



How To Play



Canasta

The Great South American Rummy Card Game

In 1950, after sweeping north from South America, Canasta became the biggest card game craze ever. "Canasta" means basket in Spanish and the game was named for the little wicker basket that the first players used to hold their cards. This 50th Anniversary Edition features custom cards that not only celebrate the basket imagery of the original game, they also make the game easier to learn and more fun to play!

Read This First...

Rules for 4 Players:

Four players are teamed in partnerships. Partners sit opposite each other. The rules are only slightly different when 2, 3, 5 or 6 play. You'll find these variations following the main rules.

How To Win:

Score points by laying down and adding to sets of cards of equal rank. 5,000 points wins and it usually takes a few hands to do so.

How To Play:

You are dealt a hand of 11 cards before each round of play. On each turn, you first draw a new card or—if you can—take the entire Prize pile (the discards). You place, face up on the table (meld from your hand), sets of cards to score points. Sets are three or more cards of the same rank, such as four Kings, six Fives or three Sevens. Sequences, like 5-6-7, are NOT permitted in Canasta. You may add to your sets during play. This is important because you'll need at least one set of seven or more cards (called a Canasta) in order to go out. Wild cards can be substituted for cards you need in a meld and they can also be used to freeze the Prize pile (very important!). Bonus cards and Stop cards have special purposes. To end your turn, you always discard one card to the Prize pile. You end the hand (go out) by playing your last card. Your team will score points for each card melded and may also be entitled to bonuses (or penalties!). On a single winning hand, your team might score less than five hundred points, but your team could score in the thousands!

The Cards:

There are 108 cards in play. Be sure to remove both Scoring cards and both Caliente cards. The Caliente cards are added to the deck when playing the Caliente variation (described at the conclusion of the rules).

- **Natural cards:** There are 88 natural cards (eight of each rank: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace).
- **Wild cards:** There are 12 wild cards—eight "little" and four

"big." The only difference between the little and big wild cards is their scoring value. A wild card can take the place of a natural card in any set, but a set must always have more natural cards than wild cards. For example, this means you may have only one wild card in a set of three cards. Once melded, a wild card cannot be moved to a different set. Wild cards can never be melded in a set of their own. As noted above, wild cards freeze the Prize pile when they're discarded.



Natural cards Wild cards Bonus & Stop cards

- **Bonus cards** and **Stop cards** (4 of each) cannot be melded in the usual way. Bonus cards are placed face up on the table immediately upon being drawn. Stop cards are discarded to prevent the next player from taking the Prize pile. They can only be melded as a set when going out (see **Going Out**).
- **Scoring cards** are handy to refer to when totaling scores.

Card Melds:

- **Natural Meld:** a set of 3 or more natural cards of the same rank.
- **Mixed Meld:** a set that includes wild cards. No set may contain more wild cards than natural cards.
- **Canasta:** a set of seven or more cards. At least one Canasta is required before your team can go out.
- **Natural Canasta:** a Canasta which does not contain any wild cards.
- **Mixed Canasta:** a Canasta which contains at least one wild card. A mixed Canasta may not contain more than three wild cards. A mixed Canasta scores fewer bonus points than a natural Canasta.



a Mixed Canasta of 5's

Combine into one set all cards of the same rank that either you or your partner melds. One partner keeps all of the partnership's melds.

Card Values:

Each card's scoring value ("valor") is found under its picture.

First Meld Requirement:

The first meld laid down by either member of a partnership must be worth at least a certain number of points. This depends on your team's score at the beginning of the hand:

Current score:	Minimum first meld:
0 to 1495 points (start of game)	50 points
1500 to 2995 points	90 points
3000 or more points	120 points
negative points (rare)	any 3 card set

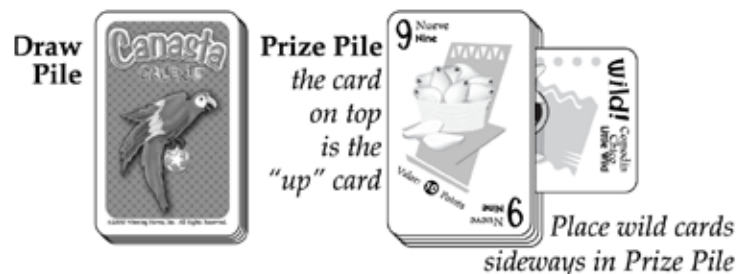
Note: Bonus cards do not count towards your initial meld requirement.

Start To Play. Read As You Go...

The Deal:

Chose a dealer at random. After each hand, the deal passes to the player on the left. The dealer shuffles the cards thoroughly, offers a cut, and then deals each player 11 cards. Players hold their cards in hand. Bonus cards must be played immediately and replacement cards drawn (see **Playing Bonus Cards**).

Place the remaining deck face down to form the **Draw pile**. Turn over the top card of the Draw Pile and place it face up next to the Draw pile. This card, called the **up card**, is the start of the **Prize pile**. If the up card happens to be a wild card or a Bonus card, turn it sideways (to indicate the Prize pile is frozen), then turn over the next card of the Draw pile and place it on top of the Prize pile (until a natural card tops the Prize pile).



The Play:

The player to the left of the dealer plays first. Then, play passes to the left. Play continues until one player plays the last card in hand and goes out. Play is as easy as 1-2-3:

1. To begin your turn, **draw** the top card from the Draw pile or **take** the entire Prize pile (see **Taking The Prize Pile**).
2. Next, you may **meld** cards (required if you took the Prize pile).



a natural meld of 7's a mixed meld of 10's

First Meld Example
You need 50 points to make your first meld requirement on your first hand. You meld these two sets, worth a total of 55 points, to "get into the game."

3. To end your turn, **discard** one card face-up onto the Prize pile.

Drawing Cards:

After drawing the top card from the Draw pile, if you are able—and you want to—you may meld cards from your hand, forming new sets or adding one or more cards to your team's existing sets. If your team has not yet melded, your first meld must meet the "first meld requirement" (see **First Meld Requirement**).

Taking The Prize Pile...

If you wish to take the Prize pile, you can only do so by using the top card on the Prize pile (the up card) to make a meld. Having done so, you must then take the entire Prize pile (making more melds likely). This is an exciting feature of Canasta; you'll want to take the Prize pile often if you can. Taking the Prize pile is easiest when the pile is not frozen. It's tougher when the Prize pile is frozen and before your partnership has made its first meld.

Taking The Prize Pile...

...Before Your Partnership Makes It's First Meld:

You may take the up card* ONLY if:

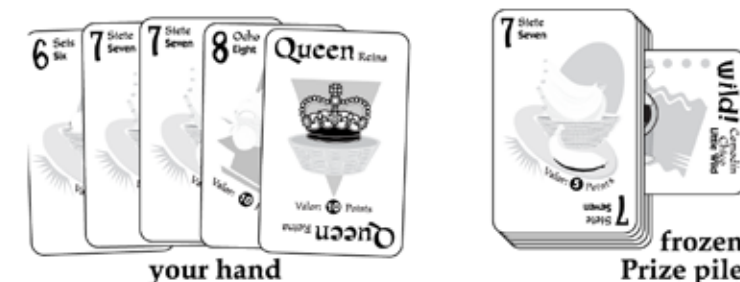
- you use it in a meld of 3 cards by combining it with two Thenatural cards of its rank from your hand, and...
 - you meld enough other cards to meet the first meld requirement.
- *Remember: You cannot use other cards in the Prize pile towards your first meld requirement.

Taking The Prize Pile...

...After Your Partnership Makes Its First Meld:

1. If the **Prize Pile** is not frozen you may take the up card if:
 - you can use it in a new meld of 3 cards by combining it with two cards of its rank from your hand (one can be a wild), or...
 - you add it to your partnership's **existing** meld of the same rank.
2. If the **Prize pile** is frozen you may take the up card only if you use it in a new meld of 3 cards by combining it with two natural cards from your hand. (Wild cards cannot be used to form a new meld with the up card when the pile is frozen, nor may you add the up card to an existing meld like you can when the pile is not frozen.)

Example: Taking the Up Card from a Frozen Prize Pile



It's your turn and the Prize Pile is frozen. The up card is a 7. You have several cards in hand, including two 7's. You take the up card, combine it with the two 7's from your hand, and meld a set of 7's. Then you claim the entire Prize pile!

Discarding To End Your Turn:

End your turn by discarding one card from your hand onto the Prize pile.

- Nothing special occurs when you discard a natural card (which you'll typically do).
- Discarding a Stop card prevents the next player from taking the Prize pile.
- Discarding a wild card freezes the entire Prize pile. To show that the pile is frozen, remember to place discarded wild cards at right angles in the pile, so they will be visible after subsequent discards.

Tip: Freezing the Prize pile limits any player's ability to take the pile. This is an important strategy in this fascinating game.

Playing Bonus Cards:

If you draw a Bonus card, place it face-up near your team's melds, and immediately draw a replacement card. If you forget to play a Bonus card, you may do so on a subsequent turn and draw a replacement card at that time. If you forget to play a Bonus card when the hand ends, you are penalized 100 points for each Bonus card in hand.

- You may never discard a Bonus card. The only way a Bonus card can get into the Prize pile is if it was turned up at the

Playing Bonus Cards, continued...

beginning of the hand.

- If you take the initial Prize pile and it contains a Bonus card, play it immediately. Do *not* draw a replacement card.
- Bonus cards do not count towards your initial meld requirement.

Playing Stop Cards:

- Discarding a Stop card prevents the next player from taking the Prize pile. (They are *not* turned sideways in the pile.)
- You cannot meld Stop cards except when going out, and then you must meld three or four of them. Wild cards cannot be added to a meld of Stop cards. (If you have just one or two Stop cards, you'll need to discard them on separate turns before going out.)

Going Out—End The Hand:

Once your team has at least one Canasta, either you or your partner may go out (end the hand) by melding the remaining cards in hand or by melding all but one and discarding your last card. If your team does not have a Canasta, you must keep one card in hand after you discard. You may not go out.

Tip: It may not be an advantage to go out just because you can. You may be able to score more points by keeping the game going, or avoid big penalties should your partner still have many cards left in hand.

- Before melding, you may ask your partner "May I go out?" Your partner must answer yes or no, and the answer is binding. If the answer is no, you can't go out. If yes, you may.
- If you don't choose to ask, you may go out at will.
Tip: It's a good idea to ask if you think your partner may be holding many high value cards (which will reduce your score).
- The hand ends *immediately* after a player goes out. Points are then totaled.

What Happens if the Prize Pile Is Exhausted?

If you do not go out after drawing the last card in the Draw pile, play continues as long as each successive up card is properly taken. The hand ends the moment a player goes out or "passes." You may pass if you can't claim the up card or if you choose not to—unless you are "forced" to take it. You are forced to take the up card if the pile is not frozen and you can add the up card to your team's meld. Neither team scores the 100 point going-out bonus when the hand ends on a "pass." *Note: If you draw a Bonus card as the last card of the Draw pile, play it as usual. The hand ends; no further melds or discards are allowed.*

Scoring:

Your partnership's points are now totaled:

1. First, add the point values of all cards melded and subtract the value of cards left in the hands of your partner and yourself. (Point values are found on the cards themselves.)
2. Next, add any special bonuses that apply:
 - 100 points if your team was the one to go out first.
 - 100 extra points for going out "concealed" - that is, either you or your partner melded his/her entire hand in one turn, including one Canasta, and had not previously melded or added any cards to partner's melds. *This rarely happens.*
 - 500 points for each natural canasta
 - 300 points for each mixed canasta
 - 100 points for each Bonus card, but only if your team has

made its initial meld.

- 400 extra points if your partnership has played all four Bonus cards and has made its initial meld.
3. **PENALTY:** If your partnership did not make its initial meld, any Bonus card melded counts minus 100 points (a total of minus 800 points if all 4 Bonus cards were melded).

Scoring Example:

You go out after melding three 7's, a mixed set of Jacks (two Jacks and one Big Wild), a natural Canasta of eight 10's, a mixed Canasta of 5's (six 5's and one Little Wild). You have also played a Bonus card to the table. Your partner still has some cards in hand: a 5, an 8, and a King. *Here's your score:*

+ 15 points for the three 7's
+ 20 points for the two Jacks
+ 50 points for the Big Wild
+ 80 points for the eight 10's
+ 30 points for the six 5's
+ 20 points for the Little Wild
+ 100 point bonus for Going Out first
+ 100 point bonus for a Bonus card
+ 300 point bonus for a Mixed Canasta (of 5's)
+ 500 point bonus for a Natural Canasta (of 10's)
= 1215

Now subtract the value of the cards in your partner's hand:

- 5 points for the 5
- 10 points for the 8
- 10 points for the King
= 1190 Total Points

Next Deal:

The new dealer collects all cards and shuffles thoroughly before offering a cut and dealing as usual.

End of the Game:

When at least one team has scored 5,000 or more points at the end of a hand, the game ends. The higher score wins.

Variations...

Prize Pile Always Frozen:

In this variation, the top card in the Prize pile can only be taken if:

- a) you use it to form a set with two natural cards from your hand, or,
- b) you add it to an existing meld of six or fewer cards— but not to a completed Canasta (7 or more cards)!

Here are the only changes to standard Four-Player Canasta when two, three, five or six play:

2 Player Rules:

- a) Deal 15 cards per player on each hand.
- b) Each player plays for him or herself.
- c) When drawing from the Draw Pile, draw two cards. Discard one (as usual) at the end of your turn.
- d) To go out, a player must have at least two Canastas.

3 Player Rules:

- a) Deal 13 cards per player on each hand.
- b) Each player plays for him or herself.

CANASTA CALIENTE™

Exclusive Variation!

The word "caliente" means "hot" in Spanish, and that's just what this exclusive Canasta variation offers: hot game play for any number of players. Enjoy!

1. Add both "Caliente" cards to the deck before the game begins. A Caliente card, when played, enables a player with a depleted hand to rebuild it to exactly 11 cards.
2. If you have a Caliente card in hand, you may play it face up on the table near your melds instead of drawing or taking the up card. However, you can only do so if your team has not melded **more** sets than the opposing team (or either opposing player, if playing a three-player game).
3. Next, draw enough cards to bring your hand up to 11 cards total. If insufficient cards are left in the Draw pile, take them all. If your hand has 11 or more cards, you draw nothing. It doesn't pay to play a Caliente card when your hand is large.
4. You may next meld cards (but may not play a second Caliente card on this turn) and then discard as usual to end your turn.
5. **SCORING:** A Caliente card will score minus 100 points if played. That's the price you pay for drawing more cards. If you are caught with a Caliente card in hand at game's end, you lose double the penalty value of all cards left in your hand. If you're holding both Caliente cards, the loss is tripled! For example, if you hold cards worth 75 points and a Caliente card at game's end, your loss would be 150 points. *Note: if the only card you hold is a Caliente card, your loss is 0!*
6. A Caliente card acts as a "Stop" card if discarded.

Tips: Early in the game, you may confidently meld most of your cards if you hold a Caliente card. Later in the game, try to play a Caliente card if your team is behind and your hand is small. Towards the end of the game, discard a Caliente if you are close to going out, especially if your team is in the lead.

5 Player Rules:

- a) One team will have two players, the other will have three.
- b) One player on the three-player team sits out each hand.
- c) The player sitting out the hand may not advise his teammates but does handle the scoring.

6 Player Rules:

- a) Form two teams of three players each.
- b) Rules are same as 5-Player Canasta except one player from each team sits out each hand.

6 Player Rules—Extra Deck:

- a) You may elect to have two partnerships of three players each, or three partnerships of two players each. Each player is seated between two opponents.
- b) Add a third deck from either a second game or by separate purchase from Winning Moves.
- c) Deal 13 cards per player on each hand.
- d) Play for 10,000 points. When a team reaches 7,500 points, it needs 150 points to make its initial meld on subsequent hands.
- e) There is no extra bonus for having four Bonus cards, but five or six Bonus cards add an extra 600 points.
- f) At least two Canastas are needed to go out.