

Bouillotte

4 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Have the highest hand (brelan or best suit total) to win the pot.

SETUP

- Use a 20-card deck (10s through Aces).
- Deal three cards to each of four players.
- Turn one card face up as the retourne.

SCORING

- Brelan (three of a kind) is the top hand.
- Otherwise, highest suit-point total wins.

Tip: The retourne card is critical for tiebreakers, so always factor it into your decisions.

ON YOUR TURN

- Evaluate your hand.
- Bet, call, raise, or fold.
- Reveal hands after betting concludes.

Bouillotte is a historical French gambling card game considered one of the ancestors of modern poker. It uses a stripped deck of just 20 cards and features betting rounds with a focus on hand rankings and bluffing.

Objective

Win the pot by having the highest-ranking hand or by being the last player remaining after others fold.

Setup

1. **Players:** 4 players.
2. **Deck:** 20 cards from a standard deck (Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks, and 10s in all four suits).
3. **Deal:** Each player receives three cards, and one card is dealt face up as the 'retourne' (trump indicator).

Gameplay

1. **Step 1:** Players ante into the pot. Three cards are dealt to each player and one card is placed face up.
2. **Step 2:** A round of betting begins. Players may call, raise, or fold.
3. **Step 3:** After betting, remaining players reveal their hands. The strongest hand wins.
4. **Step 4:** Hand values are based on point totals of cards in the same suit. Three of a kind (brelan) is the highest possible hand.

Scoring

- A brelan (three of a kind) beats any point total.
- For point hands, the highest total in a single suit wins (face cards count 10, Aces count 11).
- Ties are broken by the suit of the face-up retourne card.

Variations

- **Bouillotte Decides:** The face-up card determines which suit breaks ties, adding an element of luck.
- **Open Bouillotte:** One of each player's cards is dealt face up for added information.

Tips and Strategies

- A brelan is extremely powerful; bet aggressively if you hold one.
- Pay attention to the retourne card, as it determines tiebreakers.
- Bluffing can be effective since the small deck limits hand possibilities.

Tips & Strategy

Bet aggressively with a brelan and use the retourne card to assess your tiebreaker advantage. Bluff selectively in a four-player game.

With only 20 cards, hand reading becomes more precise. Track which high cards have appeared to estimate opponents' holdings.