

Loba

2-4 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Easy

Duration: Medium

Be the first to empty your hand by forming melds.

SETUP

- 2-4 individual players.
- Use two decks plus jokers.
- Deal 9 cards each, flip one card to start discards.

SCORING

- Remaining cards are penalty points.
- Lowest total penalty points after all rounds wins.

Tip: Lay down melds early and use jokers wisely to avoid high penalties.

ON YOUR TURN

- Draw from stock or discard pile.
- Lay down melds or add to existing table melds.
- Discard one card to end your turn.

Loba is a popular Argentine rummy game played with two decks and featuring wild cards. Players form melds through sets and runs, aiming to be the first to empty their hand across multiple rounds with escalating requirements.

Objective

Lay down valid melds and be the first player to get rid of all your cards. Minimize penalty points from cards left in hand when another player goes out.

Setup

1. **Players:** 2 to 4 players, each playing individually.
2. **Deck:** Two standard 52-card decks plus 4 jokers (108 cards total). Jokers are wild and can replace any card.
3. **Deal:** Each player receives 9 cards. The rest forms the stock pile with one card turned up as the discard pile.

Gameplay

1. **Step 1:** Draw one card from the stock pile or take the top card of the discard pile.
2. **Step 2:** Form and lay down melds: sets of three or four same-rank cards, or runs of three or more consecutive cards in the same suit.
3. **Step 3:** After laying down your initial melds, you may add cards to any melds on the table, including other players' melds.
4. **Step 4:** Discard one card to end your turn. The round ends when a player empties their hand.

Scoring

- Cards remaining in hand count as penalties: number cards at face value, face cards 10 points, Aces 15 points, and jokers 25 points.
- The player with the fewest penalty points after all rounds wins.

Variations

- **Loba with Contracts:** Each round requires a specific meld pattern before you can lay down, similar to Carioca.
- **Loba de Mas:** Players are dealt more cards each round, increasing the challenge progressively.

Tips and Strategies

- Use jokers strategically to complete melds, but remember they carry high penalty points if stuck in your hand.
- Watch what opponents discard to understand which cards are safe to throw away.
- Try to lay down melds as early as possible to start adding cards to existing melds.

Tips & Strategy

Get your melds on the table quickly so you can attach cards to any meld in play. Hold jokers only if they help complete an immediate meld.

Melding early gives you flexibility to offload cards onto any table meld. Holding too many cards waiting for the perfect hand usually backfires.