Alpine Tricks

Detailed Game Manual for
“Alpine Tricks”



2 Players



Ages 12+



20 to 30 Minutes

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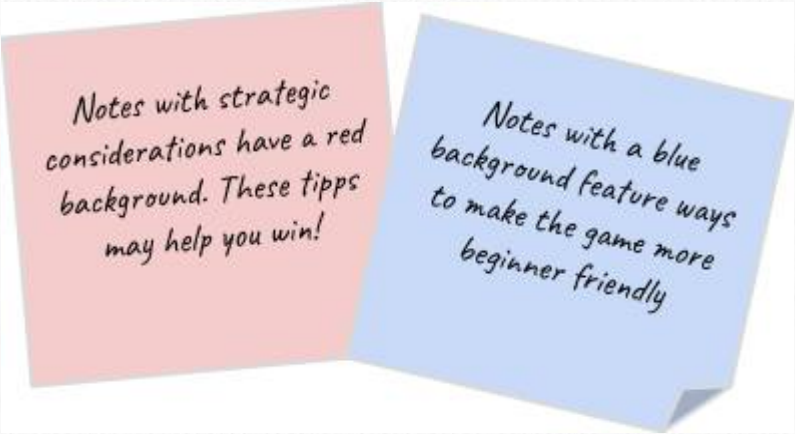
Don't shuffle!

If you bought "Alpine Tricks: Extended", your deck is pre-arranged out of the box – jump right in and follow the play along at www.elsteinergames.com/rules

What you need to start:

- Pen and paper to keep track of the score
- 2 players and 20 to 30 Minutes
- 1 Deck of either "Alpine Tricks" or "Alpine Tricks: Extended"

How to read this manual:



Getting Started: A Quick Overview

1) Both players are dealt 5 cards each, and one card is revealed next to the draw pile. This indicates which suits have the advantage this hand.

2) If starting a trick, a player may...
    a) present a chain, with or without advantage
    b) block the pile
    c) exchange a **No.2**

    ..then, the trick starts.

3) As long as the pile is neither blocked nor empty, there is no obligation to match the color or win the trick.

4) Both players draw a card. The trick's winner draws first and starts the next trick.

5) The hand ends if a player declares 66 points or there are no more cards to play.



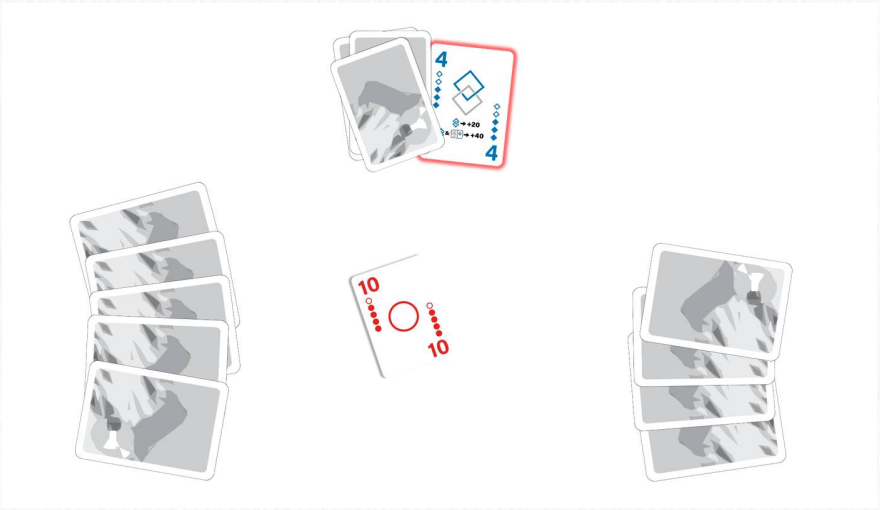
The Basics of Taking Tricks

Both “Alpine Tricks” and “Alpine Tricks: Extended” are trick-taking games: In each turn (a ‘trick’) both players play one card, the highest-ranking card wins, earning the winning player card points equal to the value of the captured cards, and the winner starts the next trick.



At the start of a hand, the dealer gives each player five cards and reveals a single card, placing it next to the pile to indicate which suit has the advantage.

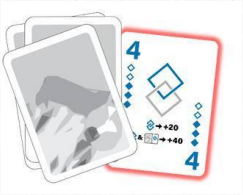
After a player starts the trick by placing a card in the middle of the table, the opponent has two ways to win the trick: either play a card of the same suit (matching shape and color, such as a red circle or blue diamond) with a higher value or play an advantage card—anything else, and they lose the trick.

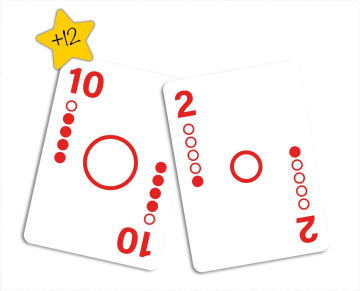


Here's an example of how the table might look at the start of the first trick!

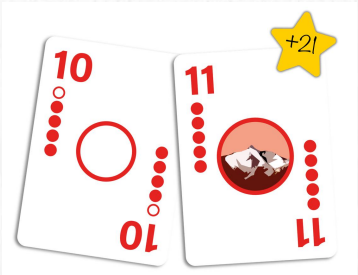
Example Tricks

For these examples, the left card was played first and the color blue has the advantage.

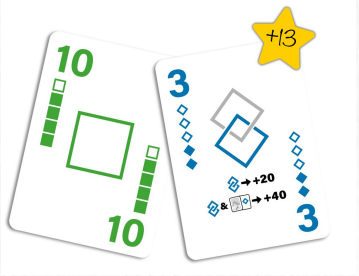




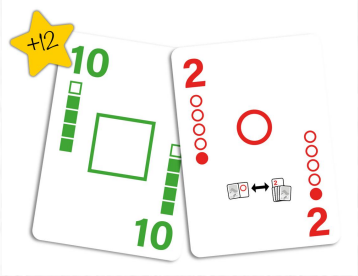
Both cards share a color, so the higher number wins.
12 points for the left player!



This time, the second player wins the trick, earning 21 points by playing a stronger card.



Blue has the advantage, so the **No.3** wins this trick regardless of strength, capturing 13 points.

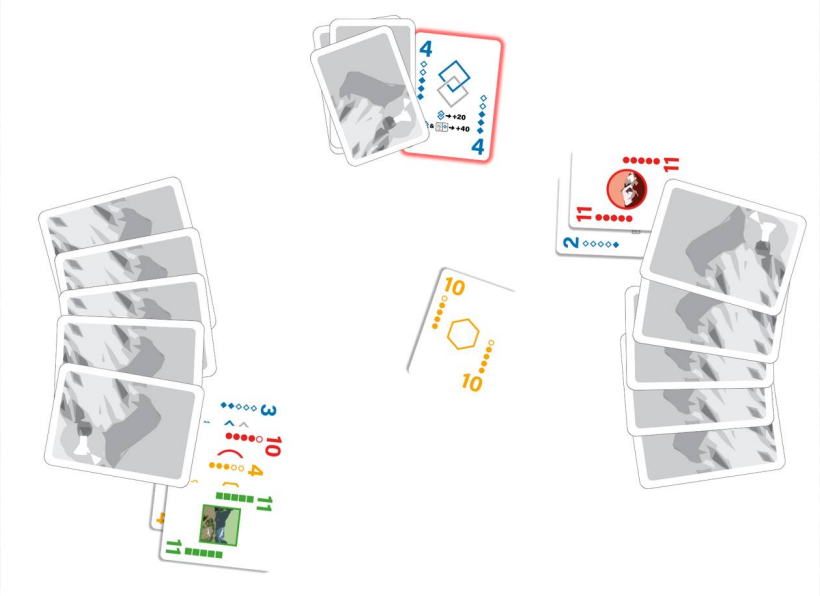


If the colors don't match, and no card has the advantage, the card played first wins the trick, earning 12 points.

Each game consists of multiple rounds, and each round consists of several hands. A hand is a full sequence of tricks until one player reaches 66 points or all cards are played. Hands play very quickly once you get the hang of it.

At the end of each hand, the winner earns 1, 2, or 3 victory points, depending on the opponent's score. A round is won when a player reaches 7 victory points. The game continues until one player wins 7 rounds, making them the overall winner. Feel free to adapt this limit to your preference: after all, the goal is to have fun!

How the table may look at the start of the fourth trick:

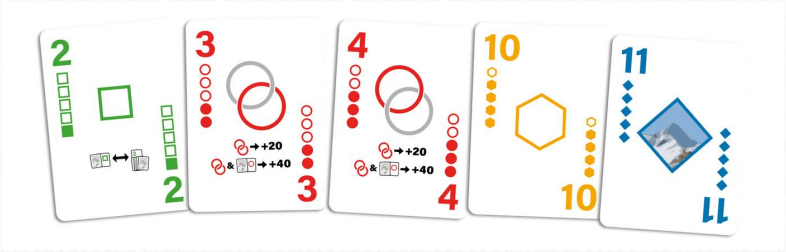




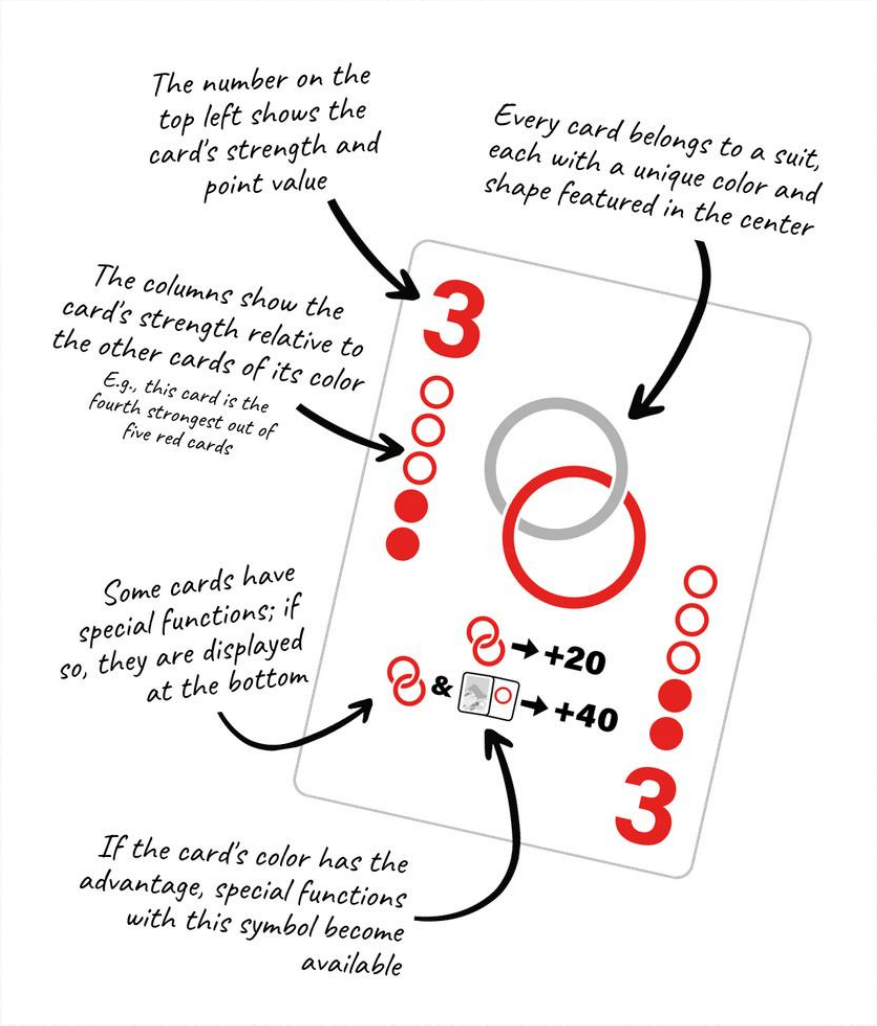
The 4 Suits

A deck of “Alpine Tricks” features 4 suits (red circle, blue diamond, green square, and yellow hex) with 5 cards each (**No. 2**, **No. 3**, **No. 4**, **No. 10** and **No. 11**)

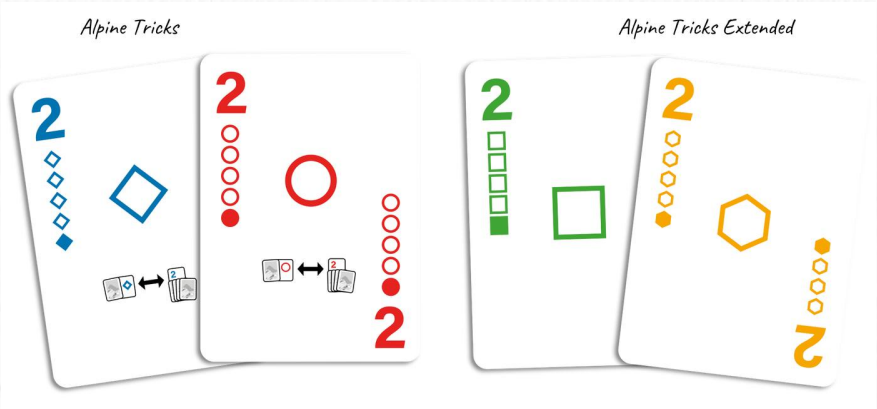
The Suits of “Alpine Tricks”



Cards of "Alpine Tricks"



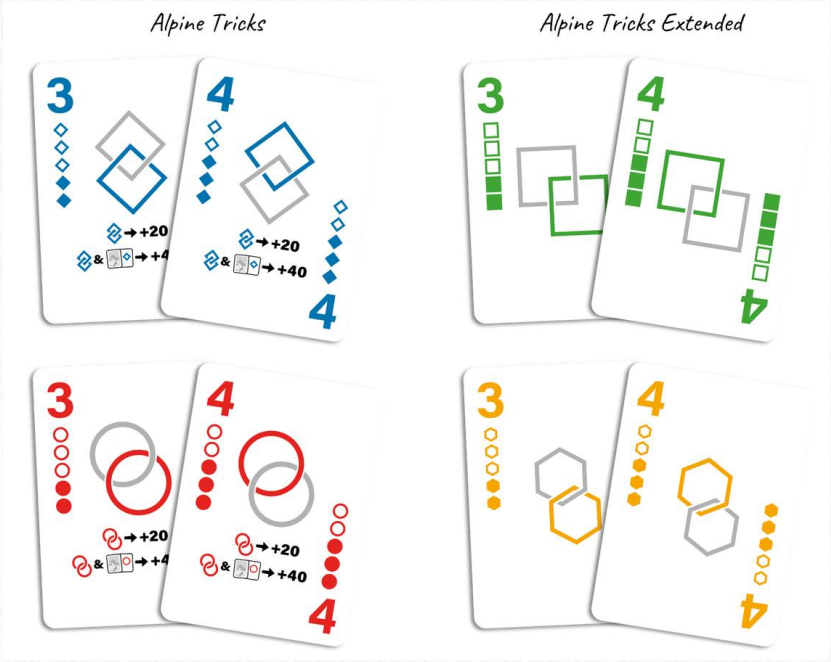
Cards with special abilities



No. 2

If a **No. 2**'s color has the advantage, the player starting the trick may use its special ability: before playing a card, they can exchange a **No. 2** from their hand for the card indicating the advantage next to the pile.

Be aware: using this special ability reveals valuable information about your hand to your opponent!



The Chains

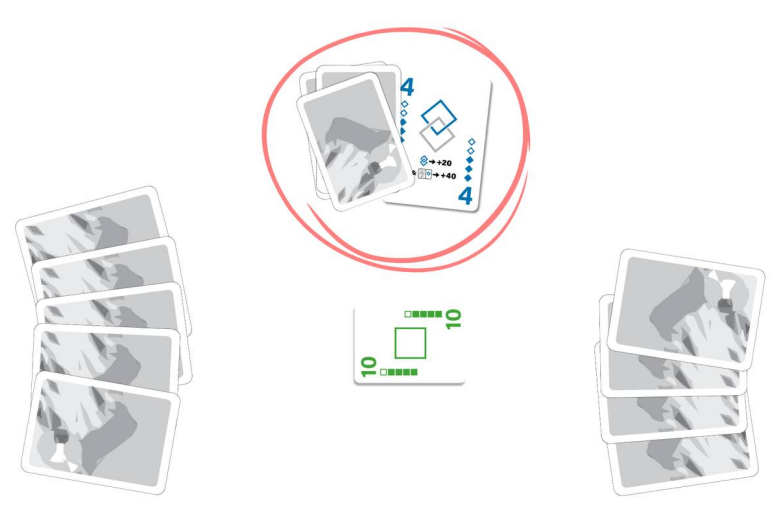
On their own, the **No. 3** and **No. 4** cards have little point value. However, if the player starting the trick holds both of the same suit, they may reveal “the chain” to their opponent before playing a card.

Presenting these grants *20 points*, or *40 points* if their suit has the advantage. However, these points can only be claimed if the player has won at least one trick in this hand, either before or after presenting.

Once a chain is presented, the **No. 4** must be played immediately. Alpine Tricks Extended includes a token card for each chain, which can be placed in front of a player to indicate they can claim the points.

The Draw Pile

The draw pile is placed between the players, next to the card that indicates which color has the advantage. After each trick, both players draw a card, with the winner always drawing first.



The advantage-indicating card acts as the final card of the draw pile, meaning the loser of the fifth trick will receive an extra advantage card—so plan accordingly!

If the pile is empty (or blocked, see the next section), the rules change for the player who did not start the trick!

New Rules if the Draw Pile is Empty or Blocked

If a player is caught not obeying these rules, they automatically lose the hand, and the opponent is awarded 3 victory points!

The player starting a trick is not affected by these changes. The other player, however, now has some obligations to consider when choosing which card to play:

- ➔ If the player can win a trick by playing a higher card of the same suit, they must do so.
- ➔ If the player cannot win the trick with a higher card of the same suit, they must play any card of the same color available to them.
- ➔ If a player cannot match the color at all, they must attempt to win the trick using any card with an advantage.
- ➔ Only if none of the above are possible may a player play a card of their choosing.



Blocking the Pile



Up to the fourth trick, if a player is starting the turn, they may 'block the pile' by flipping the advantage indicator over and placing it on top of the draw pile. From that point on, no more cards can be drawn—players must play only from their hands, and the game continues as if the draw pile were empty.

If a player chooses to do so, the opponent's score is frozen for the purpose of victory point calculations.

For example: if a player had 13 game points when blocking but finished with 47, only 13 points are considered, and the winner is awarded 2 Victory Points.

If a player has blocked the pile and does not successfully declare 66 points, the opponent wins by default and is awarded 2 victory points.



Scoring

The goal of the round is to reach 7 Victory Points by winning multiple hands. A hand is won when a player captures at least 66 card points **and** calls for the hand's end by declaring they are "done". This immediately stops the play, and card points are counted.

If the claim is valid, Victory Points are awarded as follows:

Card Points of Opponent	Victory Points Awarded to Winner
0	**3**
1 to 32	**2**
More than 33	**1**

If a player blocked the pile and won, the **opponent's score at the time of blocking** is used for the Victory Point assessment, not their final score.

For example: if a player had 13 game points when blocking but finished with 47, only 13 points are considered, and the winner is awarded 2 Victory Points.

Special Cases for Scoring

Incorrect Victory Claim
If a player wrongly declares victory and cannot prove their score (66 points or more), they lose the hand, and the opponent gains 2 Victory Points.

Failure to Reach 66 After Blocking
If a player blocks the pile but fails to reach 66 points, the opponent wins by default and is awarded 2 Victory Points.

No Block & No Declaration
If neither player blocks the pile nor declares 66 points, the winner of the last trick wins the hand, regardless of card points, and is awarded Victory Points as if they had reached 66.

Find additional games modes for 3 or 4 players on www.elsteinergames.com

Tips from Experienced Players

Form a plan early on... and just try it!. Take Risks!

Using a no.11 to capture a no.10 is one of the game's most valuable combinations, awarding 21 game points!

Starting a trick with a no.11 may tempt your opponent to use one of their advantage cards. But keeping them until late in the game when there are few advantage cards still in play can also be useful!

If you have a no.10, keep track of that suit's no.11!
As soon as this no.11 is in your hand or out of play, all of this no.11's strategic advantages now also apply to the no.10!

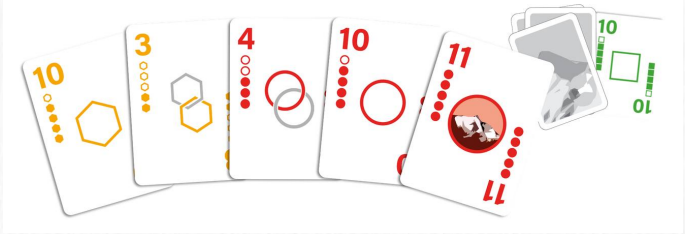
Only start a trick with a No.10 if you know where its No.11 is.

Don't "wait" for single cards - play to win as fast as you can.

If you start the game with 0 or 1 advantage cards, your opponent probably has more of them than you: Play slowly to draw more cards!
If you draw 2 or 3 advantage cards in the beginning, try to win fast, consider blocking the pile!

Practice

To make it a little easier to get started, here are some suggestions for which cards to play first. To keep it simple, all examples assume your opponent has dealt the cards and no tricks have been played yet. These are just guides, you may find better solutions!



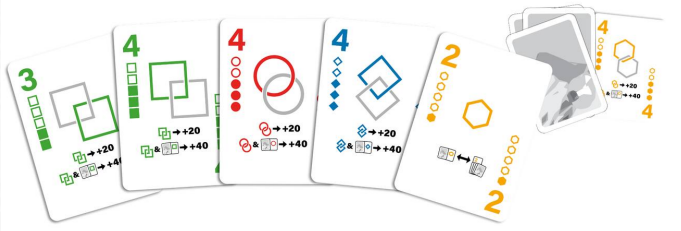
No advantage card is bad news, but the high value cards may be useful. Consider playing the no.10 and the no.11 to tempt your opponent into using their advantage cards, giving you opportunities to draw more cards.



This may be one of the best starting hands possible!
Block the pile, present the chain (+40). Your opponent either has the blue no.2 or no blues at all, so you win at least 17 points when playing your blue cards (57 total). Seal the deal by playing the then unbeatable yellow no.11.
3 Victory points for you!



Two advantage cards are a great start! One suggestion would be to play a no.10, accepting the risk of your opponent playing a no.11. as you probably have more advantage cards. A safer suggestion would be to play the no.2.



Prioritize reaching 33 points over winning if need be!
Exchange the ***no.2*** *and present the chain. Your opponent may take that trick, impeding you from claiming your points. You may need to use the card with advantage to capture a high-value card, to secure the points of your chain.*

Find more strategy puzzles at

www.elsteinergames.com

About “Schnapsen”

“Alpine Tricks” is a reimplementation of “Schnapsen”, Austria's national card game. With its mix of strategy, skill, and luck, it remains popular today, with tournaments and dedicated players.

Despite its appeal, the game is little known elsewhere, partly due to the memorization required with traditional decks. We believe games should be fun—not homework—so we redesigned the cards for clarity and playability.

Honoring the tradition of embellishing aces, we’ve woven Austrian landmarks into the game's strongest cards, blending in the game’s heritage.



Thank you for your Support!

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Best,
Greg, Founder of Elsteiner Games

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We love seeing more people enjoy classic games.