

Pepper

4 players

24 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Short

Score points by winning the number of tricks you bid; first team to 30 wins.

SETUP

- Use a 24-card deck (9 through Ace).
- Deal 6 cards each to 4 players in two partnerships.
- Bid 1-5 or Pepper (all 5 for 10 points); highest bidder names trump.

SCORING

- Meet your bid to score the number of tricks won; fail and lose the bid amount.
- Pepper bid: +10 for winning all 5, -10 for failing.
- Right Bower (Jack of trump) is highest; Left Bower (same-color Jack) is second.

Tip: Only attempt a Pepper bid with both Bowers and at least one more trump.

ON YOUR TURN

- Bid winner leads the first trick.
- Follow suit; the Left Bower belongs to the trump suit.
- Highest trump or highest led-suit card wins the trick.

Pepper is a fast-paced Midwestern trick-taking game using only 24 cards. A streamlined relative of Euchre, it features aggressive bidding and a 'pepper' bid where the bidder aims to win all five tricks for a big payoff.

Objective

Score points by fulfilling trick bids with your partner. The first team to reach 30 points wins. Going set on a bid costs you the bid amount.

Setup

1. **Players:** 4 players in two partnerships.
2. **Deck:** 24 cards (9 through Ace in each suit).
3. **Deal:** 6 cards each, using the entire deck.
4. **Bidding:** Players bid from 1 to 5 on how many tricks their team will win, or 'Pepper' (all 5 for 10 points). The highest bidder names trump.

Card Rankings

1. **In Trump:** Right Bower (Jack of trump) > Left Bower (Jack of same color) > Ace > King > Queen > 10 > 9.
2. **In Non-Trump:** Ace > King > Queen > Jack > 10 > 9.
3. **Note:** The Bower system is identical to Euchre.

Gameplay

1. **Leading:** The bid winner leads the first trick.
2. **Following Suit:** Follow suit if possible. The Left Bower belongs to the trump suit, not its printed suit.
3. **Winning Tricks:** Highest trump wins, or highest card of the led suit.
4. **Scoring:** Meet your bid and score the number of tricks won. Fail and lose the bid amount. Pepper bids are all-or-nothing: win all 5 for +10, or lose for -10.

Tips and Strategies

- The Bower system means the Jack of the same-color suit as trump is the second-highest card — do not forget it.
- Pepper bids are risky but powerful. Only attempt them with both Bowers and at least one additional trump.
- With only 6 cards each, hands play out quickly — bid accurately.

Tips & Strategy

Bidding accuracy is everything in Pepper. The small hand size (6 cards) means each card decision matters enormously.

With only 6 cards, you can often deduce opponents' hands after just 2-3 tricks. Use this information to plan your final plays precisely.