

Chase the Ace

3-10 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Easy

Duration: Short

Avoid holding the lowest card at the end of each round to keep your 3 lives.

SETUP

- Use a standard 52-card deck (Aces low, Kings high).
- Each player starts with 3 lives (tokens or chips).
- Deal 1 card face-down to each player.

SCORING

- All cards are revealed; lowest card loses a life.
- Lose all 3 lives and you are eliminated.
- Last player with lives remaining wins.

Tip: Cards 8 or above are usually safe to keep; the risk of swapping to worse is high.

ON YOUR TURN

- Look at your card and decide to keep it or swap with the next player.
- A King blocks the swap; the holder reveals it and the swap is denied.
- The dealer may swap their card with a random one from the deck.

Chase the Ace is a simple card game of survival where each player tries to avoid holding the lowest card at the end of each round. Players may swap their card with the next player, creating a chain of exchanges that builds tension as it circles the table.

Objective

Avoid holding the lowest card at the end of each round. Players who survive all rounds win, while those caught with the lowest card lose a life.

Setup

1. **Players:** 3 to 10 players.
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck. Aces are low, Kings are high.
3. **Lives:** Each player starts with 3 lives (tokens, coins, or chips).
4. **Deal:** Each player receives 1 card, dealt face-down.

Gameplay

1. **Decision:** Starting left of the dealer, each player looks at their card and decides to keep it or swap with the player to their left.
2. **Swapping:** If you choose to swap, the next player must exchange cards with you unless they hold a King, in which case they reveal it and the swap is blocked.
3. **Chain:** Play continues clockwise. Each player either keeps their card or forces a swap with the next player.
4. **Dealer's Turn:** The dealer may either keep their card or swap it for a random card from the deck.
5. **Reveal:** All players reveal their cards. The player(s) with the lowest card lose a life.

Elimination

Players who lose all 3 lives are eliminated. The last player with lives remaining wins.

Tips and Strategies

- Kings are the safest cards — they block swaps and are the highest rank.
- Mid-range cards (7-10) are often worth keeping rather than risking a swap to something worse.
- Watch which cards get revealed each round to gauge what might be circulating.

Tips & Strategy

If you hold anything 8 or above, you are usually safe to keep it. The risk of swapping and getting something worse often outweighs the potential improvement.

The swap decision is a simple risk calculation: how likely is your current card to be the lowest? With experience, you develop intuition for when to hold and when to swap.