

Aurum by Shreesh Bhat

GAME OBJECTIVE: Be the first to collect 2 gold nuggets by earning the highest points.

PLAYERS: 3 or 4 players.

CARDS: 50 base metal cards: 5 suits of ranks 1 – 10.

11 gold cards: ranks 1 – 8 with duplicates of 1 – 3.

Introduction

In the competitive trick-taking game Aurum, you play as an Alchemist melding base metals into gold. Earn points by collecting gold cards or by correctly bidding how many tricks you will win.

Rules for 4 players

Setup:

Deal 12 base metal cards to each player.

Place the 2 leftover base metal cards face-up.

Place all of the gold cards face up in the center.

Bid:

Starting from the first player, in turn order, each player places a base metal card **face-up** in front of themselves. This will be their bid. The rank of the bid card indicates how many tricks they believe they will take this round.

After both players on a team have made a bid, the **higher** of the two bids will be the team's bid.

Play:

The starting player leads any base metal. You cannot lead with a gold card.

Each player, in turn order, **must** play a different base metal card than what has already been played **OR may** play a gold card from your collection. Gold cards played to the trick are returned to the supply.

Collecting gold: The player who played the lowest ranked base metal card takes a gold card of the same rank from the supply (if it is available) and adds it to their collection face-up. If there is a tie, the one played latest wins. This player also **leads** to the next trick.

Winning a trick: The player who played the highest gold card wins & takes the trick. Otherwise, highest base metal card wins. If there is a tie, the one played latest wins.

Bid exchange: Before any cards have been played to a trick, a player can spend a gold card from their gold collection to replace either their partner's bid card **OR** their own with a card from their hand.

End of Round:

The round ends when a player cannot play a valid base metal card and does not / chooses not to play a gold card.

Scoring:

Under the bid: **0 points** if you take fewer tricks than your team's bid.

Over the bid: You earn your **bid value** as points if you take more tricks than your team's bid.

Exact bid: You earn **double the bid value** as points if you take the exact number of tricks as your team's bid.

Gold cards in your gold collection have values based on their rank:

- Gold cards with rank 0 are worth **0 points** each
- Gold cards with ranks 1-3 are worth **1 point** each
- Gold cards with ranks 4-6 are worth **2 points** each
- Gold cards with ranks 7-8 are worth **3 points** each

Players add their gold card score and their bid score to determine their total score for this round. The player with the highest score wins the round and takes a golden nugget.

Round tie breaker: If there's a tie for highest score, then the gold nugget goes to the team/player that met their bid exactly. If it's a tie on bids met, then the gold nugget goes to the team/player that collected the highest ranked gold card. If it's still a tie, tied players/team get a gold nugget each.

Next round

To start the next round, place all gold cards back into the Supply and shuffle & deal all the Base Metal cards together.

The person to the left of the first player from the previous round will be the first player for the next round. Give this player the First Player Marker.

End of game

The first team/player to get 2 gold nuggets wins the game.

Three player rule changes

Setup:

Remove 1 base metal suit and all 10s.

Use gold cards ranked 0-7.

Deal 12 base metal cards to each player. There will be no leftover cards.

Bid:

Each player places their bid card **face-down** and reveal them simultaneously.

Variants

- 1) Consider playing with the rank 0 gold cards for a “training mode” of Aurum. Everyone starts with a 0 gold card in this variant.
- 2) Instead of using the golden nuggets, tally numerical scores each round. The player/team with the most points after 3 rounds wins.

Clarifications

- 1) If everyone plays the same rank base metal card, the last played one wins the trick, collects the gold card, and has to lead to the next trick.
- 2) Anytime a gold card is used, whether played to a trick or used to exchange the bid, the gold card is returned back to the supply for someone else to collect in future tricks.
- 3) For order of operations on collecting gold and winning trick, first you collect gold if present and then resolve who wins the trick.

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