

Card Games from Around the World

Compiled by the Staff of Two Horizons Press

As a Resource for the Heritage Playing Cards

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India

Introduction: players, cards, deal

Teen Pathi, sometimes spelled **Teen Patti**, means "**three cards**". It is an Indian gambling game, also known as **Flush**, and is almost identical to the British game 3 Card Brag. An international 52 card pack is used, cards ranking in the usual order from ace (high) down to two (low). Any reasonable number of players can take part; it is probably best for about 4 to 7 players.

Before playing it is necessary to agree the value of the minimum stake (which I will call one unit). Everyone places this minimum stake in the pot - a collection of money in the centre of the table, which will be won by one of the players. The dealer deals out the cards one at a time until everyone has three cards. The players then bet on who has the best three card hand. Each has the option to look at their three-card hand before betting (playing **seen**) or to leave their cards face down on the table (playing **blind**).

The ranking of hands

The ranking of the possible hands, from high to low, is as follows.

Trio - three cards of the same rank. Three aces are the best trio and three twos are the lowest.

Straight run - three consecutive cards of the same suit. Ace can be used in the run A-2-3, which is the highest straight run. Next comes A-K-Q, K-Q-J and so on down to 4-3-2, which is the lowest. 2-A-K is not a valid run.

Normal run - three consecutive cards, not all of the same suit. A-2-3 is the best normal run, then A-K-Q, K-Q-J and so on down to 4-3-2. 2-A-K is not valid.

Colour - any three cards of the same suit. When comparing two colours, compare the highest card; if these are equal compare the second; if these are equal too, compare the lowest. Thus the highest colour is A-K-J and the lowest is 5-3-2.

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Pair - two cards of the same rank. Between two such hands, compare the pair first, then the odd card if these are equal. The highest pair hand is therefore A-A-K and the lowest is 2-2-3.

High card - three cards that do not belong to any of the above types. Compare the highest card first, then the second highest, then the lowest. The best hand of this type is A-K-J of mixed suits, and the worst is 5-3-2.

Any hand of a higher type beats any hand of a lower type - for example the lowest run 4-3-2 beats the best colour A-K-J.

The betting process

The betting starts with the player to the left of the dealer, and continues with players taking turns in clockwise order around the table, for as many circuits as are needed. Each player in turn can either put an additional bet into the pot to stay in, or pay nothing further and **fold**. When folding you permanently drop out of the betting and sacrifice any money you have already put into the pot during that deal.

The amount that you have to put in at your turn in order to stay in the game depends on the "**current stake**", and whether you are playing blind or seen - seen players have to bet twice as much as blind players to stay in. At the start of the betting the current stake is one unit (i.e. the amount that each player put in the pot as an ante).

If you are a **blind player** (you have not looked at your cards), you must put in at least the current stake and not more than twice the current stake. The current stake for the next player is then the amount that you put in.

If you are a **seen player** you must bet at least **twice** the current stake and not more than **four times** the current stake. The current stake for the next player becomes **half** the amount that you bet.

If you are a blind player, you may choose to look at your cards when your turn comes to bet. You then become a seen player and from that turn onwards you must bet at least twice the current stake (or fold).

The betting continues in this way until one of the following things happens:

All except one player have folded. In that case the last surviving player wins all the money in the pot, irrespective of the cards held.

All except two players have folded and one of these players at their turn pays for a **show**. In that case the cards of both players are exposed and compared.

The rules for a **show** are as follows:

A show cannot occur until all but two players have dropped out.

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If you are a blind player, the cost of a show is the current stake, paid into the pot, irrespective of whether the other player is blind or seen. You do not look at your own cards until after you have paid for the show.

If you are a seen player and the other player is blind, you are **not allowed** to demand a show. The seen player can only continue betting or drop out.

If both players are seen, either player in turn may pay twice the current stake for a show.

In a show, both players' cards are exposed, and the player whose hand is higher ranking wins the pot. If the hands are equal, the player who did **not** pay for the show wins the pot.

If **all** the players are seen, then at your turn, immediately after betting the minimum amount (twice the current stake), you can ask the player who bet immediately before you for a **compromise**. That player can accept or refuse the compromise.

If the compromise is accepted, the two players involved privately compare their cards, and the player with the lower ranking cards must immediately fold. If they are equal, the player who asked for the compromise must fold.

If the compromise is refused, the betting continues as usual with the player after the one who asked for the compromise.

Example. Players A, B, C & D are playing the game. They all put 1 unit on the table and D deals. Player A decides to play **blind** and puts one more unit. Player B sees his cards and folds. Player C plays blind and bets one unit. Player D looks at his cards and puts in 2 units (the minimum amount); the current stake remains at one unit. Player A raises the stake by putting in 2 units. Player C looks at his cards and folds. Player D puts in 4 units (the minimum amount for a seen player since A has raised the current stake to 2). Player A decides to look at his cards, and having done so he puts in 4 units and asks for a show. Player D shows his cards and the winner takes it all.

Note that the betting process in this game is quite different from Poker betting. There is no concept of equalising the bets, and a showdown is not possible with more than two players.

Pakistan

Seep, also known as **Sip**, **Sweep** or occasionally **Siv** or **Shiv** is a fishing game related to Casino. The main part of this page describes a version of Seep played in northern India, where the game is popular. It is also played in Pakistan, where the scoring is somewhat different, as described at the end of the page.

Players and Cards

Seep is normally played by four people in fixed partnerships of two with partners sitting opposite one another. The deal and play are counter-clockwise. A 2 player variation also exists but is less common.

A standard English pattern 52-card pack (without jokers) is used.

Objective and scores

The aim of the game is to capture cards worth points from a layout on the table (also known as the **floor**). The game ends when one team has accumulated a lead of at least 100 points over the other team (this is called a **baazi**). Players can decide in advance how many games (**baazis**) they want to play.

The method of capture is to play a card from one's hand and to pick up with it one or more cards or groups of cards from the table that have a **capture value** equal to the played card. For the purposes of capture, aces have a capture value of 1, cards from 2 to 10 are face value, a jack has capture value 11, queen 12 and king 13. During the game it is possible to build sets of cards into piles called houses, which can then only be captured as a unit. Cards on the floor that are not part of a house are called **loose cards**.

At the end of the play the scoring value of the captured cards is counted:

All cards of the Spade suit have point values corresponding to their capture value (from the king, worth 13, down to the ace, worth 1)

The **aces** of the other three suits are also worth 1 point each

The **ten of diamonds** is worth 6 points

Only these 17 cards have a scoring value - all other captured cards are worthless. The total scoring value of all the cards in the pack is **100 points**.

Players can also score for a sweep, which occurs when a player captures all the cards from the layout, leaving the table empty. Normally a sweep is worth 50 points, but a sweep made on the very first play is worth only 25 points, and a sweep made on the last play is worth no points at all.

The Deal and Bid

The first dealer is chosen at random. Subsequent hands are dealt by a member of the team that is currently losing. If the team that dealt the previous hand is behind or if the difference is zero, the same dealer deals again. If the team that dealt the previous hand is now winning, the deal passes to the next player to the right, who is now on the losing team. After a baazi, the turn to deal passes to the partner of the player whose turn it would have been without the baazi.

The dealer shuffles the cards and the player to dealer's **right** cuts. The dealer then gives 4 cards to the player on his right and places 4 cards face down on the table (floor). The player to the right of the dealer picks up his cards and looks at them and if possible must "bid for a house" on the basis of those four cards. The bid must be a number from 9 to 13, corresponding to the capture value of a card in his hand. If the player is unable to bid, having no card bigger than 8, he shows his cards and throws them in, and the shuffle, cut and deal are repeated until a bid is possible.

Example 1: if the player to dealer's right has ♠9, ♣10, ♥9 and ♥4 then he can bid for a house of either 9 or 10.

Example 2: if the player to dealer's right has ♠7, ♦6, ♣8 and ♥2, then no bid is possible and the hand must be redealt.

If the to dealer's right player has bid, the four cards on the floor are turned face up. The bidding player must now do one of the following three things (see play and houses below for further explanation).

Create a house **of the bid value** by adding a card from hand to the ones on the floor.

Play a card **of the bid value**, picking up one or more cards or sets of cards of the bid value amount.

Throw down a card **of the bid value** - this remains on the floor as a loose card. (If no house can be established or cards picked up, this is the only option.)

The dealer then completes the deal, dealing all the rest of the cards counterclockwise in groups of four. The player to dealer's right will then have 11 cards (having played one of his original 4) and the other players will have 12 cards each.

The Play

After the player to dealer's right has bid and played and the deal has been completed, it is the turn of the player to the right of the bidder (the dealer's partner). Play continues in counter-clockwise rotation. A turn

always involves playing one card from hand, so the play ends after everyone has had 12 turns, and all the players' hands are empty.

In a normal turn, there are basically three possible types of play:

Creating or adding to a house. The played card is used to construct a new house (a pile of cards which can only be captured as a unit) or added to an existing house.

Picking up (capturing) houses or cards. If the played card matches the value of a house or a card or a set of cards on the table, those cards, together with the played card, can be taken from the table layout and added to the cards captured by the player's team. These captured cards are stored face down in front of one member of the team.

Throwing a loose card. If the card played is not incorporated into a house and not used to pick anything up, it remains on the floor as a loose card.

Cards on the floor are face up, and are open to inspection by all players. That includes cards stacked into houses - players are entitled to look through the cards of a house to check what it contains. When cards are picked up and added to a team's pile of captured cards, players still have the right to be shown those cards on request, until the next player to the right has played a card. After the next player has played, cards previously picked up cannot be looked at by any player until the score is counted (when all players have played all their cards).

Houses

Houses (*ghar* in Hindi) are piles of two or more cards on the floor which can only be captured as a unit. The smallest such house has a capture value of 9, and the biggest 13 (king). A player can only create a house if he has a card equal to the capture value of the house in hand, as that card is needed to pick up the house later and collect points.

Every house on the floor must have at least one **owner**. The owner of the house is player who established it, unless it has been broken (see below). If a house has been broken the owner is the last player who broke it. A cemented house can sometimes have two owners: this happens if it is cemented or added to by an opponent of the first owner. A player who owns a house must always keep a card in hand whose value is equal to the value of the house, until the house is captured (picked up) or broken.

Cards on the floor that are not part of any house are **loose cards**. At the start of the game the four cards placed on the floor by the dealer are all loose cards.

An **ordinary (uncemented) house** consists of a pile of cards that add up to its capture value. For example a 5 and a 4 can form a 9-house, or a jack

and an ace can form a queen house, or two 2's, a 3 and a 6 can form a king-house.

A **cemented house** (*pukka*) is a pile that includes more than one copy of the capture value. Each copy could be a set of cards adding up to the capture value, or a card equal to the capture value. For example a cemented queen-house could consist of any of the following:

4, 8, 2, 10 (because $4+8=12$ and $2+10=12$)

4, 8, Q

Q, Q

3, 3, 6, A, J, Q

An ordinary house can be **broken**, by adding a card to it that increases its capture value. A house can only be broken by adding a card from a player's hand, never by adding a card from the floor. **A cemented house cannot be broken.**

There cannot be more than one house of the same value on the floor at the same time. If a play is made that would create a second house of the same value, the two houses are combined into a cemented house.

Also it is impossible to have a loose card and a house of the same value on the floor together. If the loose card was there first, then when the house was created the card would automatically be cemented into it. If the house was there first, then when the single card was played it would either cement the house or pick up the house.

Establishing an ordinary house

To establish an ordinary house, you play one card from your hand to the floor and combine it with one or more loose cards on the floor to make a pile which adds up to the capture value of the house, which must be 9, 10, 11, 12 or 13. You must also have a card of this value in your hand, and you must keep this card until the house is either broken or picked up. **Example:** on the floor are the following loose cards: 2, 3, 5. In your hand you have a 6 and a jack. You can play your 6 and establish an 11-house (jack house) by making a pile of **either** the 6, 2 and 3 **or** the 6 and the 5.

Note: you can only create a house for yourself, never for any other player, not even your partner. It may be known from the existence of a previous house that was broken or picked up that your partner must be holding a particular card, but you cannot create a new house of that value unless you hold a card of that value yourself. **Example.** The cards on the floor are king, 8, 7, 2, all loose. Your partner plays a 4 on the 7 to create a jack-house. The next player plays a 2 to break it and make a cemented

king-house. You have a 9 in your hand but no jack. In this case you cannot play your 9 on the 2 to make a new jack-house for your partner. You could only do that if you had a jack of your own, and then it would be your jack-house. Lacking a jack, you will have to wait for your partner to establish a new jack-house before you can add to it.

Breaking a house

An ordinary (uncemented) house that belongs to another player can be **broken** by adding a card from your hand which increases its value. You must hold a card that matches the new value. For example, if you have a 2 and a king and there is an ordinary jack-house on the table, you can break it by playing your 2 on it, converting it into your own king-house.

Please note that:

You cannot break your own house, but you are allowed to break a house belonging to your partner or an opponent.

You can **never** break a cemented house.

You cannot use a loose card on the floor to break a house. **Example:** suppose there is an ordinary 9-house (belonging to another player) and a loose 2 on the floor. In your hand you have an ace, a 10, a jack and a queen. You can break the 9-house with your ace to make a 10-house for yourself. You cannot break the 9-house with the 2 on the floor to make a jack-house. Also you cannot break the 9-house with your ace and add the 2 on the floor to make a queen-house.

Cementing a house

There are three ways to convert an ordinary house to a cemented house:

You may add to it a card from your hand which equals the value of the house. **Example:** on an ordinary jack-house belonging to your partner you may play a jack, cementing it. If you were the owner of the house, you would need two jacks in your hand to do this - one to play and one to keep.

You may play a card from your hand which together with one or more loose cards on the floor adds up to the value of the house. **Example:** on the table there is an ordinary 10-house and a loose 7. If you have a 3 in your hand you may play it on the 7 and add these cards to the 10-house, cementing it.

You may break another player's ordinary house by adding to it a card from your hand that makes its value equal to that of the house you are cementing. **Example:** On the table are an ordinary queen-house and an ordinary 9-house. If you have a 3 and a queen in your hand, you can play the 3 on the 9-house to break it and combine the resulting 12-house with

the queen-house to cement it. This play is also possible without holding a queen if your partner owns the queen-house: in this case your partner remains owner of the house and is responsible for keeping a queen so long as it is on the floor.

While cementing a house in any of the above ways, you may also add any loose cards from the floor that match or add up to the value of the house.

Example: on the floor is a jack-house, a loose 8 and a loose 3. You may play a jack from your hand, cementing the house, and at the same time add the 8 and 3 to the cemented house, since they also add up to 11.

If you cement a house belonging to an opponent (without breaking it) you become a second owner of the house. Both owners are now obliged to keep a card equal to the value of the house until it is picked up by one of them or another player.

Adding to a cemented house

When there is a cemented house on the floor, you may add further cards or sets of cards of equal value. One of the cards you add must come from your hand. Any of the above methods for cementing a house may be used. **Example:** on the floor is a cemented 10-house, a loose 6 and a loose 3. You may play an ace, combining it with the 6 and the 3 to make 10 and adding these cards to the 10-house.

Note that if the house belongs to an opponent you can only add to it if you also retain a card equal to the value of the house in your hand. By adding to it you become the second owner, responsible for holding a card of equal value to the house until it is picked up. However, if your partner is already an owner, you can add to the house without becoming an owner. **Example:** if your partner owns a cemented queen house and you hold one queen, you may add it to the house at your turn.

Establishing a cemented house

It is sometimes possible to create a cemented house in a single turn, where there was no house of that value on the floor before.

If you establish a house and there is already a loose card of the same value on the floor, that card is automatically added to the house, cementing it. The same applies if there is a set of loose cards that add up to the value of the new house - they are automatically added to the house and you have created a cemented house. **Example:** On the floor are a 4, a 3 and a queen. You hold a 5 and a queen. You can play the 5, combine it with the 4 and 3 making 12, and combine these three cards with the loose queen to make a cemented queen-house, of which you are the owner. The result would be similar if instead of the queen there were a loose 8 and 4 on the floor: when you play your 5 and create the queen-

house, the 8 and 4 automatically become part of your house and it is thereby cemented.

If you have more than one card that equals the value of a card or sum of loose cards on the floor, you can play one of these cards and combine it with the floor cards to make a cemented house. **Example:** there is a loose 9 on the floor and you hold two 9's. You can play one of your 9's on the floor 9 to make a cemented house.

If you break a house and the result is equal to a loose card on the floor, or the sum of several loose cards on the floor, a new cemented house is created. **Example:** on the floor is a 9-house belonging to another player and a loose 4 and a loose 6. You hold an ace and a ten. You can break the 9-house with your ace and the resulting 10-house will immediately be cemented by the loose 6 and 4.

Picking up cards and houses

In order to score points, it is necessary to pick up (capture) cards. The purpose of building houses is to create piles of cards that can be picked up together, and to make it more difficult for the opponents to pick up these cards. When picking up, the player places the card being played face up on the floor, and then gathers up this card together with all the captured cards and adds them to the face down stack of cards captured by his team.

Any single loose card can be picked up (captured) by playing a card of equal value. Both cards are added to the team's stack of captured cards. **Example:** on the table is a loose 5 of spades. A player plays a 5 from hand to the floor, picks up both fives and stores them as captured cards.

A set of loose cards can be picked up by playing a card equal to the sum of their values. **Example:** on the floor is a loose 3 and a loose 4. You can play a 7 to pick up the 3 and 4, and add these three cards to your captures.

Any house can be picked up by playing a card of equal value. **Example:** if there is a 12-house on the table, you can play a queen and pick up the house. You take the queen that you played and all the cards of the house and stack them with your team's captured cards.

If there is more than one item on the floor that matches the card you played, you pick up all of them: single cards, sets of cards and possibly a house. For example:

If there are two loose tens on the floor (which can only happen at the start of a game), you can play a 10 to pick up both of them.

If you find loose on the floor the cards A, 3, 5, 7, 8 you could play an 8 and pick up all of them (A+7, 3+5, 8) or play a queen and pick up all of them (A+3+8, 5+7).

If there is a jack-house and a loose 7 and a loose 4 on the floor, then by playing a jack you can pick up the house and also the 7 and the 4.

Note that when you pick up several sets of cards, those sets cannot overlap. **Example:** you find on the floor the cards 2, 3, 5, 6. By playing a jack you can pick up 2+3+6 or 5+6. You have to leave either the 5 or the 2 and 3 on the floor.

Note that a house can only be picked up by a card of equal value, not as part of a set. **Example:** on the floor is a 9-house and a 3. If you play a queen you **cannot** pick up the 9-house and the 3. Your queen would remain on the floor.

If a card is played and not used as part of a house, the player **must** pick up any cards that can be picked up. It is not possible to leave on the floor any loose card, set of loose cards or house that matches the value of the played card.

First example: the player to dealer's right is dealt 7, 8, 8, J, so must bid 11. On the floor is 2 of spades, 9 of spades, J, K. Having bid 11, the player **must** play the jack, and must pick up the 2, 9 and jack with this card. Unfortunately this risks a sweep (see below) if the next player has a king. But the first player is not allowed to pick up just the 2 and the 9 with the played jack, leaving the jack and king on the table. Nor is it possible simply to throw the jack and leave all five cards on the table as loose cards.

Second example: on the floor is a jack-house and some loose cards: 2, 4, 6, 9. If you play a jack to pick up the jack-house, you must at the same time pick up the 2 and the 9, leaving the 4 and the 6. Again this risks a sweep by the next player, but you are not allowed just to take the jack-house and leave the 9 and 2 on the floor with the 4 and 6. When picking up cards you must take all the cards that are captured by the card that you played.

Throwing a loose card

When it is your turn you **must** play one card from your hand. Normally you try to establish or add to a house or to pick up cards. But if the card you play is not used in a house and does not match any loose card, set of loose cards or house on the floor, it simply remains on the floor as a new loose card, which can be used or picked up by subsequent players.

Sweeps

A **sweep** (or **seep**) occurs when a player picks up all the remaining cards on the floor in one go. Normally, the player's team is awarded a bonus of 50 points for a sweep, but there are two exceptions.

If on the very first turn of a deal the bidder uses the bid card to pick up all four of the initial floor cards, this sweep is worth only 25 points.

A sweep on the very last turn of a deal, using the dealer's last card, does not score any points.

When a sweep is made, the card used to make the sweep is normally stored face up in the team's pile of captured cards, as a means of remembering when adding up the scores how many sweeps have been made.

A sweep in the middle of a game is particularly dangerous. The next player has to throw a loose card, and if the following player can match it, that is another sweep for the same team. If this pattern continues, the team making the sweep will probably win the baazi on that deal.

End of the Play

The play ends when everyone has played all the cards in their hands. At this point all houses must have been picked up, because of the rule that house owners must keep a matching card in their hand. These matching cards eventually have to be played to pick up the houses. However, there may be loose cards remaining on the floor. In this case, any remaining loose cards are picked up by whichever team was the last to pick up cards from the floor.

Scoring

Each team counts its points for cards (all spades, all aces and the ten of diamonds - see above) and adds the bonuses for any sweeps. Provided that each team has scored at least 9 points, the difference between the scores of the two teams is then calculated.

The differences in successive deals are accumulated to give a running total of the score difference between the teams. If the winning team achieves a difference of 100 or more between the scores, they win one Baazi (one game) and the difference is reset to zero.

If in any deal a team scores less than 9 points, then that team immediately loses a baazi, irrespective of the previous score and whether or not they were winning or losing at the start of that deal, and the scores are reset to zero.

Example: The players are North, West, South and East. North deals first and the North-South team win with a difference of 20. So West deals next and North-South win again with a difference of 36. North-South now have a lead of 56 and West deals again. East-West win with a difference of 42, so the running total is now 14, with North-South still winning, so West deals yet again. East-West win again with a difference of 66 so now East-West are in the lead with a running total of 52 and the deal passes to South. East-West win again with a difference of 54 and so win a baazi, since the cumulative difference is now 106. The score is reset to zero and the deal passes to North.

Second example: North-South are leading by 10 and East deals. East-West wins with a difference of 124 (having made two sweeps), so East-West win the baazi since they have a lead of 114. Since East-West took the lead the deal would normally pass to North, but because of the baazi, the next dealer will be North's partner South.

Third example. North-South are leading by 99 points, and East deals to North. In this deal North-South manage to score only 5 points (East-West have 92). 5 is less than 9 so there is an instant Baazi with East-West winning. The scores are reset to zero and it is South's turn to deal to East.

Basic Tactics

If possible, try to remember the number of cards left in denominations of 9 to king. Also try to remember the number of point-carrying-cards which have been picked up. This is the single most important strategy in the game. Once you are able to remember these things, you will master the game very soon.

When possible, players should try to leave only 2 items on the floor - 2 houses or 1 house and 1 loose card or 2 loose cards. This gives limited options to the other team. If just 2 loose cards are left they should total at least 14 to avoid the danger of a sweep.

Since the player who picks up last takes away the all the loose cards left on the floor at the end as well, the players should try to make sure that they are the last to pick up cards. For example, if the dealer is somehow able to cement a house which no other player can pick, then he should not pick up this house until his last turn unless absolutely necessary. Once you play lot of Seep, you will see that lot of points will be thrown away in the players' final turns as loose cards.

Don't just rush into picking up points. Try to build houses as long as possible. But if you fear that a house may be broken or picked up by somebody else, then pick it up with your point carrying card, else you might risk throwing it away in the end as a loose card.

If you are able to infer that you and your partner have all the four cards in a single denomination or if some cards have been played and the rest of the cards of that denomination are with your team, then you can use this greatly for your advantage. This is because, once you create a cemented house in this denomination, the members of opposing team cannot break this house or pick it up. So you can go on filling in points in this house to increase your score. For example, suppose that one king has already been picked up and you hold two kings. Now if your partner builds a ordinary king house, it means that all three kings are with your team only. What you can do now is cement that king house with some big-point-carrying-cards. Your confidence in placing these valuable cards in the house indicates to your partner that you have no fear of losing it, and therefore that the other team does not hold a king.

Variations

Two-Player Game

Two players can play Seep, in a slightly modified form. Four hands are still dealt, two hands to the players and two hands that are stored face down until needed. Play proceeds as normal until both players have played their first 12 cards. Any remaining loose cards on the floor are not picked up, but remain in place for the second part of the game: each player picks up one of the face-down hands and play continues using those cards.

Since the players are forced to pick up any houses before the second hands come into play, the transition from the first part to the second leaves the two-player game particularly vulnerable to sweeps.

Limited Houses

Some play with a rule that there can only be two houses on the floor at any one time. Normally one would prefer not to create a third house, as this creates too many options for the opponents, but in this version it is actually illegal to do so. Once there are two houses, any player who cannot or does not wish to play a card in either of those houses has no option but to throw a card and pick up what it can take or just leave it as a loose card.

Scoring variation

The Sweep page by Karan Juneja, which was used as a starting point for this description, gives the 10 of diamonds a score of only 2 points instead of 6, and awards 4 points to the team that take the majority of cards (more than 26), so that the total is still 100. Also there is no mention of a different score for a sweep with the first play - presumably this score 50, the same as a sweep later in the game, in this version.

From the discussion appended to that page, it seems that some players allow a house to be broken using a loose card from the floor, provided that it is at the same time cemented with a card from the player's hand - for example if there is an uncemented jack-house and a loose 2 on the floor, a player who holds two kings can play one of them and combine it with the jack-house and the 2 to make a cemented king-house. This play would not be allowed in the version on this page.

Pakistani version

Dr Kamran Dodhy describes a version of Seep played in Lahore, Pakistan, where there are only 30 points to be won in each deal (instead of 100). There are only seven scoring cards:

10 of diamonds: 12 points

9 of spades: 9 points

2 of spades: 1 point

each ace: 1 point

In addition, the team that captures more cards scores 4 points.

The remaining rules are probably similar to those used in India, but unfortunately I do not have full details. For example I know that all the cards are dealt, that houses (builds) must have a value of at least 9, and that sweeps are possible (as in India), but I do not know the score for a sweep in Pakistan. I would guess that the target score for a game is less than 100 - maybe 30. I would be interested to hear from anyone who can tell me more about this version of Seep.

Jamaica

Kalooki

Kalooki is reported to be very popular in Jamaica, but apart from the fact that they are both types of rummy, Jamaican Kalooki has nothing in common with the European and North American games of the same name - it is in fact a form of Contract Rummy. A version called "Super Kalooki" is often played in tournaments. The following description is based on information received from Robert Ebanks, Jason Chang and Mary Sorum.

Players and Cards

There are usually from three to six players; tournaments are played with four players at each table. A pack of 108 cards is used, consisting of two standard 52 card packs plus four jokers.

As in most rummy games, the object is to go out by laying down all of your cards. The penalty values of the cards, if left in a player's hand when someone goes out, are:

Joker	...	50 points
Black Ace	...	15 points
King, Queen, Jack, Ten	...	10 points
2 to 9	...	face value
Red Ace	...	1 point

Threes and fours

A **"three"** is a set of three or more cards of the same rank, such as **5-5-5** or **K-K-K-K-K**. The suits of the cards do not matter and duplicates can be included.

A **"four"** is a run of four or more consecutive cards in the same suit, such as **♥8-♥9-♥10-♥J-♥Q**. Aces can be high or low but can only be used at the end of a run, not in the interior, so **A-2-3-4** and **J-Q-K-A** are valid, but **K-A-2-3** is not.

Jokers can be used wild cards to substitute for any card in a three or four, with the following restrictions:

In a **"four"**, jokers cannot be used for consecutive cards - so **♥5-Joker-♥7-Joker** is OK but **♥5-Joker-Joker-♥8** is not allowed.

In a **"three"** there must be at least two genuine (non-joker) cards, so in a minimum "three" of three cards you can only include one joker. **K-K-Joker** and **Q-Q-Joker-Joker** are OK, but **9-Joker-Joker** is not allowed.

Jokers that have been used in a three or four can **never** be removed from that combination. A joker used in a three cannot be moved at all. When a joker used in a four, it can in certain circumstances be moved to the end of the sequence by the holder of the real card that it represents (see tacking on below), but never moved to a different three or four - there is **no** possibility for the holder of the real card that the joker represents to play it and take the joker in exchange, as in some other rummy games.

Deal and contracts

Players take turns to deal (or "share") the cards, the first dealer being chosen at random. Nine deals (or **"games"**) make up a **"set"**, and the winner is the player who has the lowest cumulative score at the end of the set. The cards are dealt out one at a time, the number of cards dealt to each player depends on the game being played as shown in the table below. The next card is turned face up to start the discards pile, and the remaining undealt cards are stacked face down beside it, to form the stock.

In each game, there is a minimum **contract** or quota of threes and fours that a player can lay down; this is also shown in the table.

Game No.	Cards dealt	Contract
1	9	three threes
2	10	two threes, one four
3	11	two fours, one three
4	12	three fours
5	12	four threes
6	13	three threes, one four
7	14	two threes, two fours
8	15	one three, three fours
9	16	four fours

When more than one four is put down by one player, they **must** be of **different suits**, and when more than one three is put down by one player, they **must** be of **different ranks**.

The play

The player to the dealer's left begins and the turn to play passes clockwise. A player's turn consists of:

drawing one card from the top card of the face-down stock or the top of the discard pile;

optionally laying down some cards;

discarding any one card (other than a joker) face up on the discard pile.

Calling If you have not yet laid down any cards, and you want to take a card discarded by another player when it is **not** your turn to play next, you can **call** the card. The player whose turn it is to play has two options:

Allow the call. The player whose turn it is gives the top discard to the player who called it. The calling player takes the discard and must also draw one extra card from the stock, but cannot lay down any cards or discard at this time. The caller will from now on have two extra cards in their hand. The play then reverts to the player whose turn was interrupted by the call, who must draw from the stock, and continue the turn in the usual way.

Refuse the call. If the player whose turn it is has not yet laid down, they have the right to take the discard for themselves, rather than giving it to the caller and drawing from the stock; the call then has no effect.

Calling is subject to the following rules.

If several people try to call the same card, the person who calls first gets the card, assuming that the person whose turn it is allows the call. No one can call a card before it reaches the table.

There can only be one call per turn: the card underneath the called card cannot be called - anyone who wanted it should have called it when it was first discarded.

Each player is allowed a maximum of three calls per game (deal). Since each call adds two cards to a player's hand, you can check how many calls you have made by counting the cards in your hand. Calls that were not allowed by the player whose turn it was or which were unsuccessful because another player called first do not count towards the three.

A player who has laid down cards can no longer call.

Laying downThe first cards you **lay down** must satisfy the contract for the game being played. You place these cards face up in front of you, where

they stay for the rest of the game, and then discard as usual. For example, in game 3, you must lay down a group of three or more equal ranked cards, plus sequences of four or more cards in two different suits. If you are not able to do this, you cannot lay any down any cards yet. A player who has laid down is no longer allowed to take cards from the discard pile. When you have laid down you can no longer call for a discard, and in your turn you must draw from the stock. If another player calls in your turn, you must allow the call. After laying down the required threes and/or fours, you are allowed to lay down additional threes or fours in the same or a later turn if you have collected the appropriate cards, provided that you respect the rule that you cannot put down two fours in the same suit.

Tacking on After you have laid down cards you can in the same turn, or in later turns of the same game, add cards to your own or other players' threes and fours. This is called **tacking on** or **laying off**. Further cards of the same rank can be tacked onto a three. A four can be extended by tacking on the next **higher** card in sequence only. When the sequence reaches the ace, so that no further tacking onto the high end is possible, then and only then is it permissible for cards be tacked on to the **low** end of the sequence. **Example:** if the sequence **♦9-♦10-♦J-♦Q** has been laid down, it is possible to tack on the **♦K** but not the **♦8**. After the **♦K** and **♦A** have both been tacked on, it is then possible to tack on the **♦8**, followed by the **♦7** and so on. Jokers can always be tacked onto a three. They can be tacked onto a four provided that the rule prohibiting two adjacent jokers in a four is respected. Also, if a joker has been used in a four, the holder of the real card that the joker represents can tack on by placing the real card in the four in place of the joker, and moving the joker to the high end, provided that this has not already reached ace, in which case it is moved to the low end. However, this cannot be done if there is already a joker at the end where the displaced joker would have to be put, since it is not permissible to have two jokers next to each other in a four. No player may tack cards onto a three or four until they have laid their contract.

Jokers cannot be discarded, but apart from that there is no restriction on what card you may discard from your hand at the end of your turn. It is legal to discard a card that could be tacked onto a three or four on the table, and it is legal to discard the same card that you just picked up, if you find it is in your interest to do so.

Running out of stock cards. It sometimes happens that the entire stock is used up before any player has gone out. If this happens, the discard pile, except for its top card, is reshuffled and placed face down to form a new stock. Play continues as before. If the stock runs out a **second** time, which may happen if players are holding back the key cards needed by

others to lay down their contracts, the play ends with no score. All the cards are thrown in, shuffled and dealt again by the same dealer and the play is restarted (playing for the same contract).

End of the play and scoring

As soon as a player **goes out** by getting rid of all their cards, the play ends. The other players count the total value of the cards they have in their hands (see above) and add the result to their cumulative total of penalty points.

If a player manages to go out on the same turn that they first lay down cards, this is known as **bending the table** or **down and out**, and the other players score double penalty points for that game. When bending the table you can tack cards onto other players' threes and fours and discard a card at the end of your turn as usual, but you must of course begin by putting down from your hand the appropriate threes and fours for the game being played.

At the end of the set of nine games, the player who has the lowest cumulative score is the winner.

China

24

This Chinese game requires skill at mental arithmetic. It has been played in Shanghai at least since the 1960's and may have originated there, and it is also known in some other cities, for example in Qingdao and Guangzhou. Since the end of the 20th century it has also spread to some places in North America. The basic game for two players will be described first, followed by variations for a larger number of players and extra options.

Players, Cards and Deal

From a standard international pack remove all picture cards and jokers leaving just 40 cards: the numbers from ace (1) to 10 in each suit.

Shuffle the cards equally between the two players, each having a face down stack of 20 cards which they must not look at until they are played.

The Play

The two players simultaneously take the top two cards of their stacks and place them face up in front of them, to form a square of four face up cards. Now each player tries to think of a way to combine the four numbers using only addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to get a result of 24. For example if the four cards were 2, 3, 6, 9 then possible solutions would be $(9+6-3)\times 2$ or $(9-3)\times(6-2)$ or $(9\times 3)-(6\div 2)$.

The first player to think of a solution slaps the table and calls out the solution. If it is correct, the four cards are given to the other player to place at the bottom of his or her stack. Then each player again places two cards face up and players again try to make 24 from the four numbers showing. This process is repeated until one player has no cards. This player is the winner.

If a player slaps the table and then calls out a solution that is wrong, or cannot immediately give a solution, then this player must take the four cards as a penalty.

If neither player can make 24, they may agree after a little while that there is no solution. In this case, each player chooses one of their cards to take back, adds this card to the bottom of their stack, and replaces it with a new face up card from the top of their stack.

Players may shuffle or cut their card stacks any time they wish, but must not look at the cards in their stacks.

In the standard game the four numbers must be combined using *only* the arithmetic operations +, -, \times , \div , with brackets (,) if necessary to define the order in which operations are carried out. All four numbers must be used.

Four Player Game

Four players can play 24 as follows. The deck is divided equally between the players. Each player places a card face up. A player who has a solution slaps the table but says nothing. When three players have slapped the table, the fourth player must select one of them. If the selected player gives a correct solution, the fourth player must take the four cards; if not the selected player must take the four cards. In this version it is possible to bluff by slapping the table when you do not in fact have a solution, in the hope that you will not be selected. As in the two-player game, if no one slaps the table, the players can agree that there is no solution. Then all players put their cards on the bottom of their decks and turn up a new card.

Card collection version, for two, three or four players

In this version, the first player to call a correct solution takes the four cards and places them under his or her stack. Players who run out of cards can still call solutions and thereby win some cards back. If there are four players with cards, each places one card face up. When there are three players with cards, the player who won the previous set places two cards and the others one each. (To start a three-player game 13 cards are dealt to each player and one card is placed face up; the three players each contribute one card to the first set.) When there are two players with cards each player places two cards. When only one player has cards, this player has won the game.

Notes

Players should try to show their two cards at the same time as each other, and should place the cards so that they are clearly visible, being careful not to cover the cards with their hands.

The total of 24 is often achieved by grouping the cards to make a two numbers that can finally be multiplied: 4×6 , 3×8 or 12×2 , but this is not always the case. A surprisingly difficult problem is to make 24 with the numbers 3, 3, 8, 8. Given the limited resources available it may seem impossible at first - most people take a considerable time to find the solution.

Other Variations

A version of 24 can be played by more than two players. In this case the 40 cards are kept in a single shuffled stack and one player (the dealer) drops four cards face up on the table. In China, it is quite usual simply to play a series of throws in which the first player to find a solution calls it out, or the players agree that there is no solution, without keeping any kind of tally of the overall score. If you prefer to keep score one possible method is as follows. The first player who finds a way to make 24 from the four numbers scores a point. If no solution can be found, the first person to call "no solution" wins a point - but if another player finds a solution after "no solution" was declared, then the player who claimed no solution gets nothing and the finder of the solution scores 2 points.

Some players allow additional operations, such as powers and roots. For example you could use two 3's to get 27 (3 to the power 3). A square root requires a 2 - for example 9 and 2 can then be combined to make 3 (square or 2nd root of 9). Some people even allow logarithms - for example the base 2 log of 8×4 is 5. Factorials are never allowed - each operation must use at least two numbers - and approximations are never allowed. the result always has to be exact, without rounding.

Some players include the Jack, Queen and King in the pack, valued at 11, 12 and 13 respectively, or at 10 each.

Gong Zhu

This is a Chinese version of Hearts, which was taught to me by Guo Juan. It is popular with Chinese Weiqi (Go) players when relaxing between tournament games.

An approximate English translation of the name of the game is **Chase the Pig**: *zhu* means pig or boar and *gong* is to root out, or force out of hiding. In the game, the queen of spades is a penalty card, known as the **pig** - players may try to drive out the pig by leading spades; also the loser of the game is known as the pig, and may be required to grovel under the table as a penalty.

Players, Cards and Deal

The game is for four or five players using a standard 52 card pack. The cards in each suit rank from high to low: **A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2**. Four can play as individuals or as partners - partners sit opposite. When 5 play it is necessary to take out two cards - the twos of clubs and diamonds. At the beginning of the hand all the cards are dealt out equally to the players. Unlike in Western Hearts, there is no passing of cards. Everyone plays with the cards they are dealt.

The Play

The play is in tricks. There are no trumps. In the first hand the holder of the two of spades leads to the first trick; in subsequent hands, the player who took the pig (queen of spades) on the previous hand leads to the first trick.

Any card may be led (there is no restriction on leading hearts or spades). Players must follow suit if possible. If you cannot follow suit you may play any card. The trick is won by the highest card of the suit led. The winner of a trick leads to the next.

Values of cards

The object is to take or avoid taking in tricks particular cards which carry a penalty or bonus to the person who wins them. The scoring cards are as follows:

Card Score

Queen of spades (pig) -100

Ace of hearts -50

King of hearts -40

Queen of hearts -30

Jack of hearts -20

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5 of hearts -10 each

4, 3, 2 of hearts 0 each

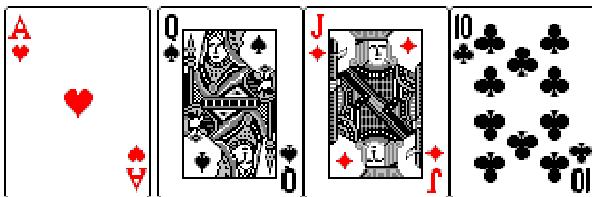
Jack of diamonds (sheep) +100 In addition the **ten of clubs** counts +50 if the player who takes it takes no other scoring cards. If the player does take other scoring cards, the ten of clubs counts nothing in itself, but doubles the value of all other scoring cards taken. Note that the 4, 3 and 2 of hearts are scoring cards, even though they score zero, so the ten of clubs plus the three of hearts score twice zero which is zero.

If one player takes **all the hearts**, they score +200 instead of -200. Note that it is necessary to take the 4, 3 and 2 of hearts to get this plus score, but you **don't** need the pig (queen of spades). If a player takes all the hearts and the pig as well, then the score for the pig becomes +100, making a total of +300. The sheep (jack of diamonds) is still worth a further +100 to a player who takes all the hearts.

During the play, the hearts, pig, sheep and ten of clubs are kept face up in front of the players who take them in tricks. All the other cards played to tricks are turned face down when the trick is complete, and are kept in a single heap.

Exposing cards

There are four cards which may be exposed by their holders before the start of play: ace of hearts, queen of spades, jack of diamonds, ten of clubs.



The effect of exposing a card is basically to double its value. Specifically:

Ace of hearts exposedAll hearts are worth double. If a player takes all the hearts this will therefore be worth +400 instead of +200. **Queen of spades exposed**The pig is worth -200 instead of -100 (or +200 to a player who takes all the hearts) **Jack of diamonds exposed**The sheep is worth +200 instead of +100. **Ten of clubs exposed**The ten of clubs quadruples the value of all scoring cards taken by the same player instead of doubling them. Therefore if the ten of clubs and pig are both exposed and the same player takes both, that player gets -800 (4 x -200). If the player who takes the exposed ten of clubs gets no other scoring cards it is worth +100 rather than +50.

If you expose a card, you are not allowed to play it to the first trick in which that suit is led, unless you have no other cards of that suit. For example, if you expose the queen of spades, then the first time that someone leads a spade you are not allowed to play the queen if you have other spades. The other players can take advantage of this to get rid of their ace and king of spades safely on the first trick of the suit - safe, that is, unless you have sneakily exposed the queen of spades having no other spades.

If you lead the suit of your exposed card yourself, and the suit has not been led before, then you must not lead the exposed card itself unless it is the only card you have in that suit.

Scoring

Keep a cumulative total of each player's score - positive or negative. When a player reaches minus 1000 they have lost, and a new game is started. The penalty for losing is that you are a pig; you are given a long narrow strip of paper and you must put one end in your mouth; the strip of paper hangs there until someone else loses a game, at which time you can give it to them. On the other hand, if you lose again, you get another strip of paper to hang from your mouth.

In addition, as previously mentioned, the loser may also be required to grovel under the table.

Variations

The following variation was contributed by Theodore Hwa. The game is as described above, with the following differences:

Value of hearts: The hearts 10, 9, 8, ..., 2 are scored the negative of their face value, except for the 4 of hearts which is -10 instead of -4 (this exception is made so that the total of all the hearts remains -200).

When any player takes all the hearts, the values of the pig and sheep are interchanged for all players for that deal. That is, if one player takes all the hearts and someone else takes the pig, then the player who took the pig scores +100 for it, etc. The pig and sheep always cancel each other out, even for the player who took all the hearts.

A player who takes all the point cards (all hearts, queen of spades, jack of diamonds, ten of clubs) scores +1000.

If any player reaches -1000 **exactly** at the end of a deal, the game still ends, but that player's score is converted to +1000.

There is no option to expose cards to double their score.

In rec.games.playing-cards.jp described a variation played by Chinese students at CU Boulder. They called it "Catch the Pig". They played as in the main account except that you could double the value of the key cards (pig, sheep, ten of clubs or ace of hearts for hearts) by putting them "up for sale" face down, or quadruple their value by putting them face up.

Jun Qian has contributed the following variations:

Some play that if you are dealt an exposable card as the first card of your hand and you expose it before seeing your other cards, the effect is doubled. For example a pig exposed as your first card is worth -400, and a club ten exposed as your first card multiplies the value of all your scoring cards by eight.

Some play that if you expose the sheep it becomes a negative card, worth -200, or in some circles -400.

Some play that if you take all the hearts, the pig and the sheep, all these cards become positive. This is called *Zhu Yang Man Juan* (catch pig and sheep in hand). If you take all the hearts and the pig, but not the sheep, the pig remains negative.

Zheng Shangyou is a Chinese card game whose name can be roughly translated as **Struggling Upstream**. For some Chinese people this name is reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution - it said to be a literary quotation

referring to the perseverance of a fish swimming against the current in the early spring. Will Tomlinson has pointed out that this is the topic of the "Trilogy of a Fish" by the poet Shi Zhi (Guo Lusheng), born 1948. The game exists in several variations, and has various alternative names. According to Zhang Shutai, the most interesting version is the partnership game for six players, also known as **San jia xi** (family of three) or **Huojian** (rocket). For simplicity, however, the first version described here is the individual game. This is a skilful and light-hearted card game for four or more players, probably best with 5 or 6.

In the form set out here Zheng Shangyou was brought to the UK by John McLeod, who learned it during a visit to China by some British Go players in 1979 from our interpreter Zhang Chuansheng. In Britain we gave it the name **Pits**, which is easier to pronounce, and refers to the predicament of the losing players, who find themselves in a pit which is hard to escape from. A couple to whom Jonathan Norris taught it report that they call it "Unto him..." [see *Matthew 25:29-30*].

It is closely related to several other games - the Japanese Dai Hin Min (or **Dai Fugo**), Vietnamese Tien Len, Chinese Big Two and the Western derivative usually called Asshole or President. I have classified this group as climbing games.

Equipment and Objective

Zheng Shangyou uses a 54-card pack consisting of the standard 52 cards as for bridge or poker, with the addition of two distinguishable jokers, referred to here as Red and Black. The object of each hand is to be the first to play out all one's cards and thereby gain 2 points, or second and gain 1, towards a rubber-winning total of (usually) 11.

The Deal

The initial dealer is chosen at random. The cards are dealt to the players singly, anticlockwise, **starting with the dealer**. Depending on the number of players, some may have more cards than others - this does not matter.

The Chinese method of dealing is as follows. The dealer shuffles the cards, places the cards face down in the centre of the table and helps herself to the top one, followed by the player to her right, and so on. The players take single cards in counter-clockwise rotation until the pack is exhausted. Western players may prefer to have the dealer distribute all the cards as in most Western card games - this will not affect the rest of the game.

The Play

The dealer begins by leading any playable combination.

The opportunity to play proceeds anti-clockwise, and at each turn a player chooses to pass or to play. A player who has passed is **not** debarred from playing if the chance comes round again. After the lead, all plays must:

contain the same number of cards as the lead

form the same type of pattern

be higher-ranking than the previous play

Play continues until all but one of the players pass in turn, whereupon all the played cards are gathered up and put aside. Whoever played last (and therefore highest) starts again by leading any playable combination.

By this means, the players will eventually run out of cards. The first player to do so wins the hand, the second comes second, and so on. The hand is played to the bitter end, until only one player has cards left, for reasons explained below.

If the player due to lead has no cards, the turn to lead passes to the right.

Playable combinations

There are four types of playable combination, as follows:

(i) **Single card** The rank from low to high is 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, J, Q, K, A, 2, black joker, red joker. Suit is irrelevant. (ii) **Set** of 2 or more cards of the same rank. These rank in the same way as single cards, suit being irrelevant. Twos or jokers can be used as wild cards to stand for any lower card. A set containing wild cards is beaten by an equal ranked 'pure' set. (iii) **Single sequence of three or more** cards of consecutive rank. The rank from low to high is 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, J, Q, K, A. **Twos cannot be used in single sequences** - neither as wild cards, nor as natural cards in their own right. Jokers can be used as wild cards to stand for any card from three to ace. Any single suited sequence is better than any mixed suited sequence of the same length. When comparing two mixed suited sequences, the one containing higher ranking cards is better. Between equal ranking mixed suited sequences a 'pure' sequence beats an 'impure' sequence containing one or more jokers. In the same way a higher single suited sequence beats a lower one, and if the ranks are equal a 'pure' sequence beats an 'impure' one. (iv) **Multiple sequence** This consists of equal numbers of cards (two or more) of each of three or more consecutive ranks (such as 9-9-10-10-J-J). The cards rank as for single sequences with 3 low and Ace high. Suit is irrelevant. Jokers can be used as wild cards to stand for any other card. Twos can also be used as wild cards, with the limitation that you cannot use twos to stand for all the cards of a particular rank - at least one card of each rank must be natural or a joker. A multiple sequence can only be beaten by a better

multiple sequence containing the same number of ranks and the same number of cards of each rank. A multiple sequence containing higher ranks is better than a lower one, and if the ranks are equal, a 'natural' multiple sequence beats one with wild cards.

Examples of sets

7-2-2 can be played as three sevens. This can be beaten by **7-7-7** (natural sevens), which can be beaten by **8-8-joker**.

9-2-2, **9-2-joker**, **9-9-2** and **9-9-joker** are all equal; none of them can be played to beat the others, as they all contain wild cards.

2-joker can be played as a pair of twos; this is beaten by **2-2**, a natural pair of twos.

Examples of single sequences

Please note: twos cannot be used in single sequences. The following are not valid sequences: 2-3-4, Q-K-A-2, 5-6-2-8.

Please note: a sequence must contain at least three cards. 6-7 is not a valid sequence.

♣Q-♣K-♦A is beaten by ♠3-♠4-♠5, which can then only be beaten by a higher sequence in a single suit.

The presence of 'impurities' in the form of wild cards is only used as a deciding factor between otherwise equal-ranking plays, e.g. ♥6-Joker-♥8 beats ♣7-♣8-♠9, because the Joker is deemed to represent the ♥7. This Heart sequence would be beaten by ♦6-♦7-♦8 on account of purity, or by a higher single suited sequence, pure or impure.

Examples of multiple sequences

Multiple sequences must have at least three consecutive ranks. The following are **not** valid:

6-6-6-7-7-7 (only two ranks)

5-5-7-7-8-8 (not consecutive)

7-7-8-8-9-9 (each rank must have same number of cards)

7-7-2-2-9-9 (illegal to substitute twos for both eights)

5-5-6-2-7-joker (impure) can be beaten by **5-5-6-6-7-7** (pure), which is beaten by 6-joker-7-2-8-8 (higher).

K-K-A-A-2-joker is valid only if you regard the 2 and joker as substitutes for queens. Twos cannot be used as a natural rank in a multiple sequence. **Q-Q-K-K-A-A** is therefore higher.

This is very unlikely to come up, but **10-10-10-J-J-Q-Q-K-K-K** does **not** beat **4-4-4-4-5-5-5-5-6-6-6-6**, because although they are both 12 cards, they are different shapes of multiple sequence.

Scoring

The first player to run out of cards gains 2 points.

The second player to be out of cards gains 1 point.

The third player to get rid of her cards can begin to shuffle the cards, as she will be the next dealer, and therefore start the play of the next hand.

The last and second to last players are penalised in the next hand by having to give up their best cards to the winners - see below. These are the *pit dwellers*.

If there are only four players, the player who was third is also second to last, so that player both deals next and has to give up a card.

If there are six players, the player who comes fourth gets no score and suffers no penalty.

Second and subsequent deals

Immediately the cards have been shuffled and distributed, the players who came last and next-to-last must each throw their highest-ranking card face-up on the table. If they have several equal highest cards they can choose which to throw. The player who came first takes whichever of these she prefers and adds it to her hand, leaving the other for the runner-up. These top two players then each discard face-up an unwanted card of their choice; the next-to-last player of the previous hand chooses one of these and adds it to her hand, leaving the other unwanted card to the lower pit-dweller who must add it to her hand. Play then begins as before, with the dealer making the first lead.

Partnership Game

With 4 or 6 players it is usual to play as two teams. The six player partnership game is said to be the most interesting version of Zheng Shangyou, and the following description of it is based on information from Zhang Shutai. In Beijing this six player game is also called **San jia xi**

(**三家喜**) which means something like "happy family of three". In

Chengdu, in Sijuan province it is called **Huojian** (**火箭**) which means rocket.

There are two teams of three, each player sitting between two opponents. Before the cards are shuffled prior to the first deal a card is drawn from the pack and then replaced. Whoever draws this card in the first deal will start the first hand.

The rules of play are as usual, and the order in which the players run out of cards determines the scores for the teams. If the players who finish first and second are on opposite teams, the scores are as follows:

The team of the player who finishes first adds 3 points to its score.

The team of the player who finishes second adds 2 points to its score.

The team which does **not** contain the player who finished last adds 2 extra points to its score.

So for example if a team takes 2nd, 3rd and 5th place, they score 4 (2 for coming second and 2 for not coming last) and their opponents score 3 (for their first place).

If the first and second places are taken by members of the same team, the scoring is different, and depends on the position of the third member of that team:

If the third team member takes third place, the team has all of the top three places and scores 10 points for this; the other team scores nothing.

If the third team member comes fourth or fifth, the team scores just 5 points for the top two places; the other team scores nothing.

If the third team member comes last, the team with first and second place scores 5 points and the other team scores 2 for not having last place.

In the second and subsequent hands the fifth and sixth players from the previous hand must give up their highest cards to the first and second players (the first player has first choice), and these players give any unwanted card in exchange (fifth player has first choice). In fact if you are first or second and your partner is fifth, you might well choose to return a good card to help your partner.







In the second and subsequent hands the play is started by the player who finished **fifth** in the previous hand.

The object of the game is to reach a score of 50 points or more, and the first team to do so are the winners. If both teams reach 50 on the same deal the team with the higher score wins. If it is a tie another hand is played.

Four players with partnerships

Four people can also play a partnership game, with partners sitting opposite. The rules of play and scoring are exactly as in the individual game, but partners combine their scores. If you are first or second, and your partner is third, you may choose to throw away a high card - maybe a wild card - to help your partner, who gets first choice of the discards.

Variations

Some allow twos as valid **natural** cards in sequences, so for example K-A-2 would be a valid single suited sequence, beating Q-K-A.

Hints on play

The appeal of the game, particularly for pit-dwellers, is to discover how skilful play and some luck with the cards dealt can enable one to 'struggle upstream' and end up on top. One should try to keep plans flexible, and be ready to re-assess the hand according to the play of others.

The most urgent priority is to get rid of your low cards. The only way you can ever play an isolated 3 is by leading it, so if you are fortunate enough to have the lead, take advantage of it to get rid of such a card. The same applies to low combinations, such as 3-4-5-6. If your hand contained 3-3-4-5-6, you might lead the 3-4-5-6 in the hope that no one else had a sequence of 4, and then follow up with your 3.

Do not lead high cards, unless you can see a safe way to get rid of all your cards by doing so. High cards are best used for gaining the lead. Use the lead to get rid of low cards. With 4-4-7-2-2 as your last five cards, lead the 4-4, take back the lead with the 2-2, and then play the 7. Do not lead 4-4-2-2 as a set of four fours; if someone has four sixes, you will probably be left holding your 7 after everyone else has finished.

If you have a group of cards like 3-4-5-5-6-7 it will often be best to play this as two sequences: 3-4-5 and 5-6-7, especially if one of them is single suited. If you had the lead you might lead the five card sequence 3-4-5-6-7 if you were fairly sure no one could beat it (or if you were desperate), and if no one else plays a 5 card sequence you could then go out by leading the 5. It will almost never be right to play the two fives as a pair. That would leave you with four low cards (3, 4, 6, 7) which can only be played singly.

It is unwise to store up a rock-crushing 9-card sequence while repeatedly passing, if one has no 'entry' to the lead with a probable winner (e.g. Joker or Q-K-A sequence). Consider splitting it into shorter sequences -

for example you might take the lead with the upper four cards and then play the lower five.

Try to avoid being trapped with too few cards to follow a lead late in the hand (or conversely exploit this problem in someone else's hand!). Don't be surprised if derisive fingers are pointed when you're left with 3s at the end!

Some attention to what cards are out, particularly wild cards, will obviously help to ensure the success of one's winning strategy.

Japan

Dai Fugō ("very rich man"), which was formerly more often known as **Dai Hinmin** ("very poor man") is a Japanese card game of the "climbing" group. As in all these games, the aim is to get rid of all one's cards before the other players by playing them singly or in combination. It seems likely that the game was introduced from China in the 1970's. It became popular throughout Japan in the 1980's and 1990's, and during this time numerous additional rules and variations were introduced. It seems likely that some early version of Dai Hinmin was the direct ancestor of President, which became popular in the West a few years later. The basic game will be described first, followed by a selection of variants.

On this page, the "o" with accent ("ō") is used to indicate a long "o" sound in Japanese.

Players and Cards

Dai Fugō is usually played by from 3 to 6 players. A standard 52 card pack is used, to which one joker is normally added, so that there are 53 cards in all. The rank of the cards from high to low is:

Joker-2-A-K-Q-J-10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3.

Deal

Deal and play are clockwise. Any player may deal the first hand. After the first hand, the loser of each hand deals the next. All the cards are dealt out one at a time as equally as possible to the players. Some players will have one card more than others - this does not matter.

Play

In the first deal of a new session the first player is decided at random. As in many Japanese games, this is usually done by a game of Janken (similar to rock-paper-scissors). Each player chooses "rock", "paper" or "scissors" and all choices are shown simultaneously by hand signals. If all three options are chosen at least once, or if everyone chooses the same option, it is a tie and the process is repeated. If just two of the three options are chosen, all players who picked the losing option (scissors beat paper, rock beats scissors, paper beats rock) are eliminated, and the process is repeated with only the survivors taking part. When there is only one survivor, this player starts the game.

The first player may play any card or valid combination, placing the card(s) face up in the centre of the table. The possible plays are:

Any single card. Single cards rank as described above from 3 (low) to joker (high). A single card can only be beaten by a higher single card. A

pair. Two cards of the same rank. A higher pair beats a lower pair: the lowest is 3-3 and the highest is 2-2. Three of a kind (triplet). Three cards of the same rank. A higher triplet beats a lower triplet: the highest is 2-2-2 and the lowest is 3-3-3. Four of a kind. Four cards of the same rank. In the basic game they rank in the same order as single cards, but note that many people now play that four of a kind causes a revolution - see variations. A sequence. Three or more consecutive cards **of the same suit**, such as ♠4-♠5-♠6 or ♦9-♦10-♦J-♦Q. A sequence can only be beaten by a higher sequence containing the **same number of cards**. The highest 3-card sequence is K-A-2 and the lowest is 3-4-5. (A-2-3 and 2-3-4 are **not** valid sequences, since the 2 and 3 are not adjacent in this game.)

The joker may be used as a substitute for any card in a pair, triplet, four of a kind or sequence. A combination containing a joker is equal in rank to the equivalent combination made from natural cards. So for example the pairs 8-8 and 8-joker are equal: neither beats the other, and a sequence ♥9-♥10-Joker is equal in rank to ♣9-♣10-♣J.

After the first player has played a card or combination, each player in turn has the choice of passing (playing no cards) or playing a higher card or combination of the **same type** as the previous play. This continues as many times around the table as necessary until someone plays a card or combination which no one else is able or willing to beat. When all the other players has passed, the player of the unbeaten card or combination sets aside all the played cards face down, and begins again by leading any card or valid combination.

Here is an example with four players:

Player A	Player B	Player C	Player D
4-4	pass	7-7	8-8
pass	pass	K-K	pass
pass	A-Joker	pass	pass

pass

B's play is unbeaten, so she clears away the played cards and begins again with any card or valid combination. To beat B's A-Joker pair, a pair of twos would have been needed. Note that throughout this process only pairs could be played. For example at his first turn, player D would not be allowed to play three 8's or a single 2.

Please note that:

You do not have to beat the previous play just because you can - often it is better to pass and save your good cards for later.

Passing does not prevent you from playing at your next turn.

In the example, player B passed twice, although she could have played the A-Joker at her first or second turn, she decided to play only after C had used his Kings.

The objective is to get rid of all your cards. When a player runs out of cards, the play continues among the other players until only one player has cards left.

When a player plays his last card or cards, the other players as usual have the opportunity to beat this play. If no one beats it, since the player of the unbeaten card(s) has no more to play, the turn to begin again passes to the next player to the left who still has cards.

Result

If there are five or more players, the player who runs out of cards first is the Dai Fugō (very rich man), the second is the Fugō (rich man) the last player left with cards is the Dai Hinmin (very poor man) and the second last is the Hinmin (poor man). With three or four players, the winner, who runs out of cards first, is the Fugō and the loser, who is left with cards at the end, is the Hinmin.

As with many Japanese card games it is common to play without score or payment. The aim is simply to be as rich as possible as often as possible. If you prefer to formalise the result, the Dai Fugō should score +2 points, and the Fugō +1.

Exchange of cards

In the second and subsequent hands of a session there is an exchange of cards after the deal and before play begins. The Dai Hinmin must give his highest ranking two cards to the Dai Fugō and the Hinmin must give his highest card to the Fugō. In exchange, the Dai Fugō gives any two unwanted cards to the Dai Hinmin and the Fugō gives any one unwanted card to the Hinmin.

After the exchange, the loser of the previous hand (the Dai Hinmin, or the Hinmin if there are only three or four players) begins the play of the new hand with any card or valid combination.

Variations

More than six players It is possible for as many as 8 players to take part. In Japan it is normal still to use a single deck of 53 cards, though in some Western adaptations, a larger number of players may use a double deck. Revolution (kakumei) Many people adopt the rule that any play of four of a kind (such as 9-9-9-9 or 5-5-5-Joker) causes a revolution, which reverses the ranking of the cards from the next time that the table is cleared. The joker remains the highest single card but the other cards rank from high to low 3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-J-Q-K-A-2, so twos are now the lowest cards. If a second four of a kind is played, this causes a counter-revolution, which restores the original order. So if someone plays 5-5-5-5 to the empty table, another player can beat this with (for example) 7-7-7-7, and the card ranking order remains as it was, the revolution having been cancelled. But if everyone passes the 5-5-5-5 play, the cards are cleared and the revolution takes effect. If the player of the 5-5-5-5 now begins with (say) a pair of 6's, this can be beaten by 4-4 or 3-3 (the highest pair), but not by 8-8. The reversed order stays in effect until the end of the hand, unless another 4 of a kind is played, in which case there is a counter-revolution and the original order is restored. When the play ends, for the new deal the cards always revert to their original order. Some people play that a revolution is also caused if anyone plays a five-card or longer sequence. Other variants are sometimes encountered, such as that a revolution is caused by a set of three 3's, or by a 4-card sequence. Some only allow a revolution with a genuine four of a kind, but not with three equal cards plus a joker. Jokers Rarely, this game is played without jokers, or with two jokers, in which case a pair of jokers is the highest pair. In an early form of the game, described to me in 1979, there were two jokers but no sequences were allowed. In the game with jokers, if the Dai Hinmin or the Hinmin was dealt both jokers there was a different kind of revolution, in which the roles of the players were reversed: the Dai Fugō became Dain Hinmin, Fugō became Hinmin and so on. No twos in sequences Some play that a 2 cannot be used to make a sequence K-A-2. In this version a sequence headed by an ace is unbeatable. Miyako-Ochiru In this variant, if the Dai Fugō of the previous hand fails to win again and maintain his position, he automatically becomes Dai Hinmin. (Miyako can refer to Kyoto or any large and beautiful city, and ochiru is to fall, so the phrase Miyako-Ochi means exile from the city where the very rich man formerly lived.) Suit lock rule (Shibari) In this variant, if two consecutive plays are in the same suit, then subsequent players can only beat this with another play in the same suit. For example the ♥3 is played, this is beaten by a ♣4 which in turn is beaten by a ♠8. Subsequent players can only play clubs (or the joker), not other suits. This restriction applies until the table is cleared. A similar restriction applies if a sequence is beaten by a higher sequence in the

same suit; this can then only be beaten by another sequence in that suit. The suits are also locked if a pair is beaten by a higher pair in the same two suits - for example if ♠5-♣5 is beaten by ♠7-♦7, subsequent players can only beat this with a pair consisting of a spade and a diamond. A similar rule applies to triplets - the suits are locked if a triplet is beaten by a higher triplet using the same three suits. Some also play with **Kata-Shibari** (partial suit lock). If a pair is beaten by a higher pair with one suit in common, then subsequent players can only beat this with a pair that includes the same suit. For example if ♠3-♦3 is beaten by ♠6-♣6, then this can only be beaten by a higher pair that includes a spade. If the next play is a spade-club pair, then that establishes a full lock and only spade-club pairs are allowed until the table is cleared. When triplets are played there can be a partial lock involving one or two suits. Some play that suits are only locked if there are three consecutive plays in the same suit. Cannot go out with highest card Some play that you cannot go out by playing a 2 or a set of 2's as your last card(s). It's also illegal to go out by playing the highest sequence (K-A-2) or a single joker. If there has been a revolution (and no counter-revolution) then you cannot go out by playing a 3 or a set of 3's or a top sequence such as 3-4-5 or a single joker. When playing this variant, the penalty for going out with such an illegal play is that you automatically become the Dai Hinmin. Of course the penalty is rarely needed, since players avoid being left with cards that are illegal to play under this rule. Three of spades rule Some play that when the joker is played as a single card, it can be beaten by the 3 of spades (but by no other card). The ♠3 can then in turn be beaten by any higher card. But if the ♠3 is played before the joker, the joker can beat it. Eights rule (hachi-giri) Some play that any 8 or combination containing an 8 causes the table to be cleared immediately. The person who played the 8 begins again by playing any card or valid combination. When the hachi-giri rule is played, some also play that it is illegal to go out with a play that includes an eight. Jack A rarely played variation is that if a Jack is played, the ranking order of cards is immediately reversed, but this reversal lasts only until the cards are cleared. For example a 5 is beaten by a 9, which is beaten by a Jack. This reverses the ranking, so the Jack cannot be beaten by a Q, K, a or 2. It might, however be beaten by a 7, which in turn could be beaten by a 6 and then a 3. Then the cards would be cleared and ranking returns to normal. Discard for tens One correspondent reports a rule whereby anyone playing one or more tens is allowed to discard one further card from their hand for each ten played. These discards are placed face down in the pile of used cards. Cannot play after passing Another rarely played variant is that a player who passes is not allowed to play again until after the cards have been cleared. Switching seats Some people play that before each new deal the players change seats according to their result. The Dai Fugō sits to the right of the Dai Hinmin, then the Fugō and

so on in order of their result, with the Hinmin to the Dai Hinmin's left. According to some players, probably a minority, the positions are the reverse of this, with the Dai Fugō to the left of the Dai Hinmin, followed by the Fugō and the other players in order: in this version Dai Fugō begins the play. Card exchange variants Some play that the loser must always exchange two cards with the winner, even if there are only 3 or 4 players, and with 4 players the second player exchanges one card with the third player. Some play that if you are the Dai Hinmin and have the joker in your hand, you don't have to give it to the Dai Fugō. A few people play that the winners are allowed to ask for particular cards from the losers, and the losers must give these cards rather than their highest ranking cards, if they have them. Scoring variants Another possibility is that the Hinmin pays 1 point to the Fugō and the Dai Hinmin pays 2 points to the Dai Fugō.

Korea



The card game **Mighty** is said to have been invented by Korean college students in the mid 1970's, but it is closely related to the group of Japanese picture capturing games, especially Napoleon, which date back to the beginning of the 20th century. Mighty is played mostly current or former students in Korea, and it is known there by the English sounding name "Mighty". It is also played by some groups in North America.

Mighty is a point-trick game with bidding. In each hand the high bidder chooses a partner by calling a card, and these two players try to take enough of the scoring cards (A, K, Q, J, 10) to fulfill the bid. The basic version for five players will be described first, followed by versions for other numbers of players from three to eight. There are several variations of the rules, which will be described at the end.



Players and cards

The basic game is played by five players, using a standard 52 card deck with one joker - 53 cards in all. The cards in each suit rank from high to low **A-K-Q-J-10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2**. The ace, king, queen, jack and ten of each suit are worth one point each, so that the pack contains 20 points in all. The other cards have no value.

There are three cards with special powers:

the **mighty** is the  unless spades are trumps in which case it is the . It is the most powerful card in the pack, beating all others;

the **joker** is the second most powerful card, but loses its power if the ripper is led;

the **ripper** or **joker hunter** is the  unless clubs are trumps, in which case it is the . If led, the ripper forces the joker to be played and robs it of its power.

The Mighty and the Joker are together referred to as the **Magic Cards** because of their properties and strength.

Deal

The first dealer is chosen at random. Thereafter the holder of the called card becomes the dealer for the next hand.

The cards are shuffled by the dealer and cut by the player to dealer's left. Ten cards are then dealt to each player, one at a time, starting with the player immediately to the dealer's left. The last three cards are placed face-down in the center of the table to form the **blind**.

Bidding

In the first hand the dealer starts the bidding. In subsequent hands the bidding is begun by whoever was the declarer in the previous hand. The bidding continues clockwise around the table for as many circuits as necessary until the highest bidder and contract are established. At your turn you can pass or bid. A bid specifies the number of points to be taken (minimum 13, maximum 20) and the proposed trump suit or "no-trump". One would say, for example, 13 with hearts, 14 with no-trump, 16 with spades, full score(20) with clubs, etc.

Each bid must be higher than the one preceding it. A bid for a greater number of points is higher than a bid for a lesser number, and a no-trump bid is higher than a bid of an equal number of points with a trump suit. There is no priority order between the suits, so if the previous bid was 14 with diamonds your options are to bid 14 with no-trump, or 15 or more with any suit or no-trump, or to pass.

If you bid and another player bids higher, you can bid again when the turn comes back to you, provided that your new bid is the highest so far. A player who has passed cannot bid again during the auction. If a bid is made then the auction continues until all the players except one have passed. That one player who has not passed is the declarer and the final bid is the contract.

It is unusual for all five players to pass. If it happens, there is a second round of bidding in which players have another chance to bid. If everyone passes again the cards are thrown in and there is a redeal by the same dealer.

Exchanging cards and calling a partner

The declarer (the last and highest bidder) now exposes the three cards of the blind and then adds them to his hand and discards any three of his cards face down, bringing his hand back to 10 cards. If the cards discarded by the declarer include any scoring cards, these points count for the declarer's team.

At this point the declarer can change the trump suit or change from trumps to no-trump or vice versa, but in order to do so must increase the level of the bid. If changing from one suit to another or from no-trumps to a suit the bid level must be increased by two. If changing from a suit to no-trump it must be increased by one. The declarer cannot change the bid level by any other amount, nor can the level be raised without changing trumps.

The declarer may then name a card, and whoever holds this card becomes the declarer's **partner** or **friend**. Any card can be called, including the mighty or the joker. The holder of the called card must not reveal who they are at this stage. The identity of the partner will only become clear during the play of the hand - when the called card is played or when the partner wins a trick containing scoring cards. It is also possible for the declarer to play alone by declaring "no friend" or by calling a card that is in the declarer's hand or has been discarded.

If the final bid was '20 with no-trump', when calling a partner, the declarer is also permitted to say which suit he would like his partner to lead after winning a trick, so as to pass control back to the declarer. The declarer would say, for example, "full-20 with no-trump and I need hearts from my friend".

The Play

The declarer leads to the first trick, and is not allowed to lead a trump, nor the joker, nor the joker hunter (ripper). The other players, in clockwise order, each play one card from their hands. The winner of each trick leads to the next trick. In the second and subsequent tricks any card may be led.

Players must follow suit when possible, except when playing the mighty or joker as described below. A player unable to follow suit is free to play any card. A trick is won by

the mighty, if it was played;

the joker, unless the mighty was played or the ripper was led;

the highest trump played, if not beaten by the mighty or joker;

the highest card of the suit led, if not beaten by a trump, the mighty or the joker.

All point cards (10 and higher) won in tricks by a player not known to be in the declarer's team are displayed face up in front of that player. All other cards - the tricks won by declarer's team and the non-scoring cards played to other tricks - are kept in a single face-down pile in front of the declarer, along with the discard.

If you hold the called card and win a trick containing point cards, you are allowed (but not forced) at this point to announce that you are the partner and add your tricks to declarer's pile. If you choose not to reveal yourself, the fact that you are the partner will only become officially known when you play the called card. When the declarer's partner is identified, any point cards in front of this player are also added to declarer's pile.

The **Mighty** always wins the trick it is played to, and it can be played to any trick, even if you could have followed suit. However, it still functions as a card of its suit in the following cases:

if the suit of the mighty is led, and the mighty is the only card you have in that suit, you have to play it;

if the mighty is led, the other players have to play the suit of the mighty if they can.

The **Joker** is the second highest ranking card unless the Joker Hunter is led. The Joker can be played to any trick except the first or the last, even if you could have followed suit. If you lead the Joker to a trick, you can nominate the suit that the other players must play to that trick if they can.

The **Joker Hunter** (or **Ripper**) has no special power to win a trick, but if it is led, the player who holds the Joker is compelled to play it, unless he also has a Mighty which he may choose to play instead. When the Joker is 'ripped' by the Joker Hunter, it cannot win the trick. Unless someone plays the mighty, the trick is therefore won by the highest trump, or if none are played, by the highest card of the Joker Hunter's suit.

Scoring

The scores are kept in such a way that they add up to zero, representing the amount won or lost by each player. The score can be recorded on paper or you can settle up in money or chips after each hand.

At the end of the play, the scoring cards won by the declarer's opponents are counted, and the total is subtracted from 20 to find out how many scoring cards the declarer's team won. If this is equal to or more than the

bid, then the declarer's team has succeeded. Each defender loses one unit for each point bid above 12. Two units per point above 12 are collected by the declarer and one by the partner. For example for a bid of 15, each defender loses 3 points (15 - 12), the declarer wins 6 and the partner wins 3.

If the declarer's team was unsuccessful these payments are reversed. Each defender wins one unit for each point bid above 12, the declarer has to pay two thirds of these units and the partner one third.

If the declarer played alone, all four defenders pay the declarer one unit per point bid above 12 if the contract succeeds, and the declarer pays them each the same amount if it fails.

Other numbers of players

Mighty has been adapted to be played by any number from three to eight. There are a number of ways of doing this. They involve adjusting the number of cards in the pack, (sometimes) the number of cards dealt, the partnership arrangements, and the scoring. Here are the details.

Three players (Jun, Chulmin's version) The 2 - 6 of each suit are removed, leaving 33 cards - 10 for each player and three in the blind. The Joker Hunter is the ♣7, or the ♠7 if clubs are trumps. The holder of the joker in each hand deals the next. The declarer does not call a partner but always plays alone against the other two. The minimum bid is 11 and the declarer receives from or pays to each opponent one unit per point bid above 10.

Four players (Jun, Chulmin's version) All the twos and fours and the two red threes are removed from the pack, leaving 43 cards - 10 for each player and three in the blind. The minimum bid is 12. Declarer calls a partner as in the five-player game. The defenders pay or receive one unit for each point bid over 11. If the contract is successful the declarer and partner divide the winnings equally; if they lose they divide the loss - or (by prior agreement) some play that the declarer pays the whole loss and the called partner pays nothing.

Four players (Chicago version) Remove the ♥2 and ♣2 leaving 51 cards - 12 for each player and three in the blind. The gain or loss is divided between declarer and partner in a ratio of 2:1. This results in some fractional scores; to avoid these the following table may be used:

Contract	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Declarer	1	3	4	5	7	8	9	11
Partner	1	1	2	3	3	4	5	5

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Defenders	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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Six, seven or eight players (Chicago version) In Chicago, a two deck version of Mighty was developed to allow six or more people to play. Two jokers are included, for a total of 106 cards. A few cards may be removed from the pack to make the deal even as follows:

six players - use all the cards; deal 17 cards each;

seven players - remove both ♣2's and both ♥2's; deal 14 cards each;

eight players - remove both ♣2's, both ♥2's, one ♦2 and one ♠2; deal 12 cards each.

There are always **four** cards in the blind. The minimum bid is 25 and the maximum is 40. If the declarer changes to a new trump suit after looking at the blind, the bid must be increased by three; if changing to no-trump it must be increased by two. The declarer calls two partners by naming two distinct cards. The players (other than the declarer) who play the first copies of each of these cards join the declarer's team, which therefore normally consists of three players. Either partner can announce themselves when they win a trick containing point cards. If the other partner is not yet known, the player making such an announcement must say which of the two called cards it is based on. It can sometimes happen that the declarer only has one partner - for example if a single player has both copies of both called cards. When two identical cards are played to the same trick, the first played beats the second. The defenders win or lose one unit for each point bid in excess of 24. The gain or loss is divided among the declarer's team in such a way that the declarer wins or loses twice as much as the each of declarer's partners. Fractional scores can be avoided by using the scoring tables on John Pannell's Mighty page

Variations

Some play that the bidding is begun by the partner (holder of the called card) from the previous hand - or the first of the two partners in the double deck game.

Some play that when picking up the blind, the declarer does not show it to the other players.

Some play that when changing the trump suit, the bid level is only increased by one. If the bid is 20 the trump suit can simply be changed without increasing the bid.

Some play that the declarer is not allowed to call a card that is in his own hand or that he has discarded in order to play without a friend. If he

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wants to play alone he can only do so by announcing "no friend". Others do not allow the declarer ever to play alone.

Some play that the holder of the called card is not allowed to announce his identity when winning a trick containing points. The partnerships only become known formally when the called card is played.

Some play that in the following cases the score for the hand is doubled (everyone wins or loses twice as much):

declarer plays with no trump suit;

declarer buries the Mighty in the blind;

declarer buries the Joker in the blind;

declarer bids a 'grand-slam' (all 20 points).

If several of these things happen, the doubles are cumulative. For example if you bid no-trump and bury the Mighty and the Joker, the score is multiplied by 8.

In John Pannell's version, if the contract is 17 or higher (in a game with 4 or 5 player), the declarer can on one occasion during the hand instruct partner to win the trick. Partner does not have to obey. In the 6 to 8 player double deck game, if the contract is 34 or higher the declarer may issue two such instructions during a hand.

It is not quite clear, but it may be that some players score a successful contract according to the number of points actually taken by the declarer's team, rather than according to the number that was bid.

It seems that some people play that the joker may be played to the first last trick, but in that case it loses all its power and becomes the lowest card of the pack.

Tactics

As in any strategic trick-taking game it is important to keep track of which cards have been played, especially the trump suit cards and magic cards. It is also important to use the Mighty and Joker to maximum effect, and to avoid having the Mighty forced out by a spade lead when you have no spades or the Joker by the Joker hunter.

It is possible to employ some conventions in the bidding. Suggestions for bidding and play tactics can be found on John Pannell's Mighty: Bidding and Play page.

Ghana

About Spar

Spar is a card game that has been around the western African continent for a while, particularly Ghana. It's a game based on both skill and chance and mostly played for money. It is also played socially where the object is to score points. It's a turn-based game where a player wins a round of play by performing a trick. The winner of the last turn of play gets to win that round and the cycle continues until the target is reached.

Playing The Game

The players initially decide what the high score of the game should be. This is usually in the range of ten to a hundred in increments of ten. They also decide which rules apply, such as if there will be betting, the use of the under ten rule, and that of dry and wet.

A dealer is then chosen, this could be at random or based on a coin toss. It should be noted that the dealer plays the game as well and not like other card games where the dealer only deals out cards.

The deck is then shuffled and players are assigned their five cards. The dealer then start by playing any card of choice. The rest of the players on the table are then forced to follow suit. In situations where a player has not got the dealers suit, they get to play any card of choice.

After everyone has had a turn the highest-ranking card-holder of the dealer's suit becomes the round leader and proceeds to start the next round of play. The process continues, following the round leader until all the cards are played. The winner of the last round of play gets to score points, and if there was a bet gets to win the money. The process continues until the agreed points on start up are reached. A detailed description of the processes is given below.

Players

The number of players in any game of spar ranges from two (also known as heads-up) through to seven (seated at a single table).

Deck Of Cards

The game is played with 35 cards in the deck. The cards used are the six to Ace of all suits with the exception of the Ace of Spades. These are then ranked from six to Ace of all suits with the Ace being the highest. Except for Spades where the highest-ranking card is the King. Each card is worth a point except for the six and the sevens of all suits that are worth 3 points and 2 points respectively.

Shuffling the Deck

The deck is shuffled after every three games in a two-player game or heads up mode, every two games in a three-player mode and after every game in a four or more player mode.

Dealing Cards

This is done in a sequence of the one dealing the cards. Lets call this person the dealer. The dealer deals three cards to each player starting from the player to his left (clockwise) and dealing to himself last. The sequence is then followed again this time dealing out two cards to each player and himself last. The player to his left then starts the round of play. The dealer is always the winner of the previous game or if it's the start of the game the winners of a coin toss.

Scoring

1. The most points to be won in the game, is 12 points. This is a dry and wet combination of which both cards are sixes.
2. The next is 10 points. This is a dry and wet combination of the six and seven cards.
3. The next is 8 points. This is a dry and wet combination of which both cards are sevens.
4. The next is 6 points. This is winning with a six card of which the player's penultimate card was another six card.
The next is 5 points. This is winning with a six card where the player's penultimate card was a seven or winning with a seven card where the player's penultimate card was a six card. The score is only awarded if both cards are not of the same suit, else only the last card counts.
6. The next is 4 points. This is winning with a seven card of which the player's penultimate card was another seven card.
7. The next is 3 points. This is winning with a six card.
8. The next is 2 points. This is winning with a seven card.
9. The next is 1 point. This is winning with any other card. (8 upwards)
10. The least points in the game, is -3 points. This is a result of the offside rule.

NB: in point 7 and 8, the points are doubled if the winning card is a dry card.

Dry

A player can choose to show a six or seven of any suits to the opponents, by placing the card face up on the table with the intention of winning with that card. This in turns double the value of the card. For example a six will then be worth 6 points and a seven will be worth 4 points.

Wet

A player can wet a six or a seven if a dry is already in place. This requires the card to be placed face down on the table. And just like the dry the value of the card is doubled. The exception being that a dry and wet of the same suit is not allowed. For example you cannot dry a six of spades and wet a seven of spades.

Rules

1. A suit must be followed if requested by the round leader. This could be ranked higher or lower at the player's discretion.
During the course of the game, if a player is found to have a suit, which was requested by the round leader and was not played, the player gets a score of -3 and the game ends. This is known as the offside rule.
2. A player can play any card if they do not have the requested suit.
During the course of the game, if a dry card is played at any point besides the penultimate round then the wet card must be turned face up so all players can see. This only occurs if a dry and wet is in place.
3. A dry and or wet must occur before the first round of play.
A dry and or wet card if played at anytime besides the penultimate and final round loose their double points and become regular six and seven cards.
4. To beat a card, it has to be the same suit and have a higher rank than the played card.
5. A player can trade all five cards for another set, if the highest-ranking card of all his or her cards is nine provided there are more cards in the deck. This is known as the under ten rule and must occur before

the first round of play.

A player can request to see the last card in the deck in the penultimate round, provided there are more cards in the deck. This can only occur once in a game by one player only. This is known as the under card rule. It is based on the assumption that similar cards stick together when shuffled.

10. The looser of the game or the coin toss has the option to cut the deck before it's dealt out after it has been shuffled. This is known as the cut rule.
11. A player cannot have more than five cards at any given time in the game.
12. During the game if a dealer or the round leader's card is not matched they proceed to start the next round.

Betting

1. Each player buys into the table with the amount set at start up.
2. A bet can only take place before the first round of play if accepted by an opponent.
3. A player is not obliged to place a bet.

The winner of the game takes the money. In a situation where none of the betting players win the game, the players keep their original amounts.

Lebanon/Egypt/Middle East

Tarneeb

Tarneeb is a plain trick-taking game for four players with trumps and bidding. It is popular in various versions in several Middle Eastern countries, possibly having originated in Lebanon. Tarneeb is the Arabic word for "trump" in this game.

There are two main versions. In the original and simpler form of the game, which is described first, players bid only the number of tricks their team will take. In the more elaborate version, which is popular in Egypt, the bid includes the proposed trump suit as well.

Players and Cards

There are four players in fixed partnerships, partners facing each other.

A standard international 52-card pack is used, the cards in each suit ranking from high to low: A-K-Q-J-10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2.

The game is normally played counter-clockwise.

Deal

The first dealer is chosen and random. After each hand the turn to deal passes to the right. The cards are shuffled and cut, and are all dealt out, one at a time so that everyone has 13 cards.

Bidding

The bidding begins with the player to dealer's right and continues counterclockwise.

The bids are numbers, representing the number of tricks that the bidder's team undertakes to win. The lowest bid is seven and the highest is thirteen. Each bid must be higher than the last.

A player who does not wish to bid at their turn can pass. Once you have passed you drop out of the bidding - you cannot bid again on a later turn.

If all four players pass on their first turn to speak, the hand is thrown in and redealt by the same dealer.

Otherwise the bidding continues around the table as many times as necessary until all players but one have passed. The final bidder then announces the trump suit (tarneeb) and leads to the first trick.

There is also the option to announce that the hand will be played without trumps.

Example of bidding:

North (dealer)	West	South	East
--	pass	7	8
10	--	pass	11
pass			

Here West began the bidding, since North dealt. West could not say anything over North's bid of 10, since he has already passed at his first turn. The bidding ends when North passes, and East must now choose trumps.

Play

The player who won the bidding leads to the first trick, and thereafter the winner of each trick leads to the next.

Play is counterclockwise. Players must follow suit if able to. Those unable to follow suit may play any card - either trump (*tarneeb*) or discard a card of another suit (*sakret*).

Each trick is won by the highest trump in it, or by the highest card of the suit led if it contains no trumps.

Scoring

The bidder's team tries to take at least as many tricks as they bid. If their bid is less than 13 and succeed, they score the number of tricks they won, and the other team scores nothing. If the bidding team takes fewer tricks than they bid, they lose the amount of their bid, and the other team scores the number of tricks they won.

Winning all 13 tricks is called *kaboot*. If the bid was less than 13, *kaboot* brings a bonus of 3 points, so 16 points in total instead of 13.

If a team **bids** 13 tricks and wins them all, they score 26 points. If they lose any tricks, they score minus 16 and the other team scores **double** the number the tricks that they win.

Further hands are played until one team achieves a cumulative score of 31 points or more, and wins the game.

Variations

Some play the whole game clockwise, in which case the player to the left of the dealer begins the bidding.

Some allow the cards to be dealt in a single batch of 13 to each player.

In some parts of Lebanon, each player is allowed only one bid. After everyone has spoken, the auction is at an end. Players cannot increase their bids. In this version the dealer, who bids last, need only **equal** the highest bid made by another player to take over the role of bidder.

Some play that if the first three players pass, the dealer is forced to bid seven.

Some play that the bidder must lead a trump to the first trick.

If the players agree at the start, the score required to win the game may be set at 41, 51 or 61 rather than 31.

Some play that the cards may be thrown in immediately after the deal by any player who has

no ace, and

no king in a suit of two cards or more, and

no queen in a suit of three cards or more, and

no jack in a suit of four cards or more.

In other words, the player has no card that could take a trick if an opponent led the suit from the top down: A, K, Q, ... In this case, the cards are shuffled and dealt by the next dealer.

Egyptian Tarneeb

There is a popular variation played mostly in Egypt in which each bid specifies the proposed trump suit as well as the number of tricks. The suits are ranked from high to low: No Trump, Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs. To overcall the previous bidder, you must bid the **same** number of tricks in a **higher** suit, or a **greater** number of tricks in **any** suit. So the lowest bid is 7 clubs, the highest is 13 No Trump.

Starting with the player to dealer's right, each player in turn may either:

Pass

Bid higher than the highest bid so far

Doouble, if the last bid was by an opponent

In this version of Tarneeb, passing (or doubling) does **not** prevent you from bidding on a future turn.

The bidding continues until there is a complete round in which none of the four players bids. Then the play begins. The declarer leads and the trump suit (or no trump) is as specified in the final bid.

This bidding process may look similar to bidding in Bridge, but there are two important differences.

Three consecutive passes do **not** end the bidding. If you bid 8 hearts and the other three players pass, you still have the chance to change to a higher bid - for example 8 spades or 9 diamonds - and if you do that everyone else gets another chance to bid as well.

A double does **not** count as a bid. If you bid 9 spades, your right-hand opponent and your partner pass, your left-hand opponent doubles and you pass, that is the end of the bidding. The contract is 9 spades doubled.

If the final bid is not doubled, the scoring is the same as in the version where the bids are just numbers. The bidders win the trick they took if sufficient. Otherwise they lose their bid and the opponents score for their own tricks.

If the final bid is doubled, this doubles the amount won or lost by the bidding side, but does not affect the amount scored by the opponents if the bidding side loses.

For example, if the contract is 10 hearts doubled:

if the bidders win 11 tricks, they score 22 points;

if the bidder win 8 tricks, they score -20 points and the opponents score 5;

if the bidders win 13 tricks they score 32 points (twice the usual 16).

The target score to win the game is usually set at 41 in this Egyptian variant.

Variations of Egyptian Tarneeb

If the final bid is doubled, some players allow the bidder or his partner to redouble, multiplying their score for the hand by 4 instead of 2.

Some play that a double or redouble also multiplies the opponent's score for tricks by 2 or 4, in the event that the bidder fails

Basra

Deal and Play

The cards are shuffled and the person to the left of the dealer cuts. The dealer may look at the bottom card of the pack after it has been cut.

The dealer then gives the four cards to each player, beginning with his right hand opponent, going around the table anticlockwise, and ending with himself. The next 4 cards are turned face up in the middle of the table. The area where the face up cards are set out is known as the "floor" - maybe the game was originally played on the floor, though nowadays it is normal to play on a table. If the cards on the floor include any jacks or the seven of diamonds, the dealer buries these cards in the undealt pack and replaces them by dealing new cards to the floor from the top of the undealt cards.

The player to dealer's right plays first and the turn to play passes anticlockwise. Each turn consists of playing one card face up to the floor and possibly capturing some of the cards that are there. Captured cards are placed face down in front of the player who captured them. When there are four players, partners keep the cards they have captured together in a single pile. When all players have played their four cards, the dealer gives them each another batch of four from the undealt cards (but no more cards are dealt to the floor) and play continues. When the whole pack has been dealt and the players have played their last four cards the play ends. The hand is scored and the turn to deal passes to the right.

Capturing and the Basra

If you play a card whose rank matches one of the cards on the floor, you capture that card, and place both the card you played and the captured card face down in front of you. For example a 7 captures a 7, a queen captures a queen, and so on.

If you play a numeral card whose value is equal to the sum of the values of some cards on the floor, then your card captures that group of cards. For example if the floor contains 3, 4, 5 and 8 and you play a 9, you capture the 5 and 4 and place the 5, 4 and 9 in your capture pile.

It is possible to make more than one capture with the same play. For example, if the floor shows a 4, 6, 10 and 3 and you play a 10, you capture the 10 and the 4 and the 6 from the floor along with the 10 that you played.

If you play a card that does not match anything, it stays face up on the floor, and is available for capture in future turns.

Note that there is no obligation to play a card that makes a capture just because you can - if you have a card that does not match, you can add it

to the floor if you wish to. However, if you play a card which does make a capture, you must make the capture.

Queens and kings have no numerical value. A queen can capture or be captured by a queen and a king can capture or be captured by a king. The only other way to capture a queen or king is to play a special card (jack or seven of diamonds - see below).

A **basra** occurs when a player captures all the cards from the floor, leaving it empty. The player scores a 10 point bonus for this, and the capturing card is placed faced up in the player's capture pile, as a way of remembering the bonus when the time comes to score the hand.

Jacks have a special property. If you play a jack when there are cards on the floor, it captures all the cards from the floor, leaving it empty, but this does **not** count as a basra and scores no bonus. If you play a jack when the floor is empty it does not capture anything, but just remains on the floor.

The **seven of diamonds** behaves in a similar way to a jack - it captures everything on the floor. If the cards on the floor are all numerals, and their values add up to 10 or less, this counts as a basra, and scores the 10 point bonus. If the floor adds up to more than ten, or includes picture cards, the **♦7** still takes all the cards but it does **not** count as a basra. If you play the **♦7** to an empty floor it stays there (and can be captured later just like a normal seven).

After the last card has been played, any cards that remain on the floor are taken by the player who last made a capture, but this does not count as a basra.

Scoring

When all 52 cards have been played, the cards in each team's stack are counted. The team that has the majority of the cards (27 or more) scores 30 points. If it is a tie, each team having 26 cards, these 30 points are held in abeyance, and added to the score for the majority of cards on the next hand. So on the next hand, the team which takes more cards will win 60 points (30+30).

In addition one point is scored for each jack and each ace in your pile, two points for the **♣2** and 3 points for the **♦10**, plus 10 points for each basra, as already mentioned. Thus the total points to be scored in each hand are 43 plus 10 for each basra.

Whichever team reaches a score of 101 points first wins the game. It is possible that both teams reach 101 in the same hand. In that case the team with the higher score wins, and in case of a tie, more hands are played until the tie is broken.

It is usual to play the best of five games - the player who wins three games wins the match and the loser pays for the shisa and beverages which have been consumed in great quantities all through play. If after four games, the players have won two each, then by common agreement decisive fifth game is played to 150 points rather than 101.

Customs and Tactics

It is important to remember the cards that have been played. Towards the end you know what cards your opponent is likely to have and what has already been played and you can use this knowledge to collect valuable cards. An important tactic is to clear the floor with a jack when you know that your opponent's next play to the empty floor is likely to give you a basra. In the last deal of the hand, if both players have been concentrating they will each know exactly what four cards the other has and can play accordingly.

Bonnie Smith writes that experts normally play in a constant state of movement - of themselves, of the cards - cards are moving all the time; much like a shell game. There is no overt cheating - it is drama and an attempt to distract the concentration of the opponent.

Variations

In the version reported by Bonnie Smith (which is for two players), the bottom card of the pack is shown to both players after the cut so that each knows what the last card will be.

In the version described by Alexey Lobashev, there are the following differences:

Although the capturing of all the cards from the floor by a jack does not normally count as a basra, there is one exception. If you play a jack when there is only one card on the floor and this card is also a jack, this counts as a 'double basra', and it is counted as 20 rather than 10. It is not clear whether this rule is used in Egypt, or whether it is a variation from Yemen.

When the seven of diamonds is played, it counts as a basra in the following cases:

The total value of the cards on the floor is **less than 10** (not if it is equal to 10)

The only card(s) on the floor are tens, queens and kings


The cards on the floor can be divided into two or more groups which score an equal number of points, less than 10. For example capturing A-2-7-8 with the **♦7** would be a basra, because $(1+8)=(2+7)=9$.


The Egyptian game was said to be played to a target of 121 points, though the target in Yemen was 101 points.

Basra in Lebanon

The game is for two or four players. Four play in teams of two against two, partners sitting opposite. A standard international 52 card pack is used. The turn to deal rotates. The dealer deals 6 cards to each player - all at once - and four cards face up to the middle of the table. The rest of the deck is put to one side to be dealt when the first six cards have been played.

The scoring values of the cards are:

3 points for the  10


2 points for the  2

1 point for each jack

1 point for each ace

3 points for whichever player (or team) takes the **majority of the cards** (if they have 26 cards each, no one gets these points).

Thus there are 16 points available altogether unless there is a tie for most cards, in which case there are only 13 points. Note that the majority of cards is worth only 3 (not 30 as in Egypt and Yemen).

The play is begun by the player who received the first cards in the deal (that is the non-dealer if there are two players and the player to dealer's right if there are four). Then the turn to play rotates. The procedure for playing and capturing cards is as described above: a numeral card can capture an equal card or a set of cards that add up to its rank, or both; a jack captures everything on the table; a queen can only capture queens and a king can only capture kings. In this version the  7 has no special power.

In the Lebanese game, a **Basra** occurs only in the following two cases:

A single card is left alone on the table - either because all the other cards were captured, or because the table was cleared (perhaps with a jack), forcing the next player to play a single card. If the following player can match this single card (thereby capturing it), this counts as a Basra and scores 10 points. Capturing a lone card other than a jack by playing a jack does not count as a Basra; capturing a lone jack with another jack counts as an ordinary single Basra, not a double one.

There is a single card alone on the table, the next player plays a card that does not capture it, and the following player is able to clear the table by playing a card equal to the sum of these two cards. For example, the

table contains a lone 3. The next player plays a 4 (perhaps having no other card). If the following player can play a 7, capturing the 3 + 4, this is a Basra, worth 10 points.

After the players have played all their cards the dealer deals another six cards each (but no more to the table) and play continues. In the two-player game it takes four deals to exhaust the pack; in the four player game there will only be two deals.

After the last card has been played, any cards that remain on the table are taken by the player who last made a capture. Then each player or team scores the cards taken plus basras. Further hands are played until either player or team reaches 101 or more points. Then the player or team with the higher score wins.

Here is a description of the same Lebanese game found by Thierry Depaulis in Fuad I. Khuri: "Tents and pyramids: games and ideology in Arab culture from backgammon to autocratic rule." Saqi books, London, 1990, Appendix F, p145-6. It seems that the only difference from the version described above is the possibility of playing with 3 people, in which case the deal would have to be 4 cards at a time rather than 6.

Basra (or ashush)

Like many card games, *basra* can be played with 2, 3 or 4 players. If with 4, 2 players normally team up against the other 2. But in order to increase the element of competition, people often play as individuals, without teams.

In *basra*, or *ashush*, cards are distributed to every player in one hump, in sets of 4 or 6 cards at a time. Four other cards are laid face upwards on the floor. The first player, that is the one sitting on the right of the dealer, tries to match the cards on the floor with the cards in his hand: ace matches ace, nine matches nine, king matches king, and so on. The card in the hand 'eats' the card it matches on the floor. If no cards match, the player then has to throw another card on the floor and the next player takes over. The right to deal rotates at every shuffle. A card in the hand could match the sum of the cards on the floor. For example, 9 matches 6 and 3, 2 and 7, 1 and 8, and 5 and 4. The knave (jack), which is called *ashush*, matches everything; it is an imam that 'eats' everything else on the floor, which is exactly what the term means in colloquial Arabic. In Bahrain, I have heard people referring to the knave as imam.

If a card is laid or left alone on the floor, it becomes vulnerable and could be taken as *basra* should it match a card in the hand. This could happen by manipulating the jack that eats everything else, thus forcing the next player to throw a lone card on the floor (vulnerability of isolation).

The *basra* counts as 10, the ace 1, the knave 1; the 10 of diamonds counts as 3, the 2 of clubs as 2, and the player who gets the most cards wins 3 points. The game is won once a player accumulates the sum of 101 points. Aside from the specific cards mentioned above, other cards carry equivalent values with no distinction made between diamonds or hearts, clubs or spades, kings or queens, sevens or fours. The highest value obviously is placed upon the *basra*, which is a captured lone card, or a 'hostage'.

Iran

Hokm is a trick taking card game, in which the object is to be the first team or player to win 7 points. It's the most popular card game in Iran. Deal and play are anticlockwise.

The word *Hokm* literally means "command, order" but in card game jargon, it's Persian for trump suit.

Hâkem

At the beginning of each hand, one of the players becomes **Hâkem**. Hâkem literally means "ruler, governor" and in card game jargon, it refers to a player having certain privileges in the game. In Hokm, these privileges are:

To be the player who receives the first cards dealt.

To be the player who makes trump (i.e. chooses and declares what suit will be trump) for the current hand.

To be the player who leads to the first trick of the hand.

Players and Cards

Hokm can be played with 2, 3 or 4 players. If with four players, two players normally team up against the other two.

The game uses a standard 52-card deck. Within each suit, the cards are ranked from highest to lowest: **A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2**

Hokm for 4 Players

The four players are in fixed partnerships, with partners sitting opposite each other.

Determination of Hâkem, His Partner and Dealer

One of the players flips one card to each player anticlockwise. The first player to take an **Ace** becomes Hâkem. The dealing is continued (notice that Hâkem gets no more card) until another player takes another **Ace**.

This player becomes the partner of Hâkem. If necessary, the players must change seats so that the partners are sitting opposite each other.

The player to the left of Hâkem, who is from the opposite team, becomes dealer.

Deal

Before the deal, the partner of Hâkem (the player to dealer's left) has the right to cut the deck. The dealer then deals out all the cards in 3 rounds so that each player has 13 cards. Each player receives 5 cards at a time in the first round, and 4 cards in the following rounds. The first cards are dealt to Hâkem (the player to dealer's right) and the deal continues anticlockwise, ending with the dealer. Hâkem must choose and declare the trump suit on the basis of his own first 5 cards only. To avoid any possibility that Hâkem's partner might help by passing information about his cards, the deal must be paused during the first round, and no cards given to Hâkem's partner until Hâkem has declared the trump suit.

Play

Hâkem leads to the first trick. Each player in turn must follow suit. If a player holds no cards of the suit led, that player may play any card (including any trump card). The highest card in the trump suit always wins the trick. If no trump cards are played, the trick goes to the highest card of the suit led. The winner of a trick leads to the next.

Scoring

The first team to take 7 tricks wins the hand and scores 1 point.

If the Hâkem's team wins the hand by taking the first 7 tricks, the other team having taken none, they win 2 points instead of 1. If the Hâkem's opponents win by taking the first 7 tricks, they win 3 points instead of 1.

The first team to reach 7 points wins the game.

If the Hâkem's team won the hand, the Hâkem retains the rank, and the same dealer deals again. If the other team wins, the turn to deal passes to the right: the previous Hâkem deals and the player to his right becomes Hâkem for the following hand.

Hokm for 3 Players

Determination of Hâkem and Dealer

Before starting the game, one of the 2's is removed from the deck, leaving 51 cards (17 cards for each player). One of the players flips one card at a time to each player anticlockwise. The first player to take an **Ace** becomes Hâkem and the player to his left becomes dealer.

Deal

The dealer deals out all the cards in 4 rounds so that each player has 17 cards. Each player receives 5 cards at a time in the first round, and 4 cards in the following rounds. The Hâkem receives the first cards and the deal continues anticlockwise. The deal is paused after the first round, and continued after Hâkem has declared the trump suit.

Play

Hâkem leads to the first trick. Each player in turn must follow suit. If a player holds no cards of the suit led, that player may play any card (including any trump card). The highest card in the trump suit always wins the trick. If no trump cards are played, the trick goes to the highest card of the suit led. The winner of a trick leads to the next.

Scoring

If one player takes all the first 7 tricks, the hand is over and the winner scores either 2 points if he was Hâkem or 3 if he wasn't Hâkem.

Otherwise, the winner is the first player who takes a number of tricks that cannot be equalled or exceeded by another player. For example if the tricks are 7-4-3 the play must continue, because a second player might also achieve 7 tricks, but at 7-4-4 the player with 7 tricks has won, because no one else can take more than 6 tricks. In the same way 8-3-1 is not yet a win, but 8-2-2 is a win for the player with 8 tricks. In such a case the winner of the hand scores 1 point.

If two of players take the same number of tricks then the third player wins the hand and scores 1 point. So for example if the tricks are 7-7-3, the player with 3 tricks wins.

The first player to reach 7 points wins the game.

If Hâkem won the hand, he keeps this rank and the same player deals again. Otherwise Hâkem becomes the new dealer and the player to his right becomes Hâkem for the following hand.

Hokm for 2 Players

Determination of Hâkem and Dealer

One of the players flips one card at a time to each player alternately. The first player to take an **Ace** becomes Hâkem and the other player becomes dealer.

Deal

The dealer deals 5 cards at once to Hâkem and 5 to himself and the undealt stock is placed face down in the middle of table. Hâkem

examines his cards and declares the trump suit. Then he chooses 3 of his 5 cards to discard face down to start the discard pile. In the same way, the other player discards 2 unwanted cards from his hand face down.

Now Hâkem draws the top card from the undealt stock (without exposing it to his opponent). If he estimates it valuable, he can add it to his hand; otherwise he discards it face down and takes the next card from the top of the stock, which he must keep. If he chose to keep the first card, he must discard the second card face down, having looked at it. Now the other player draws from the stock, choosing to keep the first or second card in the same way. This continues, the players taking turns to draw, until the stock is exhausted. At this point, each player should have 13 cards in hand.

The decision whether to take the first card or wait for the second brings a lot of excitement to the game. Sometimes you miss a valuable card because you have picked the first card. Your opponent must not see any of your discarded cards.

Play

Hâkem leads to the first trick. The other player must follow suit. If he holds no cards of the suit led, he may play any card (including any trump card). The highest card in the trump suit always wins the trick. If no trump cards are played, the trick goes to the highest card of the suit led. The winner of a trick leads to the next.

Scoring

The first player to take 7 tricks wins the hand and scores 1 point.

If Hâkem wins the first 7 tricks he scores 2 points instead of 1. If Hâkem's opponent wins by taking the first 7 tricks, he scores 3 points instead of 1.

The first player to reach 7 points wins the game.

If Hâkem won the hand, he remains Hâkem. If not, he deals and the other player becomes Hâkem.

Glossary

Kot

Winning the hand by taking all the first seven tricks is called **Kot** which is worth 2 points.

Hâkem Koti

If you or your team could **Kot** the Hâkem player or team (impossible mission) then it's called **Hâkem Koti** which is worth 3 points.

Hokm Lâzem

To lead a trump card which obliges other players to play a trump card.

Boridan

(literally 'to cut' - cf. French 'couper') To win a trick by playing a trump card when you are void of the suit led.

Rad Kardan

(literally 'to bypass') Not to play a trump card when you are void of the suit led, because you are quite sure that your partner will win the trick.

Pâyin Âmadan

(literally 'to lay low') To play a low card because you are quite sure that your opponent will win the trick.

Bâlâ Âmadan

(literally 'to lay high') To play a high card in order to make the next player play a higher card if he can.

Somalia

Arpa Turup

Arpa Turup is a four-player card game from Somalia, whose name means "Four [packs of] Cards". No doubt it is so called because it is played with a 144-card pack made up four identical 36-card packs. It was described to me by Alexey Lobashev, who obtained the information from Mohamed Hassan of Mogadishu (Muqdisho).

Players and Cards

The game is played by four players in fixed partnerships, two against two. I am told that it is played by adults only, not children. The pack of 144 cards is made by throwing out all the cards below 6 from four standard international 52-card packs. The ranking of cards from highest to lowest is as follows: Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6.

Deal

Before the game, any player deals one card to each player, face up. The player who gets a highest card becomes the dealer for the first deal.

The dealer shuffles the cards and the player sitting on his left cuts. Each player is then dealt 36 cards in batches of three.

After the player sitting on the dealer's left gets the first three cards, the dealing is stopped and this player, having looked at his cards, calls the trump suit. Then dealing is resumed.

To check that the deal is correct, because there are very many cards, the dealer shows everyone the number of cards in the last batch he dealt himself. If the number is more or less than three, the deal must be repeated.

For convenience the players sort the cards in their hands by suit and arrange them with red and black suits alternating.

[It seems from this description that the deal and play are clockwise, even though the parent single-deck game Turup was played counter-clockwise. It is a little surprising that the cards are cut by the player to dealer's left, who also receives the first cards in the deal.]

Play

This is a plain trick taking game. The first to lead is the player sitting on the dealer's left. The players should follow suit. If they have no cards of the required suit, they can play a trump or any other card. As usual the highest trump, or if none are played the highest card of the suit led wins

the trick. If two or more cards are played of the same suit and the same rank, the first of these is considered higher than the others. The winner of each trick leads to the next.

Partners can give signs to each other. For instance, having led a card one could knock once on the table, which means 'This is my strong suit'. If the player instead clicks his fingers, this would mean 'This is my weak suit'. Signs can be given only by the player who has played the first card in the trick, not by any other player.

Winning the game and the match

At the end of the game each partnership counts the tricks they have taken. The game is won by the party which takes more tricks. To win the match, a partnership must win two games, without losing any games in between them, the number of tricks taken in the second game they win being more than in the first game they win. Consecutive games in which the tricks are equal, or in which the same party wins as in the previous game, but with insufficient tricks to win the match, are considered a draw, and the match continues.

Before the match, the players place a stake. The winners of the match take the money.

For example, the first game is won by the party A with 41 tricks. The next game is again won by party A but with only 39 tricks, so is a draw. If in the third game, the party A wins with 42 or more tricks, they win the match. However, if the party B wins in the third game, then in the fourth game only party B will have an opportunity to win the match. If in the fourth game party A wins, it will be again considered their first winning game.

If the dealer's partnership wins, a player from the other partnership deals the next game; if dealer's partnership loses or comes to a draw, the same party deals. In case of loss, the players in the same partnership deal in turns. In case of a draw the same dealer deals again.

Four Somali card games were found by Thierry Depaulis in the book *British Somaliland* by Ralph Evelyn Drake-Brockman (London, 1912). These are **Turup**, **Rumpus**, **Turup frengi** and **Shaniss**. We do not know whether any of these games is still played in Somalia.

According to this book, **Turup** is a four-player partnership trick-taking game with a 36-card pack. Evidently, it is a single deck version of Arpa Turup. The dealer starts by dealing 3 cards to each player (anticlockwise). The first player has then to declare trumps. Then the dealer resumes dealing in two batches of 3, so that each player has 9 cards. "The object of the game is to get five tricks; the partners who succeed in doing this

win the game." If a team think they can win 9 tricks, "thus making a grand slam, called 'kort' by the Somalis", they can declare it.

Turup frengi ("European/White game") is, according Drake-Brockman, "practically the same as Bezique, and must have been copied from it".

Shaniss [modern spelling 'shaanis'] is a simple fishing game for two players (4 cards to each player, 4 on the table) The object is to reach 100 points, but Drake-Brockman does not say how).

Depaulis points out that Somali playing-card vocabulary seems to be derived from Hindi rather than Arabic. For example there are the words 'raani' for queen, and 'qulaan' for jack (cf Hindi 'ghulaam'); this might be the derivation of 'turup' (turub) as well.

Puerto Rico

Ocho Locos

This is a variation of the Crazy Eights game the way it's played in Puerto Rico, where the object is to win the best out of 8 games, in an Ocho Locos match. In case of a 4-4 tie, a tie breaker is played. Ocho Locos uses a standard 52 card pack, with 1 or 2 optional Jokers. Suits in Spanish are "espadas, corazones, trebol , diamantes" (for spades, hearts, clubs and diamonds).

Players: Two or three play each by themselves. Four, two against two as partners, facing each other.

The Deal: In the first game of the 8-game match, dealer gives each player eight cards, one at a time in order to his right (counter-clockwise), instead of to the left as in most other games (most games in Puerto Rico are played counter-clockwise due to our Spanish origins, from where card games are played to the right). In the second game he deals seven cards to each player, in the third game six cards and so on dealing one card less per game until the eighth game where he only deals one card per player. In case of a tie breaker, he also deals one card per player. First dealer is chosen at random, then the player to his right deals the next game and so on. In each game dealer also deals a face up card into the discard pile. If this card is an eight, dealer must nominate ("la cambio a ...") the suit which must be played first (without looking at his hand).

The Play: Starting with the player to dealer's right, and continuing counter-clockwise, each player in turn must either play a legal card face up on top of the discard pile, or draw a card from the undealt stock.

The following plays are legal:

If the top card of the discard pile is not an eight, you may play any card which matches the rank or suit of the previous card (for example if the top card was the king of hearts you could play any king or any heart).

An eight may be played on any card, and the player of the eight must nominate ("la cambio a ...") a suit, which must be played next.

If an eight is on top of the pile, you may play any card of the suit nominated by the person who played the eight.

Jokers (if used) are draw four cards, and may be played on any card. If the top card of the discard pile is a joker (and it's your turn to play a card, and not to draw), you must play any card which matches the rank or suit of the card played previous to the joker.

Drawing Cards:

In the normal game, you may always use your turn to draw a card ("robate una"), and the drawn card can not be played immediately even if it is a legal play. If you don't have any cards you can legally play, you must draw, and you are never bounded to play any card you can legally play, you can choose to draw instead.

Jokers (if used) are draw four cards ("robate cuatro"), and may be played on any card. If the top card of the discard pile is a joker, you must play any card which matches the rank or suit of the card played previous to the joker, and if the joker was the first card dealt into the discard pile, the first player must play another joker, any two, or draw four cards. If no twos are played on the joker, the next player can play any card he pleases as no suit was fixed before the opening joker.

When a two is played the next player must either draw two cards ("robate dos"), play another two or play a joker. If several consecutive twos or jokers have been played the next player must either play another two or a joker, or draw two cards for each two in the sequence, and four for each joker.

If at any time the stock is depleted, dealer removes all cards from the discard pile, except for the top card which is the only one he keeps in the new discard pile, reshuffles these removed cards from the discard pile and makes them the new stock.

Skip

When an ace or a four is played, the next player in rotation misses a turn, and the turn passes to the following player. Therefore, in 2-player games, the same player goes again, and in 4-payer games your partner gets to play the next card.

When a jack is played, all the other players miss a turn, and the same player goes again.

You must draw a card after you play your last card ("¡Ultima!") if it is a jack, (and for an ace or four in 2-player games) since its your turn again, and you do not have anymore cards to play.

Last Card

You must alert the other players (call aloud "¡Ultima!") when you have just one card left. If you fail to do so you must draw one card from the stock as a penalty. No "¡Ultima!" call is required for the eighth 1-card game or the tie breaker game right after dealer gives each player their one card.