



# BURRACO

## How to Play Burraco

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Burraco is a card game that originated in Uruguay in the last century. Today it is played internationally and is especially popular in Italy, where tournaments and clubs are dedicated to it. Burraco is very similar to Canasta, to the point that it is often considered a variant. Like Canasta, it belongs to the Rummy family. It can be played by two players or four players in teams of two. There is also a three-player variant, played "two against one."

## The Cards

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Burraco is played with a Rummy deck, consisting of 108 cards (two standard French decks, including the four Jokers).

## Objective of the Game

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The goal of Burraco is to score as many points as possible by laying down valid combinations of cards on the table.

## Dealing

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The dealer is chosen randomly (for example, by drawing high card) and rotates clockwise after each deal.

Each player receives 11 cards, dealt face down one at a time.

After the deal, the dealer makes two additional piles of 11 cards each from the bottom of the deck. These are called *pozzetti* ("little piles"). Their contents are hidden for now; they will later be taken by players who run out of cards.

Finally, the dealer places one card face up to start the discard pile, and the rest of the deck becomes the stock.

## Wildcards: Pinelle

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In Burraco there are two types of wildcards, collectively called Pinelle:

- Jokers
- Twos (2s)

There are 12 pinelle in total. They can represent any rank and suit the player wishes.

The rest of the cards are called natural cards and are used to build combinations.

Note: If a Two is used in its natural value (e.g., the 2♠ in a run of spades), it no longer counts as a wildcard.

## Gameplay

### Drawing

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On each turn, starting with the player to the right of the dealer, a player must either:

- draw the top card from the stock, OR
- take the entire discard pile.

## Combinations (Melds)

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After drawing, players may lay down valid melds, which are of two types:

- Sets (Groups): Cards of the same rank. Unlike in Rummy, sets in Burraco may contain duplicate suits (e.g., 3♥ + 3♥ + 3♠).
- Runs (Sequences): Cards of the same suit in consecutive order. The Ace can be low (A-2-3) or high (Q-K-A).

Rules for pinelle in melds:

- Only one wildcard per meld is allowed.
- If a wildcard is at the end of a run, it must take the highest value (e.g., 7-8-wildcard = wildcard must count as 9, not 6).

Each team's melds must be kept separate on the table to avoid confusion.

A team cannot have two identical sets; any extra cards must be attached to the existing set.

## Attaching

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Players may add cards to their team's existing melds (not the opponents').

- Wildcards may only be attached to melds that do not already contain one.
- A natural card can replace a wildcard in a run, but the wildcard must then be moved to the end of the run.
- Once placed, wildcards can never be taken back into hand.

## Discarding

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At the end of their turn, a player must discard one card onto the discard pile.

## Picking Up the Pozzetto

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When a player runs out of cards, they immediately (or at the start of their next turn, depending on how they went out) pick up one of the two pozzetti:

- If they played their last card without discarding, they may pick up the pozzetto immediately and continue their turn.
- If they went out by discarding their last card, they must wait until their next turn to use the pozzetto.

## Burraco (the Special Meld)

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A Burraco is a meld of seven or more cards:

- Clean Burraco: All natural cards.
- Dirty Burraco: Contains a wildcard.

Adding more cards does not increase its score, but a clean Burraco becomes dirty if a wildcard is added later.

## Closing the Hand

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The hand ends (called going out) in two possible ways:

1. The stock runs out: once the last card is drawn, the current player finishes their turn and the hand ends.
2. A player discards their last card, but only if:
  - Their team has completed at least one Burraco
  - Someone from their team has already picked up a pozzetto.

If these conditions are not met, the player must pick up a pozzetto (if available) or continue without cards.

## Scoring

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At the end of each hand, points are tallied as follows:

- 100 points for the team that closed (closing bonus).
- 200 points for each clean Burraco.
- 100 points for each dirty Burraco.
- Points for all melded cards on the table.
- Subtract the value of cards left in each player's hand.

Card values:

- Jokers = 30 points
- Twos (wildcards) = 20 points
- Aces = 15 points
- Eights through Kings = 10 points
- Threes through Sevens = 5 points

## Winning the game

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The first team to reach 2000 points wins. Traditionally, the losing team buys pastries for everyone else!

## Three-Player Burraco

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Burraco can also be played with three players.

- The dealer prepares two pozzetti: one with 18 cards and one with 11.
- The first player to run out of cards takes the 18-card pozzetto and plays as a solo player against the other two, who become partners.
- At the end of the hand, the partners record the same team score.