

# How to Play Euchre for Beginners

## Things You Should Know:

- Play Euchre with 4 players split into teams of 2. Use a deck of cards with the aces, kings, queens, jacks, 10s, and 9s of each suit.
- Rounds last for 5 turns, or “tricks.” Each turn, players place 1 card down on the table. The card with the highest value wins the trick.
- Score points for your team if you win a majority of the tricks during a round.
- Win the game if your team is the first to earn 10 points.

## Objective: Play the highest-valued cards to win tricks each round.

During each round, players play 1 card per turn, which is known as a “trick.” After everyone plays their cards, the player that has the card with the highest value wins the trick. Your team gets points at the end of the round based on how many tricks you win, and the first team to 10 points wins.

## Setup:

**1. Split into 2 teams of 2 players.** Euchre is only a 4-player game, so choose another player to be on your team. Sit directly across from your partner so the members of the other team are on your left and right.

- If you’d rather leave it up to chance, have each player draw a random card. The players with the 2 lowest cards become one team and the other players become the second team.

**2. Form a Euchre deck by removing the 2s–8s of every suit.** Euchre only uses 24 cards: the aces, kings, queens, jacks, 10s, and 9s of each suit. Set the cards you’re not using aside since you won’t need them while you’re playing the game.

- You can buy a specialty Euchre so you don’t have to pull cards out every time you want to play.
- Some people play with slightly larger decks that may include the 7s and 8s. They may also include a joker. Ask the people you’re playing with to clarify any rules they use.

**3. Have each player draw a card to pick the first dealer.** Shuffle the cards of your thinned-out Euchre deck and have each player draw one card. Whoever has the highest value (with aces being the highest) gets to start the game as the first dealer.<sup>[4]</sup>

- Alternatively, you can choose the first dealer based on who had the highest card when you picked teams.

## **Dealing and Bidding:**

**1. Deal out 5 cards to each player.** The dealer passes out cards clockwise around the table starting with the player to their left. Hand each player 2 cards from the top of the deck. Once you go around the table once, then give everyone 3 more cards to fill up their hand. Players can look at the cards in their hand, but shouldn't show them to their teammates or other players.

- Alternatively, you can deal out 3 cards to each player the first time around and 2 cards the second time. Either way works as long as everyone gets a total of 5 cards.

**2. Flip the top card of the deck to reveal the potential trump suit.** There will only be 4 cards left in the deck after you finish dealing. Take the top card from the deck and reveal it in the center of the table. The suit of the card becomes the potential "trump suit," which is considered the highest-valued suit for the current round.

**3. Decide if you want to accept the revealed card's suit as trump.** Starting with the person to the left of the dealer, players one at a time decide if they want the revealed suit as trump. Accept the trump if the majority of the cards in your hand match the same suit. Since the trump suit is the most powerful for the round, that means you're more likely to win. When any player accepts the trump suit, the dealer adds the revealed card to their hand and then discards a card face-down.

- If a player doesn't want the suit as trump, they can pass it to the next person to decide instead. If a player accepts the trump suit, an opponent says, "I order it up," the dealer's partner says "I assist," or the dealer says "I take it up."
- If you're the dealer, discard a low-valued card from your hand, like a 9 or 10, since it won't be as powerful for winning.

#### **4. Let a player choose the trump suit if everyone passes on the top card.**

If everyone passes on the trump suit, flip the revealed card face-down again. Starting on the dealer's left, a player can name the suit they want as trump as long as it's not the same suit as the card that was revealed. The first person who chooses a trump suit sets it for the rest of the round.<sup>[8]</sup>

- If all players still pass without picking a trump suit, collect all of the cards and shuffle them again. The person to the left of the dealer becomes the new dealer.
- The team that accepts or chooses trump become the “makers” while the other team become the “defenders.”

#### **5. Choose to “go alone” if you have a hand with a lot of the trump suit.**

When a player accepts or picks a trump suit, they can choose to “go alone” without their partner's help if they feel confident in their hand. When a player declares they want to go alone, their partner sets their hand face-down and sits out for the rest of the round.

- Going alone can get you bonus points if you're able to win all the hands during a round, but it can be risky if you don't have strong cards.

#### **6. Make jacks in the trump and same-colored suit the highest ranked**

**cards.** For most suits, the card ranks from highest to lowest are ace, king, queen, jack, 10, and 9. Once a trump suit is picked, the jack of the trump suit becomes the strongest card in the suit and is called the “left bower.” The jack of the suit with the same color (hearts/diamonds or spades/clubs) becomes the second-highest trump card, known as the “right bower.” The other cards in trump rank normally.<sup>[10]</sup>

- *Example:* If the trump suit is diamonds, then the trump suit ranks from highest to lowest are jack (diamonds), jack (hearts), ace (diamonds), king (diamonds), queen (diamonds), 10 (diamonds), and 9 (diamonds).

### **Gameplay:**

**1. The starting player plays 1 card to lead the first trick.** The player to the left of the dealer starts the first turn. Each turn is called a “trick.” The player can choose any card they want to play, and the suit of the card becomes the “lead suit.”

- Try leading with a card in the trump suit. Other players have to play the same suit if they can, so you'll flush out all the most powerful cards right at the start of the round.

**2. Play a card of the same suit as the lead card if you're able to.** Take turns clockwise around the table. Players must "follow" by playing a card in the same suit as the lead card. If you don't have a card in your hand that matches the lead card, then you can play any other card you have in your hand, including a trump card.

- If you want to win the trick, play a card higher in value than any other cards that have been played.
- If your teammate already played a high-ranking card in trump or the lead suit, then you can play lower-valued cards since your team is already set to win.
- If you don't have any cards matching the lead suit or in the trump suit, try to get rid of a low-valued card. You won't be able to win the current trick, but you can save your higher-valued cards to win ones in the future.

**3. Win the trick for your team by playing the card with the highest value.**

Once everyone plays 1 card to the trick, check who put down the highest-ranking card. If any trump cards are showing, then the highest-ranking trump is the winner. Otherwise, the highest card in the lead suit wins. The person with the highest card takes all of the played cards and sets them face-down in a pile in front of them.

- *Example:* Trump is clubs. The lead card is an ace (spades). Players follow with queen (spades), king (spades), and queen (hearts). The ace of spades is the highest rank of the lead suit and wins the trick.
- *Example:* Trump is hearts. The lead card is king (hearts). Players follow with jack (diamonds), 9 (hearts), and 10 (clubs). Since the jack of diamonds is the right bower, it ranks higher than the king and wins the round.

**4. Continue playing tricks until you run out of cards in your hand.**

Whoever won the last trick plays the first card to start the next one. Each turn, you'll only play 1 card. Once you play through 5 turns and run out of cards in your hand, then the round ends.

- Since there's such a small number of cards, try to memorize what's already been played so you can get an idea of what players might still have in their hands.

## Scoring

**1. Gain points as the makers for winning 3 or more tricks.** If your team accepted or chose the trump suit, you gain 1 point if you won 3 or 4 tricks. If you were able to win all 5 tricks for the round, your team gets 2 points.

- If a member of the maker team opted to “go alone,” then they get 4 points for winning all 5 tricks instead.

**2. Earn points as the defenders by winning 3 or more tricks.** If you prevented the team that accepted or chose the trump suit from getting a majority of the tricks, then they’ve been “euchred” and your team gains 2 points.

## **Finishing the Game**

**1. Pass the role of the dealer and deal out a new hand.** The person to the left of the last dealer becomes the new dealer, meaning the role alternates between teams each round. Collect all of the cards from the deck to shuffle and deal out again to start the next round.

**2. Play hands until a team reaches 10 points and wins.** Tally up your scores after each round and add them to your old scores. As soon as a team crosses 10 points, they immediately win the game!

- If you want a shorter game, only play until you reach 7 points. For a slightly longer game, you could play until a team reaches 15 points instead.