

# Biritch

4 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Win tricks with your partner to score points toward game and rubber.

## SETUP

- Use a standard 52-card deck.
- Deal 13 cards to each of 4 players in two partnerships.
- The dealer or partner declares the trump suit or no-trumps.

## SCORING

- Each trick beyond six counts toward the game score.
- Holding high trump honors may earn bonus points.
- First partnership to win two games wins the rubber.

*Tip: Plan how to use the dummy's cards before playing the first trick.*

## ON YOUR TURN

- Declarer's partner lays their hand face-up as dummy.
- Player to declarer's left leads; follow suit if possible.
- Declarer plays both their own hand and the dummy's cards.

*Biritch, also known as Russian Whist, is a historical trick-taking card game that is widely considered the direct ancestor of modern Bridge. It introduced the concept of the declarer's partner laying down their hand as a dummy, a revolutionary mechanic at the time.*

## Objective

Win tricks with your partner to score points toward game. The declaring side names a trump suit and attempts to win the majority of tricks while the opposing pair defends.

## Setup

1. **Players:** 4 players in two partnerships.
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck.
3. **Deal:** Each player receives 13 cards.
4. **Trump declaration:** The dealer or their partner declares the trump suit or chooses to play without trumps.

## Gameplay

1. **Dummy hand:** After the trump is declared, the declarer's partner lays their hand face-up on the table. The declarer plays both their own cards and the dummy's cards.
2. **Lead:** The player to the declarer's left leads the first trick.
3. **Follow suit:** Players must follow the suit led. If unable, they may trump or discard.
4. **Winning tricks:** The highest card of the led suit wins unless trumped, in which case the highest trump wins.

## Scoring

- **Trick points:** Each trick won beyond six counts toward the game score.
- **Game threshold:** A specific number of points across multiple deals wins a game.
- **Honors:** Holding high trump cards in a single hand may earn bonus points.
- **Rubber:** The first partnership to win two games wins the rubber and earns additional bonus points.

## Variations

- **Auction Biritch:** Adds a competitive bidding round where both partnerships bid for the right to declare trump, which evolved directly into Auction Bridge.
- **Straight Biritch:** The simpler original form where only the dealer's side declares trump without an auction.

## Tips and Strategies

- Choose your trump suit based on the longest combined suit between you and your partner.
- As the declarer, plan how to use the dummy's cards before playing the first trick.
- Defenders should try to establish their long suits and communicate holdings through their play.

## Tips & Strategy

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Plan your play around the dummy hand from the very first trick. Communication between defenders through card signals is just as important as in modern Bridge.

Evaluating your hand's trick-taking potential accurately is critical when choosing trumps. Count your certain winners and losers before committing to a suit.