

Vira

3-4 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Hard

Duration: Long

Win the bidding auction and take enough tricks to fulfill your contract.

SETUP

- Use a 52-card deck (or 36-card) for 3 players.
- Deal cards evenly with a small kitty set aside.

SCORING

- Made contract earns points proportional to bid difficulty.
- Failed contract loses points; defenders gain a bonus.
- Winning all tricks (Vira) carries a substantial bonus.

Tip: Use the kitty exchange to create a void in your weakest suit for trumping opportunities.

ON YOUR TURN

- Bid how many tricks you will take and which suit is trump.
- Winning bidder picks up the kitty and discards equal cards.
- Follow suit if possible; highest trump or led suit wins the trick.
- Two defenders cooperate against the declarer.

Vira is a classic Swedish trick-taking card game with an elaborate bidding system. Players compete to win the contract and then attempt to fulfill their bid by taking the required number of tricks, making it one of the more sophisticated traditional Scandinavian card games.

Objective

Win the bidding auction and then take enough tricks to fulfill your contract. Defenders aim to prevent the declarer from succeeding.

Setup

1. **Players:** 3 players (with variations for 4).
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck, sometimes reduced to 36 cards by removing low ranks.
3. **Deal:** Deal cards evenly to all players, with a small kitty of extra cards set aside for the winning bidder.

Gameplay

1. **Bidding:** Players bid in ascending order, declaring how many tricks they intend to take and which suit will be trump. Higher bids outrank lower ones.
2. **Kitty exchange:** The winning bidder picks up the kitty, adds those cards to their hand, and discards an equal number of unwanted cards.
3. **Trick play:** The declarer leads the first trick. Players must follow suit if possible. The highest trump wins, or the highest card of the led suit if no trump is played.
4. **Defense:** The two defenders work together to prevent the declarer from reaching their bid.

Scoring

- **Made contract:** The declarer earns points proportional to the difficulty of their bid.
- **Failed contract:** The declarer loses points, and defenders gain a smaller bonus.
- **Bonus bids:** Certain high-level bids like Vira (winning all tricks) carry substantial bonus rewards.

Variations

- **Plansen:** A simplified bidding structure for casual play.
- **Four-player Vira:** Adds a fourth player who partners with the declarer or defends, depending on the bid level.

Tips and Strategies

- Bid conservatively until you are confident in your hand's strength, especially regarding trump length.
- As a defender, communicate through your card play to help your partner identify your strong suits.
- Use the kitty exchange wisely to shore up weak suits and create voids for trumping opportunities.

Tips & Strategy

Evaluate your trump suit length and side-suit controls before bidding. The kitty exchange can transform a marginal hand into a winning one, so factor in its potential.

Void creation through the kitty exchange is the most powerful tool available to the declarer. Prioritize creating a void in your weakest suit to maximize trumping opportunities.