party game enthusiasts.

Narrative Summary

In a busy city market, the streets are crowded with buyers, and the vendors are filled with competition. Players are their own fruit vendor in this shady, fast-paced market where high-quality stock is scarce. Everyone is trying to reach the goal of having the 'Perfect Lot,' where other fruit vendors will do anything to corner the market. To get closer to this 'Perfect Lot', players must endure the frantic exchange of goods and chaotic blur of dealing with the 'Orchard' or rival vendors. Can you trust others or test your luck with the 'Orchard'? In this market, the risks are high, the competition is deceptive, and the fruit is worth more than gold itself.

Playtesting

Summary Results

These playtests were done within our internal team of four to iterate and test the functionality of the overall mechanics of the game. There were no surveys made for these first two playtests. Playtest 1 was done with only three players, meaning we had to remove one type of fruit completely to correct the number of cards in the game. This caused the game to become more fast-paced, while still maintaining the core feel of the game loop. Playtest 2 was done with all four players of the team, meaning it was exactly how we had structured the game within its design.

- Bell Rush is a really fun mechanic, and players love the physical race and the tension it creates.
- Bluffing and limiting information work naturally, and players would come up with lies or withhold information without prompting.

- The Orchard needs clearer rules about how random it is; sometimes it was shuffled, but other times it remained the same, and it created repeated confusion about blind drawing.
- Rounds can be won extremely easily if the draw of the hand is relatively lucky (4 out of the 5 cards), which causes some games to be won in just a few rounds. This was not super common, but did happen around 20% of the time, and more so during the 3-player games.
- If players aren't being conscious of other players getting too close to winning, or that they aren't being aggressive enough, the games will end much faster and with less player versus player engagement.
- The win condition is perfectly clear, and we never had any questions on it. Additionally, the reveal is intuitive and very satisfying.

Playtest 1

Date: April 2, 2026

Goal: To test the clarity of the setup and basic gameloop, and to collect any initial items that we did not consider when documenting the ruleset.

Feedback: With only 25 cards and 5 card types (this was adjusted to 20 cards and 4 card types for the 3-player games), it was really easy to understand how to set up the game, even when adjusting to the non-ideal number of three players. The only problem with the setup was a slight confusion on where The Orchard is placed relative to the bell and players. Passing the cards around was natural and made sense when the round was over. Game rounds were quick, and the bell rush seemed to be skillfully fair. There was a slight confusion on whether stealing from players was random, blind, or asking if they had it.

Conclusion/Analysis: The 3-player variant (removing one fruit type) successfully preserved the core loop while increasing pace, confirming that the game scales down without breaking. The confusion around The Orchard's placement was minor (could easily be fixed with a diagram or a game mat), but the larger issue was the uncertainty about forced trade mechanics. This indicates a missing rule clarification. The early lucky wins (20% of games, mostly in 3-player) suggest that starting hands with 4 matching cards give too strong an advantage, especially with fewer opponents to interrupt you. We may need more balancing mechanics if it continues to be a problem.

Playtest 2

Date: April 4, 2026

Goal: To continue testing the clarity of the basic gameloop, and to engage in more bluffing for longer-based games.

Feedback: With more comfort in how the game functioned, it became more intuitive to start asking for cards you didn't need or acting like you're closer to winning to bluff and deceive. The success rate of bluffing seemed to definitely benefit players in the start, but then others would catch on after a couple of games or rounds. The Orchard continued to be a problem of confusion as players didn't know if it needed to be random or organized when swapping and selecting cards.

Conclusion/Analysis: With a full 4-player game, bluffing emerged naturally and successfully, proving the social deduction layer works without direct prompting. However, the success rate dropped after repeated games as players learned each other's tells, which shouldn't be seen as an issue but more of a party game dynamic. A new The Orchard confusion emerged with not knowing specifically whether the swapped card goes where the original card was, or if they should be shuffled randomly and placed in The Orchard again. We need a standardized rule, such as placing your unwanted card face down anywhere in The Orchard, then drawing the card you want without looking. Additionally, passive play leads to fast and low-engagement games. This may suggest we should add a better incentive for aggression or make it clearer in the ruleset.

Next Steps

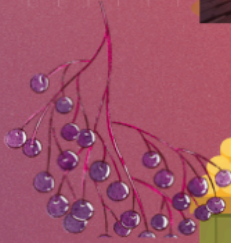
- Improve The Orchard rules by adding a visual diagram to the rulebook, a reminder card, or creating a game mat.
- Clarify Force Trade rules by adding a more detailed ruleset that explains that it is a blind draw from the opposite player's hand.
- Encourage the player to be more aggressive in the rulebook by adding more stress and importance to blocking other players from winning and collecting all their fruit.
- Run external playtests with Likert scale surveys for better quantitative data collection.

Mood Board

Fruit Fraud reflects the energetic and chaotic atmosphere of a lively fruit market. Bright colors, playful fruit illustrations, and dynamic compositions are used to capture the fast-paced nature of the game. Emphasizes motion, excitement, and the unpredictable nature of trading in the market.



FRUIT FRAUD



Characters



There isn't really any character in our game; we just have fruits. The five fruits that are in the game make the word P.E.A.C.E. This design choice reflects the theme of peace and unity. Because in a world where conflicts and wars continue to occur, the game uses playful fruit elements to symbolize cooperation, balance, and harmony among players.

Interface

The interface for Fruit Fraud is designed to be simple, intuitive, and fast-paced, so the game components are placed in a centralized play area to encourage direct interaction between players and maintain the energetic atmosphere of a chaotic fruit market.

- **Fruit Cards:** These cards represent the different types of fruits in the market. Players collect, trade, and pass these cards in order to assemble a "Perfect Lot" of five identical fruits.
- **Service Bell:** Placed in the center of the table, the bell is used during the "Bell Rush" mechanic. After each round, players race to hit the bell first to gain the opportunity to initiate a forced trade or interact with the Orchard.
- **The Orchard:** A face-down pile of cards placed in the center of the table. The Orchard introduces hidden information into the game, ensuring that players do not know which fruits may be impossible to collect in a given round.

- **Player Hands:** Each player holds five fruit cards and must strategically choose which cards to pass, trade, or keep while observing the behavior of other players.

Below is an example layout of the play area where the bell, the Orchard pile, and the players' trading interactions form the core interface of the game.



Visual Content

Gameboard

Fruit Fraud does not require a fixed or structured game board. Instead, the game is designed to be simple and portable, allowing players to set up and start playing almost anywhere. The only required components are the fruit cards, a face-down pile called the “Orchard,” and a central service bell placed within reach of all players.

Because the game focuses on social interaction, quick reactions, and fast card exchanges, the table itself effectively becomes the play area. This minimal setup keeps the interface intuitive and allows the game to begin quickly without complicated preparation.

Fruit Cards

The fruit cards use a bright and vibrant color palette to reflect the lively atmosphere of the fruit market. Each card features a cartoon-style fruit illustration placed at the center of the card, making it easy for players to quickly recognize different fruit types during fast-paced

gameplay. The name of the fruit is displayed on a banner at the top of the card for clear readability.

The five fruit cards in the game are: Peach, Elderberry, Apple, Cherry, Emblica



Concept Art Exploration

The visual style of Fruit Fraud is designed to support a casual, fast paced gameplay experience while maintaining clarity for players.

A cartoon-style illustration is used for all fruit assets to match the lighthearted and accessible nature of the game. This approach makes the visuals more friendly and approachable, reinforcing the game's identity as a social and casual experience.

Bright, saturated colors and large color blocks are applied to create a lively and energetic atmosphere, reflecting the chaotic environment of a busy fruit market. These colors also help attract attention quickly during gameplay.

To enhance the sense of motion and urgency, dynamic elements such as speed lines are incorporated into the card backgrounds. This visual technique creates a feeling of chaos and excitement, aligning with the fast-paced trading mechanics.




Color Palette

 #fd5702

 #e01f0f

 #fce9a6

 #072995

The color palette of Fruit Fraud is designed to balance visual intensity with clarity, while reinforcing the game's energetic atmosphere.

Warm tones such as orange, red, and light yellow are used on the front of the cards. These colors naturally complement a wide range of fruit colors, ensuring that no specific fruit feels

visually out of place. At the same time, the warm palette enhances the feeling of heat, energy, and chaos, supporting the fast-paced and competitive nature of the game.

In contrast, a cooler blue tone is used on the back of the cards. This creates a clear visual distinction between the front and back, allowing players to quickly identify card states during gameplay. The cooler color also helps reduce visual fatigue during play sessions.

Despite this contrast, both sides maintain a high level of color saturation. This ensures visual consistency across the game and preserves the vibrant, playful identity of Fruit Fraud.

Visual Communication



The visual content design in *Fruit Fraud* aims not merely to enhance aesthetic appeal, but also to actively serve the game's mechanics.

Each fruit card features a centered illustration complemented by strong visual contrast, ensuring that players can rapidly identify the card type amidst fast-paced interactions. This design effectively minimizes the time required to process information, enabling players to react with greater efficiency—a critical factor in this fast-paced tabletop game. Furthermore, a clear title banner on every card establishes an additional layer of identification support; this redundancy ensures that even if players fail to recognize a card's content immediately via its illustration, they can rely on the textual information for quick confirmation.

The use of unique color schemes for different fruits helps establish distinct visual differentiation, making it easier for players to track their progress and clearly identify which sets they are currently attempting to complete. This proves particularly vital within the unpredictable, real-time trading environment of the game.

Dynamic background elements—such as radial burst effects and kinetic lines—visually reinforce the game's sense of urgency and excitement. These elements intuitively convey the fast-paced nature inherent to the gameplay without the need for any additional textual explanation.

Ultimately, the entire visual system strikes a perfect balance between "vibrancy" and "clarity." Although the game deliberately cultivates an atmosphere of unpredictable chaos, the structured layout of each card ensures legibility, thereby effectively preventing genuine confusion and guaranteeing a smooth, fluid gaming experience for the players.

Appendix A: Brainstorming Notes

- Just trading doesn't work; all players finish at the same time.
- Trades should feel shady – allow for bluffing and negotiation (haggling better word?).
- Possibility of fake fruit cards as an impediment to collecting a full set.

Appendix B: A Document of Lenses

Lens #5, Endogenous Value

What is valuable to the players in our game?

The only items of value in the game are the fruit cards, with five of a kind necessary to win the game.

How can we make it more valuable to them?

There is a naturally limited supply of each type of card, and a limit to how many can be held. Therefore, if a player has more than one of a given type, cards of that type become more valuable to the player than the others, and they are more likely to prioritize those types of cards over others.

What is the relationship between value in the game and the player's motivations?

Players' motivation in the game is to complete a set before any other player, so they will focus on obtaining and holding onto more of whatever type they have most of (in theory).

Lens #15, The Toy

If our game had no goal, would it be fun at all? If not, how can we change that?

Without the goal of attaining a specific set of cards, the game would simply entail swapping cards back and forth. Players could set their own goals based on personal preferences, but their goals might not conflict and therefore be straightforward to achieve.

When people see our game, do they want to start interacting with it, even before they know what to do? If not, how can we change that?

Ideally, the bright colors and design of the cards are intriguing enough to encourage interaction.

Lens #21, Functional Space

Is the space of this game discrete or continuous?

As the cards can be located in multiple different hands or the Orchard, the space of the game is discrete.

How many dimensions does it have?

Two, since cards can be traded back and forth.

What are the boundaries of the space?

The hands of the players, and the Orchard.

Are there subspaces? How are they connected?

No, the Orchard functions as a sixth hand not connected to a player.

Is there more than one useful way to abstractly model the space of this game?

An argument could be made that the Orchard is a subspace, or that for most of the game space can be treated as one-dimensional.

Lens #4, Curiosity

What questions does our game put into the player's mind?

The most obvious questions are, What do I need to win?, How can I get it?, and What are my opponents trying to get?

What are we doing to make them care about these questions?

Answering them is the primary way to win the game.

What can we do to make them invent even more questions?

Generally, continuous trade should cause the answers to the existing questions to frequently change.

Lens #2, Surprise

What will surprise players when they play our game?

Predominantly, surprise should come from their interactions with each other.

Does the story in our game have surprises? Do the game rules? Does the artwork? The technology?

These are largely not the sources of surprise in this game.

Do our rules give players ways to surprise each other?

The game is centered around deceiving and outwitting each other. Ideally, one player's victory will be surprising to the others.

Do our rules give players ways to surprise themselves?

Drawing cards from the Orchard should be a surprise—either revealing exactly what the player needs, or something entirely worthless.

Lens #16, The Player

In general, what do the people playing our game like?

Given the nature of the game, people who play it are likely interested in simple, fast-paced gameplay with a decent amount of interaction with other players.

What don't they like? Why?

They are probably not interested in a large amount of complexity out of the gate, or cooperation with others, especially given the name and presentation of the game.

What do they expect to see in a game?

They expect to see competitiveness rewarded, and victory to come at the expense of others.

If I were in their place, what would I want to see in a game?

From my own experience, I tend to expect card games like Fruit Fraud to be relatively fast-paced and somewhat chaotic.

What would they like or dislike about my game in particular?

I think that the mechanics relating to the bell, mostly the potential to take from other players, would be particularly appealing. The trading each round would probably be less appealing.

Lens #8, Holographic Design

What elements of the game make the experience enjoyable?

At present, the most exciting aspect is the anticipation of seeing each new card and figuring out how it furthers your progress toward your overall goal.

What elements of the game detract from the experience?

The difficulty of interacting with the bell, which requires precision due to the size of the target, can cause frustration, especially given the elements locked behind successful interaction.

How can we change game elements to improve the experience?

Potentially, making the bell easier to interact with would make the struggle to ring it feel fairer.

Lens #29, Chance

What in our game is truly random? What parts just feel random?

The initial distribution of cards is truly random, while the player-guided movement of cards may feel more random than it is, as it is actually guided by player goals.

Does the randomness give the players positive feelings of excitement and challenge, or does it give them negative feelings of hopelessness and lack of control?

The front-loading of the actual randomness seems to help players determine a good starting point and pathway towards their goals, guiding them toward decisions rather than making those goals seem out of reach.

Would changing our probability distribution curves improve our game?

Given the centrality of those curves and the elements that create them, changing them would likely diminish the intended experience.

Do players have the opportunity to take interesting risks in the game?

The opportunity to add or remove cards from the pool available to all players, as well as the ability to affect other players' hands and damage their progress toward their goals, come with the possibility of providing opponents with access to the cards they need while feeling to secure your own, make everything that can happen by successfully ringing the bell risky.

What is the relationship between chance and skill in our game? Are there ways we can make random elements feel more like the exercise of a skill? Are there ways we can make exercising skills feel more like risk-taking?

The game is heavily chance-focused, with skill being exclusive to the ringing of the bell and making decisions as to which risks to take.

Lens #91, Playtesting

Done retrospectively based on our first round of playtesting.

Why are we doing a playtest?

Aside from assignment requirements, we intended to ascertain how the game functions in practice, as opposed to just guessing how it will function based on the rules.

Who should be there?

We did the playtest internally, due to a limit of available players outside of our group.

Where should we hold it?

We held it online, due to the difficulty of meeting in person.

What will we look for?

We were mostly focused on our personal experiences with our game.

How will we get the information we need?

We simply discussed our general feelings, immediately following the playtest. Additionally, each of us got to experience the game ourselves.

Lens #90, Documentation

What do we need to remember while making this game?

Generally, it is important that we clearly maintain the central concept of the game we are developing.

What needs to be communicated while making this game?

The delineation of responsibilities, what has been done to achieve them, and what still needs to be done all need to be clearly communicated.

Appendix C: Change Log

4/6/2026

Added Playtesting and additional graphics sections. Removed Gameplay, due to being redundant with the Prep and Mechanics sections. Added additional lenses.

4/5/2026

Added Prep, Mechanics, expanded Theme, removed Setting.

4/2/2026

Added image for card back. Corrected changelog.

3/16/2026

Rest of 1st draft content added.

- Gameplay
- Narrative
- Visual design
- Index

3/15/2026

Framework created, research history and changelog added.

2/27/2026

Document created, roles assigned.

Appendix D: Playtesting Forms

N/A - all internal with no playtesting forms thus far.