

Mariage

2-3 players

32 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Score points by winning tricks with valuable cards and declaring king-queen marriages.

SETUP

- Use a 32-card deck (7 through Ace in each suit).
- Deal a hand to each of 2-3 players.
- Turn a card face-up to set the trump suit; remaining cards form the stock.

SCORING

- Aces: 11, Tens: 10, Kings: 4, Queens: 3, Jacks: 2.
- Trump marriage: 40 points; non-trump marriage: 20 points.
- First player to the target score wins.

Tip: Hold marriages until the stock is nearly empty so opponents have fewer chances to counter.

ON YOUR TURN

- Win a trick to lead the next one; suit-following is relaxed while stock remains.
- Declare a king-queen marriage after winning a trick for bonus points.
- After each trick, both players draw from the stock to replenish.

Mariage is a Central European trick-taking card game where players earn points both from winning tricks and from declaring 'marriages'—matching king-queen pairs of the same suit. It is widely played in countries like the Czech Republic, Germany, and Poland under various regional names.

Objective

Accumulate points by winning tricks containing valuable cards and by declaring king-queen pairs (marriages) in your hand. The first player to reach a predetermined point total wins the game.

Setup

1. **Players:** 2 to 3 players.
2. **Deck:** A 32-card deck (7 through Ace in each suit) or a 24-card deck depending on the regional variant.
3. **Deal:** Each player receives a hand of cards, and a card is turned face-up to set the trump suit.
4. **Stock pile:** Remaining cards form a draw pile used until exhausted.

Gameplay

1. **Lead a card:** The trick winner leads any card to start the next trick.
2. **Following suit:** While the stock pile remains, players need not follow suit. Once the stock is empty, players must follow suit and trump if unable to follow.
3. **Declaring marriages:** When you win a trick, you may declare a marriage by showing a king and queen of the same suit. A trump marriage is worth more than a non-trump marriage.
4. **Drawing:** After each trick while the stock lasts, both players draw one card to replenish their hands.

Scoring

- **Aces:** 11 points each.
- **Tens:** 10 points each.
- **Kings:** 4 points each.
- **Queens:** 3 points each.
- **Jacks:** 2 points each.
- **Trump marriage:** 40 points.
- **Non-trump marriage:** 20 points.

Variations

- **Tysiac (Thousand):** A popular Polish three-player variant where players bid for the right to declare trump and aim for 1000 points.
- **Schnapsen:** The Austrian two-player variant with a tighter 20-card deck and stricter rules about trick play.

Tips and Strategies

- Hold onto your marriages until you can declare them at the most advantageous moment.
- While the stock is open, use low cards to probe your opponent's holdings before committing your high cards.
- Track which high-value cards have been played to know when your remaining cards are safe winners.

Tips & Strategy

Time your marriage declarations carefully for maximum impact. Track high cards closely once the stock is depleted, as strict following rules kick in and card counting becomes decisive.

The transition from open stock play to closed play is the most critical moment. Prepare for it by tracking which high cards have already been captured.