

Pinochle

The rules on one page

Players

4, in 2 teams of 2

You need

A 48-card pinochle deck, plus paper and a pencil for the score

Goal

When your team wins the bidding, make at least your bid from meld and counters

Game ends

The first team to 1,500 points wins

Setup

1. Use a 48-card pinochle deck. It has two each of the ace, 10, king, queen, jack and 9 in every suit. In each suit the order from high to low is ace, 10, king, queen, jack, 9.
2. Four players form two teams. Partners sit across from each other. Choose the first dealer any way. Dealing, bidding and play go to the left, and so does the deal after each hand.
3. The player on the dealer's right cuts. Starting on the dealer's left, deal all 48 cards, 3 at a time, so each player has 12.

How to play

1. **Bid.** Starting on the dealer's left, each player bids or passes. A bid is the points your team promises to make from meld and counters together. The first bid is at least 250, and each bid must top the last one by 10 or more. Once you pass, you are out. The last player bidding wins.
2. **Name trump and pass cards.** The bidder names any suit as trump. The bidder's partner then chooses exactly 4 cards and passes them face down across the table. The bidder adds them to their hand and passes 4 cards back.
3. **Show your meld.** All four players lay their meld face up. The meld chart lists every set and its points. Each team adds up its meld and writes the total down. Then everyone picks their cards back up for play.
4. **Play 12 tricks.** The bidder leads any card. Going left, each player plays one card. The highest trump wins the trick. With no trump in it, the highest card of the suit led wins. If two identical cards tie, the one played first wins. The winner leads next.
5. **Follow the playing rules.** Follow suit if you can, and beat the card that is winning the trick if you can, even your partner's. With none of the suit led, you must play a trump, higher than any trump already played if possible. With neither, play any card.
6. **Count the counters.** After the last trick, each team counts the aces, 10s and kings in the tricks it won. These counters are worth 10 points each. The team that won the last trick adds 10 more. The two teams' trick points always add up to 250.
7. **Score the hand.** If the bidding team's meld plus counters reach its bid, it scores both. If not, it is set: it scores nothing and loses its bid. The other team scores its counters. It keeps its meld only if it won a counter or the last trick, or its meld is just the 9 of trump.

Scoring

Meld chart

Meld	Cards	Points
Run	Ace, 10, king, queen and jack of trump	150
Run with an extra king or queen	A run plus a second king or a second queen of trump	190
Run with an extra marriage	A run plus a second king and a second queen of trump	230
Double run	Both of each card from the ace to the jack of trump	1,500
Royal marriage	King and queen of trump	40
Marriage	King and queen of another suit	20
Dix	9 of trump	10 each
Pinochle	Queen of spades and jack of diamonds	40
Double pinochle	Both queens of spades and both jacks of diamonds	300
Aces around	One ace of each suit	100
Double aces around	All 8 aces	1,000
Kings around	One king of each suit	80
Double kings around	All 8 kings	800
Queens around	One queen of each suit	60
Double queens around	All 8 queens	600
Jacks around	One jack of each suit	40
Double jacks around	All 8 jacks	400

Points from tricks

Cards won in tricks	Points
Each ace	10
Each 10	10
Each king	10
Each queen, jack or 9	0
Winning the last trick	10
Everything in one hand	250

Scoring a hand

What happened	Bidding team scores	Other team scores
The bidding team's meld plus counters reach its bid	Its meld plus its counters	Its meld plus its counters, if it won a counter or the last trick
The bidding team falls short of its bid	Minus its bid. Its meld and counters do not count.	Its meld plus its counters, if it won a counter or the last trick
The bidder throws in the hand before play	Minus its bid	Its meld

The first team to reach 1,500 points wins. If both teams pass 1,500 in the same hand, the bidding team wins.

