

ULTIMATE EUCHRE

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Ultimate Euchre is a variant of Euchre, a card game that is typically played with two teams of two players each. This variation is designed to use the entire 52 card deck, plus the two jokers (54 cards total). By expanding the number of cards, the gameplay and strategy are expanded as well.

History of Ultimate Euchre

Ultimate (Full-Deck) Euchre was originally created by a group of bored college friends at Anderson University, in Anderson, Indiana. Bored with the limitations of the standard euchre rules, this group figured out how to play with the game with a full standard deck of cards, including both jokers. I was one of the players who helped design and test the rules modifications.

Twenty-plus years later, I've decided to bring this version to the rest of the world. My wife (another one of the original college group) and I have taught this game to several other couples, all of whom have enjoyed this variant. I hope you enjoy it as well. - *Bryan*

Original Variant Design:

- Bryan Donihue
- Adam Peiffer
- John Zofko
- Matt Carpenter

Ultimate Euchre Variant Rules:

Use these variant rules if you already know how to play Euchre. If not, read the reverse, first.

Deck:

- 54 Cards (52 Card deck plus 2 jokers, one of them marked on the face.

Deal:

- Deal 11 Cards to each player:
- Deal 2 cards to each player,
- Deal 1 card to each player,
- Deal 2 cards to each player,
- Repeat sequence until 11 dealt.
- 10 cards left in the *kitty*.

Rank:

- Marked Joker is "High Right Bower"
- Unmarked Joker is "High Left Bower"
- Jack of Trump Suite is "Low Right Bower"
- Jack of Off-Trump is "Low Left Bower"
- Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10 thru 2.

Trump:

- Trump is determined as normal, except:
- If a Joker is revealed, person who calls the card into dealer's hand determines trump suite.

Scoring / Object:

- First team to 35 points wins.
- Call Trump, take 6-10 tricks = 5 points
- Call Trump, take 11 tricks = 7 points
- Euchre (set) opposing team = 7 points
- Player renege = 7 points to opposing team

Special Rules:

- If, after deal, a player has any combination of three "2" or "3" cards, they may call "2's and 3's". They return the three cards face up, and are dealt the bottom three cards from the *kitty* facedown.
- If Trump is NOT called, the dealer MUST call.

NOTE: These rules have been sourced from various websites and compiled as common American rules.

Object of the Game:

The first team to score 10 points is the winner.

Players:

Four players.

- Two teams of two players each
- Partners sit across the table from each other.

The Deck:

24 Cards pulled from a standard poker deck.

- Ace, King, Queen, Jack, Ten, and Nine from each suit (Hearts, Spades, Diamond, Clubs)

Dealing the Hand:

Five cards are dealt facedown to each player, either one-by-one or in a pattern agreed by the players.

- 4 Cards left from the deal (called the "kitty")
- Top card of the kitty is turned faceup ("upcard")

Calling Trump:

Beginning with the player to the dealer's left, and proceeding clockwise, each player has an opportunity to accept the suit of the upcard as "trump" for that hand. If the upcard is accepted by the player, the player will tell the dealer to, "Pick it up." The dealer will then put the card into his hand, and discard another card facedown on top of the kitty..

If the player chooses not to accept that card as trump, they can announce, "Pass." The next player will then have the opportunity to accept the upcard's suit as trump. This continues around the table.

If all four players decline the upcard's suit, the upcard is turned down, and beginning with the player to the dealer's left, each player gets an opportunity to choose which suite will be called trump. NOTE: The suite that was just turned down is not able to be called at this time.

The player who chooses the trump suit is called the "maker". Before play of the hand begins, the maker may announce that he is "Going Alone." In this case, the maker's partner places his hand face down and is out for the hand.

If the trump suit is NOT called, the dealer position shifts one person to the left and the hand is re-dealt.

Card Ranks in Play:

In the trump suit, the jack is the highest card in play, called the "Right Bower." The second highest card is the jack from the same color (black or red) as the trump suit. This is called the "Left Bower." The third highest card is the Ace, followed by the King, and on down to the Nine. It looks like this in the trump suit:

Right (J) > Left (J) > A > K > Q > 10 > 9

Non-trump suits are ranked from Ace down to the Nine, in descending order. NOTE: One suit will ALWAYS be missing its Jack. The card ranks look like this in non-trump suites:

A > K > Q > (J) > 10 > 9

Card Play:

The player to the left of the dealer begins play by playing any card faceup on the table. Each player in turn, moving clockwise around the table, must play a card of the same suit if they have one in their remaining cards. If they do not have a card of that suit, they may play any card, from any suit - this is called "throwing off (suit)."

Once all four players have played a card, the "trick" is complete. The trick is won by the player who played the highest trump card for the trick. If no trump card is played, the trick is won by the player with the highest card in the original suit played.

Scoring:

The "makers" (the team of the player that called the trump suit) must win three of the five tricks of the hand. Taking three, or more, tricks will score points for the team, and failure to take at least three tricks will score points for the opponents. The following points are assigned:

- 1 Point for taking three or four tricks
- 2 Points for taking all five tricks (a "march")
- 1 Point if "Alone" and take three or four tricks
- 4 Points if "Alone" and take all five tricks

If the makers do not take at least three tricks, the opposing team earns 2 Points - called a "Setting."

If any player "throws off" when they have a card of the suit originally played, they "Renege" and immediately forfeit the hand. The opponents of the "renege" gain 2 Points (4 Points if during an Alone attempt).