

Truco

2-6 players

40 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Win 2 of 3 tricks per hand and raise stakes through bluffing challenges.

SETUP

- 2, 4, or 6 players in two teams use a 40-card Spanish deck.
- Deal 3 cards to each player.
- Cards follow a fixed ranking (Ace of Swords and Ace of Clubs are highest).

SCORING

- Normal hand: 1 point; Truco: 2; Retruco: 3; Vale Cuatro: 4.
- Envigo side bets add additional points.
- First team to 30 points wins.

Tip: Bluff Truco with weak hands to steal points, but read the table to avoid getting counter-challenged.

ON YOUR TURN

- Each player plays one card per trick; highest-ranked card wins.
- Call Truco to raise stakes from 1 to 2 points.
- Opponents can accept, fold, or counter with Retruco (3) or Vale Cuatro (4).
- Envigo is a side bet on same-suit card combinations.

Truco is a wildly popular trick-taking and bluffing game played across South America, particularly in Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. Known for its lively atmosphere, theatrical bluffing, and vocal table talk, it transforms card play into a spirited social performance.

Objective

Win two out of three tricks in each hand. Teams earn points for winning hands, with the stakes escalating through a challenge and counter-challenge system called Truco, Retruco, and Vale Cuatro.

Setup

1. **Players:** 2, 4, or 6 players (always in two teams).
2. **Deck:** A 40-card Spanish deck.
3. **Deal:** Each player receives 3 cards.
4. **Card hierarchy:** Cards follow a fixed ranking that does not correspond to numerical value. The Ace of Swords and Ace of Clubs are the highest cards.

Gameplay

1. **Playing tricks:** Each player plays one card per trick. The highest-ranked card wins the trick.
2. **Winning the hand:** Win two of the three tricks to win the hand and score points.
3. **Calling Truco:** At any point during play, a player can call 'Truco' to raise the stakes from 1 to 2 points.
4. **Counter-challenges:** The opposing team can accept, fold, or counter with 'Retruco' (3 points) or 'Vale Cuatro' (4 points).
5. **Envigo:** A side bet on who has the highest point combination from two cards of the same suit.

Scoring

- **Normal hand:** 1 point to the winning team.
- **Truco accepted:** 2 points.
- **Retruco accepted:** 3 points.
- **Vale Cuatro accepted:** 4 points.
- **Game target:** The first team to reach 30 points wins (varies by region).

Variations

- **Argentine Truco:** Features Envigo and Flor as additional betting categories.
- **Brazilian Truco (Truco Paulista):** Uses a different card ranking and includes a communal trump card called the manilha.

Tips and Strategies

- Bluffing is essential. Call Truco with weak hands to steal points, but be prepared for opponents to call your bluff.
- Coordinate with your partner through table talk and body language. The social element is as important as card play.

Tips & Strategy

Master the art of the bluff. Calling Truco with a mediocre hand forces opponents into tough decisions. But also know when to fold—overbluffing against experienced players is costly.

The Truco challenge system is a game within a game. Knowing when to challenge, when to accept, and when to fold based on your cards and read of opponents separates champions from novices.