

Trappola

2 players

36 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Capture high-value cards in tricks to reach the target score first.

SETUP

- 2 players use a 36-card deck (A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 2 per suit).
- Deal 9 cards each in batches of three.
- Turn up a card from the stock to set the trump suit.

SCORING

- Aces 6, Kings 5, Queens 4, Jacks 3 points each.
- Winning the last trick earns 6 bonus points.

Tip: Save your high trumps for the endgame when the stock is empty and following suit is mandatory.

ON YOUR TURN

- Non-dealer leads any card to the trick.
- Follow suit if possible; otherwise play any card.
- Highest card of led suit wins unless trumped.
- Both players draw from the stock after each trick.

Trappola is a historic trick-taking card game that originated in Italy during the sixteenth century. It uses a distinctive 36-card deck and emphasizes capturing high-value cards through careful trump management. The game spread widely across Central Europe and became especially popular in the Czech lands and Austria.

Objective

Win tricks containing valuable cards to accumulate points. The first player to reach the agreed-upon target score wins the game.

Setup

1. **Players:** 2 players.
2. **Deck:** A special 36-card Trappola deck, or a standard deck stripped to Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 2 in each suit.
3. **Deal:** Each player receives 9 cards, dealt in batches of three.
4. **Trump:** The top card of the remaining stock determines the trump suit.

Gameplay

1. **Leading:** The non-dealer leads any card to the first trick.
2. **Following suit:** The opponent must follow suit if possible. If unable, they may play any card including a trump.
3. **Winning tricks:** The highest card of the led suit wins unless a trump is played, in which case the highest trump wins.
4. **Drawing:** After each trick, both players draw from the stock until it is exhausted.

Scoring

- **Aces:** 6 points each.
- **Kings:** 5 points each.
- **Queens:** 4 points each.
- **Jacks:** 3 points each.
- **Last trick:** The player who wins the final trick earns a bonus of 6 points.

Variations

- **Czech Trappola:** Uses slightly different point values and allows declarations of card combinations before play.
- **Austrian Trappola:** Features a bidding phase where players can exchange cards with the stock.

Tips and Strategies

- Hold your high trumps for the later stages when the stock is depleted and opponents must follow suit.
- Keep track of which high-value cards have been played to make informed decisions about when to press your advantage.

Tips & Strategy

Save your strongest trumps for the endgame when following suit becomes mandatory. Tracking which aces and kings have fallen helps you time your big plays effectively.

The transition from the drawing phase to the closed game is critical. Build a strong hand while the stock lasts, then dominate the endgame when suit-following is enforced.