

The Curiosity Guild presents: How to Play Euchre

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History: It is believed that what we now know as Euchre evolved from a game called “Jucker” from the French Revolution circa 1789. In the early 1800s, Euchre found its way to the United States and was popular amongst the Pennsylvania Dutch. The game is now played primarily in the northeastern states.

Rules for a 4-Hand Game: Prepare 2 decks of cards, using only 9's and higher. The second deck is shuffled and set aside after each trick, thus saving the dealer time between tricks. Your partner is the person facing you across the table.

The Deal: Each player receives 5 cards, dealt in batches of 3-2 or 2-3. The last card is dealt face up on the table. This card is called the turn-up and is used to determine the trump suit. Card values are as follows from highest to lowest: right bower, left bower, A, K, Q, J (unless trump suit), 10, 9, etc....

Making: Players (beginning with the person to the left of the dealer) now have the opportunity to accept the turn-up or pass. Whoever accepts the turn-up becomes the maker. If all 4 players pass, the turn-up is discarded. Then each player has a second chance to pass or name a trump suit of their choosing. At this point the maker has the right to say, “I play alone” and their partner must put down their hand and stay out of play. Either opponent of a lone maker may say, “I defend alone” and their partner must stay out of the game.

The Play: If the turn-up is accepted, the dealer has the right to use it in their hand, discarding any other card. The turn-up is left face up on the table until played. The opening lead is made by the player at the left of the dealer, who can play any card in their hand. The hands are played out in 5 tricks. Players must follow suit if they can. If they can't follow suit, they can play any card. A trick is won by the highest trump played. If there are no trumps played the highest card in the suit that opened the trick wins. The winner of the trick starts the following trick.

Scoring: Only the team that wins 3 or more tricks scores. Winning all 5 tricks is called a march. When the making team fails to win the majority of tricks they have been euchred, in which case the opposing team earns 2 points. The making side scores 1 point for winning 3 or 4 tricks, 2 points for a march. A maker playing alone scores 1 point for 3 or 4 tricks or 4 points for a march. The first side to reach 10 points wins a game.

3-Hand (Cutthroat) Euchre: The trump maker plays alone against the other two players who become temporary partners for that trick. The maker scores 1 point for winning 3 or 4 tricks, or 3 points for a march. If he is euchred, each opponent scores 2 points.

Call Ace Euchre (5+ players): A cutthroat form of euchre in which each player plays for his or her self. After the trump is determined, the maker calls any suit (trump or otherwise) and the holder of the best card dealt in that suit becomes the maker's partner. The maker doesn't know who their partner is, and it's possible that the partner doesn't know either, unless they hold the Ace of the suit that was called. The identity of the maker's partner is not revealed until the fall of the cards in play makes it obvious. The maker may unexpectedly play alone if they turn out to be the person with the highest card. When the maker proves to have a partner, scoring is as in normal Euchre. When the maker plays alone they win from or lose to each of the other players. A march scores 3 points for each member of a team.

Key Words:

Bower—from the German word “Bauer,” meaning Jack.

Right Bower—highest card in the game, beats all other cards and is always the Jack of the trump suit.

Left Bower—second highest card in the game. It is always the Jack of the suit that is the same color as the right bower. (i.e. if the Jack of Hearts is the right bower, then the Jack of Diamonds becomes the left bower.)

Turn-up—last card dealt is placed face up on the table and proposes the trump suit for that deal.

Maker—player who decides the trump suit by either accepting the turn-up or naming the trump in the second round.

Trump Suit—the suit in which a card beats any other card in another suit.

Trick—a round of play. 5 tricks equal 1 hand in Euchre.

March—when a team (or single player) wins all 5 tricks.

Euchred—when the making team fails to win the majority of tricks in a hand they have been “euchred”.

Further Resources:

Website: <http://thehouseofcards.com/euchre>

Literature: According to Hoyle, by Richard L. Frey and Edmond Hoyle