



Official Continental Rules

Continental is a card game that is played with two (or more) English decks and in which you have to make different combinations, like in gin rummy.

One continental game is made up of seven hands, were as in each hand you must make a different combination of trios and/or runs, increasing in difficulty each time.

It's unique in that each hand combination is fixed and you have a chance to pick cards 'out of turn' (means to take a card from the discard pile if no one before you wants it).

Content

- Game objective
- Players
- Type of deck
- Card values
- Combinations: Trios and Runs
- Fixed combinations and cards to be dealt
- Start of the game: Distribution of seats and cards
- Evolution of the game
- Picking 'out of turn'
- Dropping cards
- End of the hand
- End of the game
- The joker
- Allowed strategies
- Variants to classic continental
- Specific vocabulary

Game objective

Be the player with the fewest points at the end of the game. To do this, you have to link the cards in the combinations established for each game and expose them, since the cards that remain in the hand, combined or not, are the ones that score according to their value.

Players

From two to four players that are all individuals without partners or teams.

Type of deck

Continental is played with two English decks, with three jokers for each deck (although you can also play with two jokers per deck). You can also use poker Spanish decks.

Card values

- Joker.....50 points
- Ace.....20 points
- Face cards (king, queen, jack).....10 points
- Number cards (10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3 y 2).....their value

Combinations: Trios and Runs

The two combinations possible are trios and runs.

A trio is a set of three cards of the same number or letter, no matter the suit.

A run is four or more cards of the same suit and in sequence, unlimited number of cards (that is, cards can repeat). It has no beginning and no end: The ace can be the top card or the bottom card of the run or even in the middle between the king and the two. When you have to make several runs, they can all be of the same suit (just like there can be several trios of the same number or letter).

Fixed combinations and cards to be dealt in each hand

In classic continental there are seven hands, each more difficult than the last. In each hand you deal one more card than necessary to make the correct combinations:

- 1st (TT): Two trios. You deal seven cards.
- 2nd (TR): One trio and one run. You deal eight cards.
- 3rd (RR): Two runs. You deal nine cards.
- 4th (TTT): Three trios. You deal ten cards.
- 5th (TRT): Two trios and one run. You deal eleven cards.
- 6th (RTR): One trio and two runs. You deal twelve cards.
- 7th (RRR): Three runs. You deal thirteen cards.



Start of the game: Distribution of seats and cards

Seats are distributed by dealing one card to each player. If several players receive the same card, they will do a tie break between them (to see which of that players has the highest card).

The player with the highest card will start the game. The player with the next highest card sits to his/her right and so on until all players are seated counter clockwise. The game is also played taking turns in the same way.

The player who deals, before dealing, will shuffle the deck of cards and give it to the next player to cut. Then, he/she will deal each player the cards corresponding to the hand in play, one at a time, counterclockwise, starting with the player to his right and ending with himself/herself.

Once finished dealing, the player will put the rest of the deck in the middle of the table, putting the top card beside the deck face up thus starting the discard pile. That first card can be a joker or any other card.

The player that starts the game is the player to the right of the dealer, the player who cut the deck before dealing the cards.

Evolution of the game

At the beginning of his/her turn the player must take either the card on top of the discard pile or the card on top of the deck, one or the other. When he/she takes one of these cards, the game has begun.

The player finishes his/her turn when he/she discards one of the cards in his/her hand which he/she will put on top of the discard pile face up to continue the game or face down to finish the game. Once the card touches the discard pile the player must leave the card there, without being able to change it for another.

Players can not see cards from the discard pile, except the top card.

If one player asks another player how many cards he/she has left, that player must answer honestly.

Picking 'out of turn'

If the current player does not take the card from the discard pile, any of the remaining players can take that card (even the player who dropped it can pick it out of turn), also taking an additional card from the top of the deck as a penalty and without discarding any card. Picking out of turn always must be done before the player discards and the subsequent change of turn occurs, at which time the card that was in the pile will become a dead or trodden card and no player will be able to pick it out of turn, even if there is no card on it.

If more than one player wants the card, the decision of who gets the card is made by order of play; whose turn comes first is the one who gets the card.

Dropping cards

During his/her turn, the player with the correct combinations for that hand can put his/her cards on the table and separating one combination from another. This action is called 'dropping cards'. The dropped cards do not count against you if another player finishes the hand.

Once the cards are dropped, a player can drop additional cards in any other combination already on the table during his/her turn.

If the player still has cards left, he/she must continue playing the hand until all cards are dropped into one of the combinations on the table.

Once a player has successfully dropped off and his/her turn has passed, he/she cannot "drop on".

End of the hand

When a player has dropped all his/her cards and has only one card left, he/she can put that card on the discard pile face side down to close or finish the present hand. If that card can also be placed in a combination on the table, the player can do it and close the game anyway (in this case he/she can put the palm of his/her hand on the discard pile).

When a player drops and closes at the same turn, he/she gets -10 points for that hand. If he/she had dropped at a previous turn, he/she gets 0 points.

Other players must count the value of the cards remaining in their hands and write it down: below the name of each player there will be a line for each hand which will begin by identifying which hand has being played (TT, TR, RR, TTT...) and following the score for that hand and the total score so far for each player, so at the end of each hand the current standings of each player can be known.

Then, the cards are picked up and the dealing turn passes to the player to the right of the one who dealt last. The player with the dealing turn will deal the cards for the new hand after shuffling and cutting the deck. This will continue until all the hands are played.



End of the game

After the final hand, the player with the least amount of points will be the winner of the game.

In case of a tie between multiple players, the winner among those players will be the player who most recently won a hand.

The joker

The joker, also known as wild card, is a special card that replaces any other card in the deck.

In the trios, there can be unlimited jokers. You can even make a trio of jokers but the first value card added to the trio of jokers determines what the trio is.

In a run there cannot be two consecutive jokers. The jokers in a dropped run can be moved within the run that they are in or can be moved to other runs dropped by the same player. However, when moving a joker, a run cannot be left with only three cards and two jokers cannot be placed consecutively. The joker in a run can be substituted by the card it represents but that joker must be immediately placed in a run dropped by the player who dropped the joker to begin with without placing two jokers consecutively. If the joker is free at either end of a run you can also move it to another run of the same player as long as the run is not left with less than four cards.

The jokers in a run are the only cards that can be moved once they have been dropped, as long as they fall under the conditions in the first paragraph stated above. The rest of the cards are fixed without the possibility of being moved or exchanged.

Allowed strategies

To achieve the game objective (to be the player with the fewest points at the end of the game) a series of strategies not prohibited in the rules can be used, depending on the circumstances of each game:

- Drop jokers or high cards even if they are placed, when someone has dropped and is about to close and catch you with all the cards in your hand.
- Release jokers or placed cards, when you are interested in the player following you closing and catching the others (for example because they are winning by many points).
- Drop placed cards, when you don't have another one to drop and you are not interested in dropping one that serves you trying to steal it against you (you risk another player wanting it and taking it from you).
- Release all the high cards, to try to finish the game with the fewest number of points possible, when you have very bad cards or when you are ahead of others by many points.
- Steal a lot against when you have very bad cards, to try to get down as soon as possible.
- Get down and not place all the possible cards in the drops, to wait and place all the remaining ones at once (when you want to catch a player off guard who does not get down until you have one left).

Variants to classic continental

At the beginning of a game, it is possible to establish the playing of any of these variants or the prohibition of a specific strategy, always by mutual agreement between all the players:

- Super continental: Five additional hands are added to the game: TTTT, TTTR, TTRR, RRRT, RRRR. In each of those hands you deal 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 card respectively.
- Add two new hands at the beginning: T and R, dealing 4 and 5 cards respectively.
- Allow finishing a hand with cards in hand as long as they add up to five points or less.
- Only allow closing with -10 (get off and close at the same time), in all games or only in the last one.
- Make mandatory that the runs in RR, RTR or RRR be of different suits and that the trios in TT, TTT or TRT be of different numbers or letters.
- Change the value of -10 depending on the hand: -10 in TT, -20 in TR, and so on up to -70 in RRR.
- Give -50 points to the player who drops his/her combinations and closes the hand at the same time.
- Give -50 points to the player who drops and places all his/her cards (closing the hand) at the same time.
- Change the value of the cards: five points to all the cards between 2 and 7; 10 points to the 8, 9, 10 and face cards; 20 points to the aces, and 50 points to the joker.
- Not allow any player to pick out of turn more than three times in each hand.
- Do not allow the first card in the pot to be a joker (if this is the case, change it to another).
- Play without jokers.
- Play considering the red twos as jokers, in addition to the wild cards themselves.



Specific vocabulary

- **Clean:** A combination made without any jokers.
- **Closing:** Finishing a game or hand when a player is left without cards in hand.
- **Clubs:** One of the suits in the English deck. Its symbol is a three leave black clover.
- **Combine:** Putting the right cards together to make the correct combinations for that hand.
- **Deck pile:** Group of cards face side down in the middle of the table from where the players take cards to play.
- **Diamonds:** One of the suits in the English deck. Its symbol is a red diamond.
- **Dirty:** A combination made with the assistance of a joker.
- **Discard pile:** Group of cards next to the deck pile comprised of the cards that the players are discarding (releasing) from their hand.
- **Discard:** Putting a card from your hand on the top of the discard pile.
- **Dropping (off):** Showing the combinations of cards related to the hand and leave them exposed on the table.
- **Dropping on:** Return the dropped cards to the player's hand, nullifying the dropping. It can happen before finishing the turn of the player who has dropped, either because there is some mistake in his/her combinations or because he/she has regretted it and wants to wait longer before dropping off.
- **Equal cards:** Cards of the same value or number.
- **Face card:** The King, Queen and Jack in the deck of cards.
- **Hand:** Each round that composes the game of continental.
- **Hearts:** One of the suits in the English deck. Its symbol is a red heart.
- **Penalty card:** Additional card that must be taken by a player picking out of turn.
- **Picking out of turn:** Taking a card from the discard pile when it is not your turn. This action incurs a penalty of an additional card taken from the deck pile.
- **Player's hand:** Combination of cards that a player has in his/her hand during the game.
- **Round:** From the moment it is a player's turn to the next time it is that player's turn again.
- **Run:** A combination of consecutive cards of the same suit.
- **Spades:** One of the suits in the English deck. Its symbol is a black spade.
- **Trio:** Combination of three or more cards of the same number.