

Rules *Card*



The deal, four players

- Two decks and four jokers. Partners sit across, and each player gets **11 cards**.
- Turn the top card up to start the discard pile. If it is a wild card or a red three, turn it sideways and cover it: the pile starts **frozen**.
- Lay any red three you are dealt face up and draw a replacement. Left of the dealer starts, and the deal moves clockwise each hand.

A turn

- Draw** one card, or take the whole discard pile.
- Meld** if you can, then **discard** one card.
- A side with no canasta yet must keep at least one card in hand.

Melds and canastas

- Three or more cards of one rank, 4 through ace. No runs, and never a meld of wild cards alone.
- Every meld keeps **at least two natural cards** and never more than three wild ones.
- A **canasta** is seven or more cards with at least four naturals: **500** if no wild card is in it, **300** if one is. Adding a wild card to a natural canasta makes it mixed.
- Your side has one meld per rank, and never adds to the other side's.

The discard pile

- Frozen against your side** until it has melded.
- Frozen for everyone** while it holds a wild card, or the red three turned up at the start.
- A **frozen pile** takes a natural pair from your hand that matches the top card.
- An **unfrozen pile** can also be taken with one matching natural card plus a wild card, or by adding the top card to a meld of yours.
- Never when the top card is a wild card or a black three.
- Meld the top card first, then take the rest and meld more if you like.

Bonuses

Natural canasta	500
Mixed canasta	300
Each red three	100
All four red threes	800
Going out	100
Going out concealed	200

COUNT Card values

Joker	50
Ace or 2	20
K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8	10
7, 6, 5, 4, black 3	5
Cards left in hand	minus value

Your side's first meld

By your side's score at the start of the hand:

Below zero 15	0 to 1,495 50	1,500 to 2,995 90	3,000 up 120
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- Only the cards you lay down count. Red threes and canasta bonuses never do.
- Opening by taking the pile: its top card counts toward the minimum, and nothing else in the pile does.
- Once either partner opens, you both meld freely.

Threes

- Red threes are bonuses:** lay each one face up and draw a replacement. 100 each, 800 for all four.
- A side that never melds **loses** them instead.
- Black threes stop the next player** from taking the pile, until a card covers them.
- Meld black threes only as you go out: three or four, no wild cards.

Going out

- Your side needs **at least one canasta**, or finishes one as you go out.
- Meld every card in your hand. A last discard is optional.
- 100** for going out, **200** concealed: the whole hand at once, a canasta included, with nothing melded earlier.
- "Partner, may I go out?" is optional, and the answer binds both ways. Ask before you meld anything.
- When the stock runs out, play carries on while each player can take the discard and meld it.

FEWER Two and three players

- Two:** 15 cards each, draw two and discard one, and two canastas to go out. Some tables draw one and ask for a single canasta.
- Three:** 13 cards each, and either everyone plays alone or **cutthroat:** draw two, and the first to take the pile plays alone against the other two, to 7,500.

Table rules vary

- Bicycle has a **black three freeze** the pile; most others only stop the next player.
- Some tables allow **melds of wild cards**, with a canasta of them worth 1,000 or 2,000.
- Stricter pickups: a natural pair needed even when the pile is not frozen.