



Truco

Truco is widely played in South America. It is derived from the simpler game, *truc* or *truque*, which is played in Spain (Levante and Cataluña) and Southern France. The game has two different phases. In the first phase, the players bet on the best card combination of the different hands (*flor* and *envido*) and in second, on the tricks played with those hands (*truco*).

- **Object of the game**

A game is won by the first team whose score reaches 30 points or more, which will usually take several hands. It is usual to play to the best of three games, but it is possible to play a just single game to reach up to 30 points.

- **The pack**

Truco is played with a Spanish deck of 40 cards.

- **Number of players**

Truco is usually played by four players in partnership, but it can also be played by two, three or six.

For two players. One player plays against the other.

For three players or with a cock. In this version, one of the players, called “the cock”, plays against the other two. The cock has the advantage of drawing four cards, in order to choose three, discarding one, without showing it to their opponents.

This version can be played with a cock for all the hands or with a different cock for each hand. In this last case, the cock is the dealer of each hand.

For four players. Four players in partnership, partners sitting opposite.

For six players. The players form groups of three people, seated alternately around the table.

- **Rank and value of cards**

The rank is valid for *truco* and it determines the winner of the trick. The value of cards is important for the bets on *flor* and *envido*.

In *Truco*, there are four special cards, called *brave cards* (“*cartas bravas*”), which are the highest in the pack. These are, from high to low, the ace of swords, the ace of clubs, the seven of swords and the seven of coins.

For the rest, the rank, from high to low, is: three, two, *false aces* (ace of coins and ace of cups), *black cards* (king (12), horse (11) and jack (10)), *false sevens* (seven of cups and seven of clubs), six, five and four.

The value of cards, for *flor* and *envido*, is as follows: the *black cards* score 0 points each and the other cards, their pip values.

- **The deal**

The first dealer is chosen at random and the turn to deal and play passes anticlockwise.

The dealer shuffles the cards and the player to dealer’s left must cut the pack. Then, he will distribute three cards to each player, one at a time, anticlockwise. If one of the cards is dealt face up, the player who receives it can decide whether to remain it or to deal a new hand.

The next player to the dealer’s right is the *leader* and starts the game.

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• The singing

There are three ways of scoring points in *Truco*:

- *Flor*. To sing and bet on *flor*, a hand of three cards of the same suit is necessary. The score for *flor* is the sum of the value of cards plus 20 points.
- *Envido*. All the players can bet on *envido*, a combination of two cards in a suit. The score of the hand is the sum of the value of those two cards plus 20 points. If no player has two cards of the same suit, the score for *envido* is just the value of the highest card.
- *Truco*. The players play the tricks. To win the trick game, a player must take, at least, two tricks. The score depends on the agreed bets.

Bets on *flor* or *envido* are made during the first trick, while bets on *truco* can be made at any time. Logically, the bets are made in the order *flor*, *envido* and *truco*, and each player must respect this order. In practice, they may appear to come out of sequence, because a player who has, for example, no interest in *flor* or *envido* can immediately bet on *truco*. However, if another player wants to bet on *flor* or *envido*, they would have to do so before answering the *truco* bet.

When one of the players bets on *envido*, the others can answer to this bet even if they have played their first cards. When all the players have played his first card, bets on *envido* are not possible.

All betting is done by means of reserved words. Anyone who says one of these words at a time when the corresponding bet is legal is considered to have made that bet.

• Flor

Flor does not occur very frequently, and the rules for betting on *flor* are quite complicated. It also introduces a larger element of luck into the game. Perhaps for these reasons, many players prefer to play without *flor*.

Any player with a *flor* must announce it, in order to avoid a penalty for not doing so, but the players are not allowed to announce a *flor* if they do not have one. These are the only announcements in the game that have to be honest. In the case of *envido* and *truco*, any player can bet irrespective of what cards he holds.

A player with a *flor* must announce it before playing to the first trick, and before making or accepting any other kind of bets. If no one has announced a *flor* before him, or only his partner has done so, he just says "*flor*". A *flor* announcement cancels any *envido* bets that may already have been made, and any betting on *truco* is suspended until *flor* has been dealt with. After announcing *flor*, the player must wait a moment to see whether any subsequent players have a *flor*, as all betting on *flor* must now be completed and settled before anything else can happen.

If more than one person has a *flor*, and all of these are simply announced by saying "*flor*", the team of the person with the best *flor* scores 3 points for each *flor* that was announced.

If two or more players have a *flor* of equal point value, the best is the one that comes earliest in the order of announcements, starting with the leader and going around the table anticlockwise.

The value of a *flor* is the sum of the values of the three cards plus 20 points. Therefore, the best kind of *flor* is five, six and seven of a suit, which has a value of 38 points, and the worst, the one formed by *black cards*, scoring just 20 points.

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When a player announces *flor*, all other players who have *flor* announce it in turn, going anticlockwise around the table, but the players who have already played to the first trick. If a player has already announced *flor* and the opponents also have one, they have four possible replies:

- *Flor*. The opponent announces his *flor*. If nothing further is said, the team with the best *flor* will score 3 points for each *flor* announced like this. It is also possible that the original announcer will continue by saying *Contraflor*, in which case, the opponents have to make one of the three possible answers to this: "Con flor quiero", "Con flor me achico" or "Contraflor al resto", as explained below.
- *Con flor me achico*. The opponent announces that he has a *flor*, but he concedes that his opponents will win *flor* and he reduces the value of *flor* his team belongs to one point. In this case, the betting on *flor* is closed and the opponents will automatically score 3 points for each *flor* they hold, plus one for their announcement.
- *Contraflor*. The player announces his own *flor*, scoring 3 points so far, and challenge the opponents to speak again. When *contraflor* is announced, the team with the best *flor* scores 6 points (or 9 with three teams) for each *flor* that was announced.
- *Contraflor al resto*. The player announces his own *flor* and proposes to raise the bet to the amount needed by the team with the highest score to win the game plus 3 for each *flor*.

When *contraflor* has been announced, the opponents have three possible replies: *con flor quiero*, confirming that *flor* will be worth 3 points each; *con flor me achico*, admitting defeat and reducing his score for all their *flor* to one point; and *contraflor al resto*, proposing to raise the bet to the amount needed by the team with the highest score to win the game plus 3 for each *flor*.

When *contraflor al resto* has been said, the other team has only two possible replies: *con flor me achico*, admitting defeat and allowing the other team to score all their own *flor* plus one point, and *con flor quiero*, accepting the bet. If the leading team has the best *flor*, they win the whole game. If the other team wins *flor*, they score the number of points the leading team needed to finish the game plus 3 points for each *flor* in play.

If both teams have announced *flor* and neither has said *con flor me achico*, then when the betting on *flor* is over, the players announce the point value of all their *flor* in turn, starting with the leader or the first player, in anticlockwise order from the leader, who has a *flor*, and continuing around the table to the dealer. If when it comes to a player's turn, someone has already announced a better *flor* than his, he can simply say "They are good", admitting that his *flor* is not the best one. The player with the winning *flor* should show the cards at the end of the hand, to show that it was genuine and allow the points to be scored. Only players who actually hold a *flor* can take part in the betting on *flor*.

To request flor. At the end of the game, any player who suspects another player had a *flor*, which they did not announce it, can challenge, saying "I request *flor*". If the challenged player had a *flor*, the challenging team scores 3 points for it. If the challenged player can show two cards of different suits, proving that the hand was not a *flor*, the challenged player's team scores 1 point. A player could challenge both opponents in this way, scoring separately for each challenge.

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• Envido

Any player may bet or answer a bet on *envido*, and all bets and answers are made on behalf of the partnership. A player cannot make the first bet on *envido* after he has played his first card or after he has bet or accepted a bet on *truco*. If an opponent has already bet on *truco* before another player says "envido", that player can still reply to his *envido* bet. After the *envido* betting is over, the player or his partner should reply to *truco*.

For *envido*, a player has two cards of the same suit, the value of his hand is their sum plus 20. If his cards are all of different suits, his hand is simply worth the value of the highest card in it. Thus, the highest *envido* is worth 33 (7 and 6 of the same suit), and the lowest is worth zero (*black cards* in three different suits).

If any player has three cards of the same suit, he should normally have announced *flor*, and if *flor* is announced, no betting or score for *envido* is possible. If the player is playing the game without *flor*, then he can take part in *envido* using the best two cards of his hand. If nobody bets on *envido*, there is no score for it.

To bet on *envido*, it can be said:

- *Envido*: *envido* is worth two points.
- *Royal envido* (Real envido): it is worth three points.
- *Envido the rest* (Falta envido): *envido* is worth the number of points that the leading team needs to win the game.

If a team bets *envido*, the other team has five possible answers:

- *I want* (*Quiero*). Accepting the bet (*envido* will be worth two or three as proposed) and closing the *envido* betting.
- *Envido*. Accepting the bet and proposing to raise by a further 2 points.
- *Royal envido*. Accepting the bet and proposing to raise it by a further 3 points.
- *Envido the rest* (*Falta envido*). Accepting the bet and proposing to raise it to the number of points the leading team needs to win the game.
- *I do not want* (*No quiero*). Rejecting the last bet and closing the *envido* betting. The team which bets automatically scores one point, if it was the first bet, or the amount of the bet they accepted, if there have been two or more bets.

If a team bets *royal envido*, the same answers are possible, except that a bet of *royal envido* cannot be answered by a lower bet as *envido*.

If a bet on *envido* or *royal envido* is answered by another bet on *envido* or *royal envido*, this new bet needs to be answered again in one of the above ways. There can be several raises on one deal and they can be any number of *envido* bets followed by any number of *royal envido* bets. As soon as either team says "I want" or "I do not want", no further bets on *envido* are possible. If the betting ends in *I want*, the players announce the value of their *envido* and the team with the best *envido* wins the accepted amount. If the betting ends by a team saying "I do not want", the other team automatically wins the amount of the previously accepted bet or one point if there was only one bet, irrespective of who actually had the best *envido*.

Envido the rest is the highest possible bet. It cannot be raised. The only possible answers are "I want" or "I do not want".

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When a bet on *envido* has been accepted, the players, in turn, announce the value of their *envido*. The leader speaks first, followed by the other players in anticlockwise rotation. If an earlier player has already announced a higher valued *envido* than another player's one, he does not have to announce his value and he can simply say "They are good", admitting that his *envido* is not the best. If one player's partner's *envido* is the highest so far, he does not need to announce his unless and until an opponent announces a higher one.

A player should not announce the value of his *envido* unless he must, as doing so, gives away some information which could be useful to his opponents when betting or playing *truco*.

The winning *envido* is the one with the highest point total. If there is a tie, the one earlier in anticlockwise order around the table from the leader to the dealer has priority. The cards that constitute the winning *envido* should be shown to the other team at the end of the play to allow the points to be scored.

• Truco

Truco is the trick game and it is played after *flor* and *envido* bets. The leader leads to the first trick, and the other players in turn play a card. There is no restriction on what cards can be played. The highest card played wins the trick. The played cards are not gathered together, but remain face up in front of the players. The winner of the first trick leads to the second, which is played in the same way, and the winner of the second leads to the third and last.

It can easily happen that there is no a single higher card played to a trick, but two or more equally high cards. If the highest cards are all played by the same team, that team wins the trick, and whoever played the first of them leads to the next trick. If opposing teams plays the highest cards, then the trick is a tie ("Parda") and belongs to neither side. In the case of a tie, the player who led to the previous trick leads again.

If there is no betting on *truco*, it is worth one point. The side that takes the majority of the tricks (two out of three) wins this point. If a trick is tied, *truco* is won by whichever team takes the earlier of the other two tricks. If two tricks are tied, the winners of the only untied trick win *truco*. If all three tricks are tied, the team of the leader, that is, the non-dealing team, wins *truco*. If just one of the first two tricks is tied, the third trick does not need to be played.

- *Truco*. At any time, any player can propose to raise the value of *truco* to two points by saying "Truco". Either member of the other team can answer on behalf of the team. The possible answers to this are "I want", accepting that *truco* is worth two points, or "I do not want", and admitting defeat. If the answer is *I do not want*, play ends and the side that said "truco" scores one point for it.

- *Retruco*. The team that answered "I want" to a bet on *truco* can immediately, or at any later time, say "Retruco", proposing to raise the stake to 3. Their opponents can answer "I want", accepting that *truco* is worth 3, or "I do not want", in which case play finishes and the team which said "retruco" scores 2.

- *It's worth four (Vale Cuatro)*. The team which answered "I want" to a bet on *retruco* can immediately, or at any later time, say "It's worth four", proposing to raise the stake to 4. Their opponents can answer "I want", accepting that, or "I do not want", in which case play finishes and the team which said "It's worth four" scores 3. *It's worth four* is the highest possible bet on *truco*. Once it has been accepted, nothing more can be said. The cards are played out and the side, which wins *truco*, scores 4 points.

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- *Played card*. It is the card placed on the table face up. Once this card is played it cannot be taken back.
- *Go to the deck*. It means to throw the cards face down on the table without participating in the hand. If in one team, only one of the members *goes to the deck*, the other one will have to play against the opponents with his cards. If both players of a team *go to the deck* and *truco* has not been sung, the other team scores 1 point.

• The play

The player to the dealer's right is the *leader* and has some preferences in the game. The last player of each partnership to play, that is the dealer and the player to dealer's left is called the *foot*. Usually, the foot will act as the captain of the partnership, deciding whether to bet and what to play according to the received signs from his partner.

When the cards are dealt, each player sees if he has *flor* or *envido*, announcing them to his partner by the signs explained below. Each player is dealt three cards, which are played out in tricks, and points are also scored for holding combinations of cards in the same suit.

The leader starts the game betting on *flor*, if possible, on *envido* or playing one of his cards for *truco*. Regardless what leader decides, each player, in his turn, has those three options until one card is played, starting *truco*.

When *truco* is finished, the players score the hand. During a hand, it is said that a team *goes fishing* if they prefer to wait until the opponents bet or start *truco*, in order to answer them.

• The scoring

A game is won by the first team whose score reaches 30 points or more, which will usually take several hands. It is usual to play to the best of three games, but it is possible to play to just a single game of 30 points.

Within each hand, the first 15 points are called *malas* (bad ones) and the next 15 are called *buenas* (good ones). Thus a team which has 12 points has "12 malas", and a team with 18 points has "3 buenas".

At the end of each hand, one member of each team will write down the score achieved by his partnership.

On each hand, *flor* or *envido* is scored before *truco*, so if winning *flor* or *envido* takes a team to 15 *buenas* or beyond, the team automatically wins the game, and *truco* is no longer relevant.

• The signs

The players must take care of the expressions they say, not using reserved ones as *I want* or *I do not want*, since they will be interpreted as bets.

In *envido*, the bets must be closed with expressions as *I want* or *I do not want*, but if another bet is done, the player is supposed to accept the previous ones. In *flor* and *truco*, the conditions are different. A bet on *flor* is answered with another bet on *flor* or by saying "It is good", if the player has nothing. In *truco*, no other bet can be done until the previous one is accepted by saying "I want".

When a double bet is set, if it is accepted or rejected in its totality, the player will say "I want" or "I do not want". If only one part of the bet is accepted, the player must specify which part of the bet is accepted and rejected.

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In addition, a player is allowed to signal to his partner the cards that he holds. The players are allowed to develop their own code, but this is a widely used set:

- Ace of swords: to raise eyebrows.
- Ace of clubs: to close one eye.
- 7 of swords or 7 of coins: to move the mouth to one side.
- Any 3: to bite the lower lip.
- Any 2: to make a kiss.
- Ace of coins or ace of cups: to open the mouth.
- Bad cards: to close both eyes.
- Good cards for *envido*: to move the head to one side.

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