

Baloot

4 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Hard

Duration: Medium

Win tricks with valuable cards and outscore the opposing partnership.

SETUP

- Form two teams of two, partners sitting opposite.
- Use a 32-card deck (7 through Ace).
- Deal 8 cards to each player in batches of 3-2-3.

SCORING

- Card points vary between trump and non-trump suits.
- Bidding team must outscore opponents or forfeits all points.

Tip: Track the Jack and 9 of trumps closely, as they carry the most points.

ON YOUR TURN

- Follow suit if possible, trump if you cannot follow.
- Highest trump or highest led-suit card wins the trick.
- Winner of the trick leads the next one.

Baloot is the most popular card game in Saudi Arabia, a partnership trick-taking game derived from the French Belote. Played by four players in two teams using a 32-card deck, it combines bidding, trumps, and bonus declarations.

Objective

Win tricks containing valuable cards and reach the target score before the opposing team. Points are earned through card captures, declarations, and bonus combinations.

Setup

1. **Players:** 4 players in two fixed partnerships, sitting across from each other.
2. **Deck:** 32 cards (7 through Ace in each suit). Cards removed below 7.
3. **Deal:** Each player receives 8 cards, dealt in batches of 3, 2, and 3.

Gameplay

1. **Step 1:** A card is turned face up and players bid to choose the trump suit or pass. A second round of bidding allows choosing a different suit.
2. **Step 2:** Players may declare valid combinations (sequences or four-of-a-kind) for bonus points before the first trick.
3. **Step 3:** The player to the dealer's right leads the first trick. Players must follow suit if possible, and must trump if unable to follow suit.
4. **Step 4:** The highest trump wins the trick, or the highest card of the led suit if no trumps are played. The winner leads the next trick.

Scoring

- Card values differ in trump and non-trump suits. The Jack of trumps is worth 20 points, the 9 of trumps is worth 14.
- The team that chose trumps must score more than the opponents, or all points go to the opposing team (a penalty called 'falling').

Variations

- **Sun (Ashkal):** A no-trump mode where Aces are the highest cards and all suits are equal in rank.
- **Double/Redouble:** Teams can double the stakes during bidding, and opponents can redouble in response.

Tips and Strategies

- Lead with strong trumps early to draw out opponents' trump cards.
- Pay attention to declarations from all players to deduce remaining card locations.
- Communicate indirectly with your partner through strategic card plays and leads.

Tips & Strategy

Manage your trump cards wisely and track which high cards have been played. Coordinating with your partner through strategic leads is essential.

Counting cards is vital in Baloot, especially tracking trumps and high-value cards. Strong partnerships develop silent communication through consistent play patterns.