

Buraco

4 players

108 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Long

Meld sets and runs, build seven-card canastas, and deplete your hand to score the most points.

SETUP

- 4 players in partnerships use two decks plus jokers (108 cards).
- Deal 11 cards each; set aside two pots of 11 cards.
- Remaining cards form the stock; one card starts the discard pile.

SCORING

- Clean canasta (no wilds): 200 points.
- Dirty canasta (with wilds): 100 points.
- Going out: 100 bonus points.
- Card values: Jokers 30, Aces/2s 20, face cards 10, number cards 5.

Tip: Coordinate pot pickup timing with your partner to maximize your team's card advantage.

ON YOUR TURN

- Draw from stock or pick up the entire discard pile (if you can meld the top card).
- Lay down sets or runs of 3+ cards; extend existing melds.
- When you empty your hand, pick up a reserve pot and continue.

Buraco is a rummy-style card game extremely popular in Brazil and Italy, played in partnerships. It features a distinctive mechanic where teams access a reserve pile of cards (called a pot) when one partner runs out of cards, adding a dramatic second-wind element to gameplay.

Objective

Form melds of sets and runs, lay them on the table, and be the first team to deplete your hands and score the most points. Creating 'clean' runs of seven or more cards (canastas) earns large bonuses.

Setup

1. **Players:** 4 players in two partnerships.
2. **Deck:** Two standard 52-card decks plus four jokers (108 cards total).
3. **Deal:** Each player receives 11 cards. Two pots of 11 cards each are set aside face down.
4. **Stock and discard:** Remaining cards form the stock. One card starts the discard pile.

Gameplay

1. **Drawing:** Draw one card from the stock, or pick up the entire discard pile (only if you can immediately meld the top card).
2. **Melding:** Lay down sets of three or more same-rank cards or runs of three or more consecutive same-suit cards.
3. **Adding to melds:** You may extend your team's existing melds with additional cards.
4. **Picking up the pot:** When a player empties their hand, they pick up one of the reserve pots and continue playing.
5. **Going out:** A player can go out only after their team has formed at least one clean canasta (a seven-card run without wild cards).

Scoring

- **Clean canasta (no wilds):** 200 points bonus.
- **Dirty canasta (with wilds):** 100 points bonus.
- **Going out:** 100 points bonus.
- **Card values:** Aces and 2s are 20 points; face cards are 10; number cards are 5; jokers are 30.

Variations

- **Italian Burraco:** Features slightly different pot rules and scoring thresholds.
- **Open Buraco:** Played without partnerships, each player for themselves.

Tips and Strategies

- Coordinate with your partner on when to empty your hand and grab the pot. Timing this correctly gives your team a huge card advantage.
- Prioritize building at least one clean canasta early so your team has the option to go out when advantageous.

Tips & Strategy

The pot mechanic is what makes Buraco unique. Plan with your partner to time pot pickups for maximum advantage, and always keep an eye on building that required clean canasta.

Managing the discard pile is critical. Taking a large discard pile can give you enormous melding power, but be selective—only grab it when the top card fits your strategy.