



Siete y media

Siete y media is a very popular and traditional game. Its origins are totally uncertain, however, it is supposed that this game is based on the bets that consisted of guessing the card that would show after cutting the deck.

- **Object of the game**

To have, with one or more cards, a hand value as close to seven and a half as possible, without going over. The bank plays against each player individually and his hand must improve or equal each player's hand. If there is a tie, the bank wins.

- **The pack**

Siete y media can be played with a Spanish deck of 40 cards.

- **Number of players**

It can be played from two up to eight players, due to the limit fixed by number of cards in the deck (40 cards).

- **Value of cards**

Each face card counts as half point and the rest of the cards their pip values.

- **The play**

Before starting the game, the first player that will be the bank must be established. This first bank can be chosen at random, however, it is usual that one player buys the bank, paying compensation to each one of the players.

After having shuffled and cut the deck, the bank deals one card face down to each player, then one card face up to himself, anticlockwise. Each player can look at his card without playing until his turn arrives.

The player to the bank's right goes first and, after making his bet, must decide whether to "stand", not ask for another card, or "hit", ask for another card in an attempt to get closer to a count of seven and a half. If he stands, the turn passes to the next player to his right. If he asks for another card, before hitting, he may decide whether to show his card or leave it face down.

In the first case, he will receive the next card face down and in the second case, the card will be dealt face up, as each player can remain only one card face down. To cover or discover the cards, the player should take into account that the best strategy is to keep face down the high cards and face up the low ones.

When the player stands or hits, he can make another bet without exceeding the maximum established. After achieving, seven and a half, the bet cannot be increased.

When the player receives the second card, three situations can happen:

1) *The total value of cards exceeds seven points and a half.* In this case, the player loses, returning his cards to be shuffled for the next hand, and the bank collects his bet.

2) *The total value of cards does not reach seven and a half.* In this case, the player can hit for another card or stand.

3) *The total value of cards is seven and a half.* Obviously, the player stands.

When a player stands or exceeds, his turn finishes, passing to the next player to his right. When all the players have played their hands, then, it is the bank's turn.

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The bank plays with all the cards face up. After turning up his first dealt card, he can decide whether to stand or hit. The bank can stand if he have reached seven and a half or if he considers that his cards are good enough to win to all the players. If he prefers to stand, the banks wins to the players with a lower or equal hand and loses with the ones that have a higher hand.

If the banker exceeds the agreed score, he loses and have to pay to all the players that stood. If he reaches seven and a half, he wins to all the players and all of them give their bets to the bank.

The bank pays the same amount as the one bet by all the players that have won, but seven and a half hands, will receive double of their bets.

If in a hand, one or several players achieve seven and a half, but not the bank, the first winner will replace to the bank, becoming the new bank. If no player has reached seven and a half, the bank does not pass to another player unless it is sold or passed by the player who owns it.

• Complementary rules

These rules are not used in the basic game, but they are accepted by most of the players. Anyway, the players should establish an agreement complying with the rules that will be applied.

- *The singing of siete y media.* The first player that reaches seven and a half announces it, forcing to the bank to achieve the same score. This announcement increases the bank's risk of exceeding the target, growing the opportunities for next players.

- *To open himself.* When a player opens himself, he multiplies his possibilities of winning or losing. To open himself, the first two or three cards that the player receives must be of the same rank. Also, before starting the game, this possibility can be agreed by the players with no need that the cards are of the same rank. The number of players in the game will determine the number of times that a player can open himself.

Thus, if there are two or three players, they can open themselves up to three times; if there are four or five players, only once and if there are more, it is better not to allow this possibility.

The mechanics to open himself is simple. The player has the first card of the initial deal, normally a face card. In his turn, the player shows it, bets and requests another card. If he is not dealt a face card, the game continues according to the explained rules, standing or asking for another card. If he receives another face card, he can decide whether to place it with the previous one, playing as it has been explained, or to put it next to the other card, making a different bet on it.

Both cards will be independent, being able to bet on each one of them the agreed maximum. In addition, losing in one of them does not represent to lose automatically in the other one. The cards cannot be interchanged between the two plays. After opening himself, the play continues with the first card. Once the first play is finished, the second card will be played. The player will bet on this second card and will ask for another card. In case of receiving a new face card, if possible, the player will be able to open himself again. If it is not possible, the player will continue playing with the second card, standing or hitting.

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- *The fours.* The fours are very uncomfortable cards, as they are the lowest of the high cards and the highest ones of the low cards. Therefore, a possibility that usually is adopted is to change these cards when they are the first cards that the players receive. This change is not made immediately when the cards are dealt but when the player's turn starts and before betting. The player, in his turn, will turn the card up, returning it to the banker saying "The fours are exchanged". The banker deals to the player the first card of the stock, placing the returned four in the middle of the stock. If the player receives another four, he may change it again, up to four times.

- *To shoot.* To make this play, it is necessary that the card of the first deal is a seven. It is a very dangerous play, as if the player stands, he has many possibilities of winning and if he asks for another card, it is easy to exceed the score.

The player, in his turn, turns up his seven and says "I shoot it". The banker will place the first card of the stock face down under the seven. Above the seven, the player puts his bet. The banker will act as if the player have seven and a half, and, if it is correct, the bank will pay the quadruple of the bet.

- *The betting.* A player bets on his own hand or hands, if the possibility of opening himself exists. The players can also agree the possibility of betting on the other players' hands, although the player who has the turn will take all the decisions concerning the hand.

- *The bank must reach seven and a half.* The players can establish that the bank cannot stand and must reach seven and a half if any player has obtained this score in his turn.

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