

Cuarenta

2-4 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Be the first to reach exactly 40 points through card captures and bonuses.

SETUP

- Remove 8s, 9s, and 10s to create a 40-card deck.
- Deal 5 cards to each player with no initial table cards.
- Keep remaining cards for redealing after each round of play.

SCORING

- 20+ cards captured = 6 points, plus 1 per extra card.
- Each Caida = 2 points, each Limpia = 2 points.

Tip: Coordinate with your partner to set up Caidas for easy 2-point bonuses every turn.

ON YOUR TURN

- Play one card from your hand to the table.
- Capture matching cards or groups that sum to your card's value.
- Score bonuses for Caidas (immediate recaptures) and Limpias (sweeps).

Cuarenta (meaning 'Forty') is the national card game of Ecuador. It is a fishing and capture game for 2 or 4 players using a 40-card deck, where players score by capturing table cards, forming sequences, and reaching exactly 40 points.

Objective

The objective is to be the first player or team to reach exactly 40 points by capturing cards from the table through matching, sequences, and special bonus plays.

Setup

1. **Players:** 2 or 4 players (4 players in partnerships).
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck with 8s, 9s, and 10s removed, leaving 40 cards.
3. **Deal:** Deal 5 cards to each player. No cards are placed on the table initially. The remaining cards form the stock for redealing.

Gameplay

1. **Playing a Card:** On your turn, play one card from your hand to the table.
2. **Capturing by Matching:** If your played card matches the value of a table card, you capture both cards. You may capture multiple cards if several table cards share that value.
3. **Capturing by Sum:** You may capture a group of consecutive table cards whose values sum to the value of your played card.
4. **Caida:** If you capture a card that was just placed on the table by the previous player, this is a 'Caida' and scores 2 bonus points.
5. **Limpia (Sweep):** If you capture all cards from the table, this is a Limpia and scores 2 bonus points.
6. **Redealing:** When all players have played their 5 cards, deal 5 more to each player. Continue until the deck is empty. Any remaining table cards go to the last player who made a capture.

Scoring

- Capturing 20 or more of the 40 cards earns 6 points. Each additional card beyond 20 earns 1 extra point.
- Each Caida (immediate recapture) = 2 points.
- Each Limpia (table sweep) = 2 points.
- The game is won by reaching exactly 40 points. If a player exceeds 40, their score resets to 39 and they must earn the final point precisely.

Variations

- **Cuarenta with Jokers:** Some groups add Jokers as wild cards that can match any value on the table.
- **Periquito Rule:** If the same card value appears three times on the table, the fourth card of that value captures all three for bonus points.

Tips and Strategies

- Set up Caidas by playing cards that your partner can immediately recapture on their turn for easy bonus points.
- Avoid leaving cards on the table that make it easy for opponents to sweep or score Caidas.
- Count captured cards carefully, as the 6-point bonus for majority is often the difference between winning and losing a round.

Tips & Strategy

Focus on card majority since 20+ captures score 6 points. Set up Caidas with your partner and avoid leaving the table vulnerable to opponent sweeps.

The Caida mechanic makes turn order critical. In partnerships, coordinating plays so your partner can recapture immediately is a reliable way to accumulate bonus points without relying on card majority.