

Sushi Go Party!

Rulebook Review



This is one of my favorite games to play over the holidays because it takes so little time to teach family members who don't have a lot of gaming experience, and it has a lot of staying power for a casual game. Aside from a wonky definition of "most," the game has only a handful of mechanics and few simple rules to learn. The rest is just strategy, enjoying the cute sushi art, and wrecking the other players by stealing their Sashimi or leaving them with one too many Tofu.

Sushi Go Party!'s rulebook is rather unique for such a light game in that only 40% of it is the basic rules, and the remaining 60% are card clarifications. Normally, this balance would indicate some very poorly written cards, but in the case of Sushi Go Party!, it's just a bit of redundancy. It works because it follows the end of the rules-rules and doesn't interrupt the flow or distract with clarifications to questions no one asked. Most people will probably never read this part, or even realize it's there - and they won't need to. But, the first time you copy a Nigiri with the Special Order while you have an unused Wasabi in play, there's a clarification for that.

What really makes these clarifications work though is that they are true clarifications, rather than supplemental text needed to finish an incompletely explained rule or to correctly something poorly explained elsewhere.

PLAYING A TURN

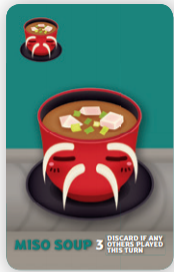
Turns in Sushi Go Party! happen simultaneously. Each player chooses 1 card in their hand that they would like to keep and places it face-down in front of them. When all players have done this, everyone reveals their chosen cards by turning them face-up.

After revealing cards, pass your remaining hand face-down to the player on your left. (In this way, each hand will move clockwise around the table.) Pick up this new hand and the next turn begins. (You will have a smaller hand to choose from.)

The most significant shortcoming with the Sushi Go rules is what it's missing: Etiquette.

The rules say to reveal your cards after everyone has made their selection, and then pass your hand. It does not say how to know that everyone has made their selection. Of course, this is hardly an insurmountable problem, and every group of players will eventually figure their own protocol out.

On the other hand, I think every time I've introduced a new person to the game, there has been a moment where someone ends up a hand ahead of everyone else, usually moving too quickly while another player is resolving a special card like the Menu. If the error isn't discovered immediately, it can be difficult to unwind.



MISO SOUP

Everyone's always jealous of that one person who orders a hot cup of miso soup!

If you play a miso soup card and it is the **only one played in the turn**, it remains in your play area until the end of the round when it will **score 3 points**. However, if **more than 1 miso soup** is played on the same turn (including by you), then all these miso soup cards are **immediately discarded** and will not score at the end of the round. Place them face-up beside the game board, to be shuffled back into the deck for the next round.

- If a player plays a miso soup by using chopsticks, spoon, menu, or special order it counts as being played on that same turn.
- You may score multiple miso soups in a round.

Notice that the rules don't specify how to check if anyone else has played a Miso Soup. In a small group, this isn't too difficult (just look around), but with 6-8 players at the table, it's easy for two Miso Soups in the same round to get missed unless players are declaring "Miso!" as they flip their cards.

Again, folks will figure this all out on their own, but a little bit of suggested etiquette would go a long way to smoothing out the first few games.

My suggested etiquette: When another player selects the Menu, loudly comment on the new cards that come up. This will keep you busy so you don't accidentally play out of turn.