

Skat

3 players

32 cards

Difficulty: Hard

Duration: Medium

As declarer, capture at least 61 of 120 card points; as defender, prevent it.

SETUP

- Use a 32-card deck (7 through Ace in each suit).
- Deal 10 cards each to 3 players; 2 cards form the skat.
- Players bid for the right to become declarer and choose game type.

SCORING

- Ace: 11, Ten: 10, King: 4, Queen: 3, Jack: 2.
- Declarer needs 61+ points to win the contract.
- Game value is multiplied by consecutive top trumps held.

Tip: As declarer, draw out defenders' trump early to secure your high-point cards.

ON YOUR TURN

- Declarer may exchange 2 cards with the skat before play.
- Choose game type: Suit, Grand (Jacks only trump), or Null (lose all tricks).
- Follow suit if possible; highest trump or led-suit card wins.

Skat is Germany's national card game and one of the most strategically rich trick-taking games in existence. Three players compete in each hand, with one player (the declarer) playing alone against the other two. Its auction, trump, and scoring systems create extraordinary depth.

Objective

As the declarer, win at least 61 of the 120 card points available. As a defender, prevent the declarer from reaching 61 points. Scoring is based on the value of captured cards.

Setup

1. **Players:** 3 players (4 can play with one sitting out each hand).
2. **Deck:** 32-card deck (7 through Ace in each suit).
3. **Deal:** 10 cards each, dealt in batches of 3-4-3. Two cards form the 'skat' (face-down in the center).
4. **Auction:** Players bid for the right to become declarer. Bidding values correspond to the game type and trump suit multiplied by the number of consecutive top trumps held.

Game Types

- **Suit Game:** One of the four suits becomes trump, plus all four Jacks are always trump.
- **Grand:** Only the four Jacks are trump; no suit is trump.
- **Null:** The declarer aims to lose every single trick. No trump exists.

Gameplay

1. **Skat Exchange:** The declarer may pick up the two skat cards and discard two (hand game if they decline).
2. **Trump Hierarchy:** In suit and grand games, Jacks are the highest trumps (Clubs > Spades > Hearts > Diamonds), followed by the trump suit in normal order.
3. **Trick Play:** Players must follow suit. If unable, they may play any card. Highest trump wins, or highest card of led suit if no trump played.
4. **Card Values:** Ace=11, Ten=10, King=4, Queen=3, Jack=2, others=0.

Tips and Strategies

- Count card points meticulously — knowing the running total is essential for both attack and defense.
- As declarer, draw out defenders' trump early to secure your high-point cards.
- Defenders should coordinate through their plays, signaling strength in specific suits.

Tips & Strategy

Master the bidding system first — overbidding is the most common beginner mistake. Understand your game value before committing to a contract.

The two-skat exchange is a pivotal decision. The cards you bury not only remove weaknesses but also add their point value to your score if you win.