

Schnapsen

2 players

20 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Short

Reach 66 card points through tricks and marriages before your opponent.

SETUP

- 2 players with a 20-card deck (Jacks through Aces).
- Deal 5 cards each (3 then 2); turn up one card for trumps.
- Remaining cards form the stock.

SCORING

- Ace: 11, Ten: 10, King: 4, Queen: 3, Jack: 2.
- Win 1 game point normally; 2 if opponent under 33; 3 if opponent won no tricks.
- First to 7 game points wins the match.

Tip: Memorize all 20 cards as they are played — close the stock only when you can count to 66.

ON YOUR TURN

- Play tricks freely while stock remains (no follow-suit obligation).
- Draw one card from stock after each trick.
- Declare King-Queen marriages for 20 points (40 in trumps).
- Close the stock at any time to enforce strict follow-suit and trump rules.

Schnapsen is the quintessential Austrian two-player card game. It demands sharp memory and precise timing as players race to 66 points using a tiny 20-card deck.

Objective

Accumulate 66 or more card points through tricks and marriages before your opponent does, winning game points based on how decisively you win.

Setup

1. **Players:** 2 players.
2. **Deck:** 20 cards — Aces, Tens, Kings, Queens, and Jacks in each of four suits.
3. **Deal:** Each player receives 5 cards (3 then 2). The next card is placed face-up to determine the trump suit, with the remaining stock placed on top.

Gameplay

1. **Phase one — open play:** While the stock exists, the trick winner leads next. No obligation to follow suit.
2. **Drawing:** After each trick, both players draw one card from the stock.
3. **Marriages:** A King-Queen of the same suit can be declared when that player leads, scoring 20 (or 40 for trump).
4. **Trump Jack swap:** The holder of the trump Jack may exchange it for the face-up trump card under the stock.
5. **Closing:** A player may close the stock, ending draws and enforcing follow-suit and trump obligations.
6. **Phase two — closed play:** After the stock is exhausted or closed, strict trick-taking rules apply.

Scoring

- **Card values:** Ace = 11, Ten = 10, King = 4, Queen = 3, Jack = 2.
- **Game points:** Win 1 game point normally, 2 if opponent has under 33, or 3 if opponent took no tricks.
- **Match target:** First to 7 game points wins the match.

Variations

- **Bauernschnapsen:** The popular 4-player partnership expansion of Schnapsen.
- **Dreierschnapsen:** A three-player version with adjusted dealing and scoring.

Tips and Strategies

- Memorize all 20 cards as they are played — perfect information is achievable in this small deck.
- Close the stock when you can count to 66 from your hand alone.

Tips & Strategy

Track every card. With only 20 in the deck, knowing what remains lets you close the stock at the perfect moment.

During open play, win tricks with minimal investment — save your Aces and trump cards for after the stock is closed.