

A DOMINO COMPANION

75 Ways to Fill a Sunday Afternoon with Dominoes



Seventy-five games for a single double-six set

to be played slowly, with good company and no particular hurry

A short history of dominoes

Dominoes are old, and well travelled. Tiles of this kind were being shuffled in China by the twelfth century, and a recognisable European version turns up in Italy in the early 1700s, spreading to France and then Britain within a couple of generations. The Western “double-six” set — the 28 tiles this book uses — settled into its familiar form along the way.

From that one plain set grew a remarkable spread of games: blocking and scoring games, the trick-and-trump games that dress up card play in tiles, gambling games from the Caribbean and Indonesia, and quiet solitaires for one. The little notes scattered through this book tell where the individual games came from; this page is simply the family's beginning.

How to read these rules

Every game here needs only a standard **double-six set** (28 tiles) and, at most, everyday household bits — pencil and paper for scoring, or a few coins or buttons as counters or train markers. Each game is written to stand on its own: **Deal**, **Play**, and **Scoring**, in that order.

Under each game's name you'll find a quick line — how many players, how long it tends to run, and how hard it is to pick up:

2–4 players | After Church | learn ●○○

Length is given as an unhurried **Lunchtime** (up to an hour), **After Church** (a couple of hours), or **After Dinner** (settle in) — and the pips run from one (learn in a minute) to three (give it a game or two).

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Block & Line Games

The heart of the domino table. Match a tile to an open end and try to empty your hand before anyone else — and if the game jams, the lightest hand wins. If you’ve ever played dominoes at all, you already half-know these.



The two that started it all —

Block

2-4 | After Church | learn ●○○

The plainest game there is — the ancestor of very nearly everything else here.

Deal. Shuffle the tiles face down. Each player draws a hand: with 2 players, 7 tiles each; with 3 or 4 players, 5 tiles each. The remaining tiles stay in the boneyard and are **not used** this round.

Play. Players draw for the lead (or, by agreement, the holder of the highest double leads). Four players may play as two partnerships (partners opposite) or as individuals. On your turn, add one tile to either end of the single line of play so that the touching ends match in number. Doubles are placed crosswise on the line but are **not** spinners — they still have only the usual two matching ends and do not cause the line to branch. A player who cannot play simply passes (there is no drawing from the boneyard). The round ends when one player dominoes or when nobody can play.

Scoring. Each player totals the pips remaining in their hand. The player with the lowest total wins and scores the sum of all the losers’ totals minus their own total. If two or more players tie for the lowest total, no one scores. Play

to **100 points** in a two-player or partnership game, or **61 points** with three or four players.

Draw

2-4 | After Church | learn ●○○

Block, but you draw from the boneyard when stuck, so the game rarely jams and every tile eventually sees daylight.

Deal. Each player draws a hand: with 2 or 3 players, 7 tiles each; with 4 players, 6 tiles each. The rest form the boneyard.

Play. Players draw for the lead. Four players may play in partnerships or as individuals. On your turn, add a tile to either end of the single line so the touching ends match. Doubles are placed crosswise but are not spinners. A player who cannot (or does not wish to) play **must draw** tiles from the boneyard, continuing until they draw a playable tile or until only two tiles remain in the boneyard. The **last two tiles of the boneyard are never drawn**; once the boneyard is down to two, a player who cannot play passes. You must end your turn by playing a tile unless the boneyard is at two tiles and you have no legal play. You may draw even when you already hold a playable tile, and keep drawing after finding one, in the hope of drawing a tile that will let you block the game. The round ends when one player dominoes, or when the boneyard is at two tiles and no one can play.

Scoring. Each player totals the pips left in their hand. The lowest total wins and scores the sum of the losers' totals minus their own. A tie for lowest means no score. Play to **100 points** (two-player or partnership) or **61 points** (three or four players).

Chance versions, dealt face-down —

Blind Hughie

2-4 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

Pure luck and memory: you play blind, from a face-down row you never look at.

Deal. Each player takes a hand: with 2 players, 7 tiles each; with 3 or 4 players, 5 tiles each. Any remaining tiles are set aside unused. The catch: each player arranges their tiles **face down in a row** in front of themselves without looking at them.

Play. Players draw for the lead. On your turn, take the tile at the **right-hand end** of your row and turn it face up. If it is the opening lead, place it in the center to start the line. Otherwise, if it matches an open end of the line, play it (doubles crosswise, not spinners); if it does not match, turn it face down again and place it at the **left-hand end** of your row. A player who cannot play passes. The round ends when one player dominoes or nobody can play.

Scoring. Each player totals the pips left in their hand. The lowest total wins and scores the sum of the losers' totals minus their own; a tie for lowest means no score. Play to **100 points** (two players) or **61 points** (three or four).

Billitonnen

3-5 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

A Dutch cousin of Blind Hughie for three to five, played from a face-down row.

Deal. With 3 players, 9 tiles each and one tile turned face up in the center to start the line. With 4 players, 7 tiles each. With 5 players, 6 tiles each to the first three players and 5 each to the other two. Each player arranges their tiles **face down in a row** in front of themselves. To decide who starts, each

player draws a tile; the highest total starts (if tied, the higher single end wins).

Play. Take tiles one at a time from the **right-hand end** of your row and turn them up. With three players the first player adds their right-hand tile to the central starting tile if it matches; with four or five players the first player places their right-hand tile in the center to start, then turns up the next and adds it if it matches. Keep turning up your right-hand tiles and adding them to either end of the line for as long as they fit. When you turn up a tile that does not fit, place it at the **left-hand end** of your row — face down, unless it is a double, which is placed face up — and your turn ends. If you turn up a tile that would fit on either end, you may look at your next tile before deciding which end to use. The first player to play all their tiles wins.

Single-arm games, where the line grows one way only —

One Arm Joe (One-Armed Pete)

5–9 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

A simple children's game played on a single arm.

Deal. 3 tiles each; the remaining tiles form the boneyard.

Play. The **highest double leads**. Thereafter every tile is added to the line from **one and only one side** of the lead double — this single growing arm gives the game its name. Doubles are **not** turned crosswise. A player who plays a double may **immediately play again** if able (if they have no tile for the free turn they say so and the turn passes). A player who cannot play **draws** from the boneyard until they get a playable tile, which is played at once; if the boneyard is empty, they pass.

Scoring. The game ends when a player dominoes or the game blocks. Each player totals the pips left in their hand; the **lowest** total wins and scores the combined pips of all the other players' hands.

A BIT OF HISTORY

☐ *Related to the Chinese game Tsair Deng.*

Sedma

4 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

A single-arm game scored on doubles — “sedma” is Czech for seven.

Deal. Each player takes **7 tiles**; there is no boneyard.

Play. The lead rotates each round (first lead by chance). The player offered the lead must **set a double**; if they have none, the lead passes left until someone can. This opening double is laid **crosswise** to mark the start of a train, which is built from **one side only**. In turn, a player who has a tile matching the open end of the train plays it (later doubles are **not** laid crosswise); a player who cannot match passes. The hand ends when a player dominoes or the game blocks.

Scoring. When you set a double you score **1 point for it plus 1 for every double already in the train that is lower than yours**. The doubles rank [0-0], [1-1], [2-2], [3-3], [4-4], [5-5], [6-6] — and the [0-0] counts as both **lowest and highest**, so a [0-0] played after the others scores over all of them (a maximum single score of 7). Game to **60 points**.

The Tiddly-Wink pair, where a double earns an extra turn —

Tiddle-a-Wink (British)

up to 5 or 6 with a double-six set | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

A brisk block game in which playing a double earns you an extra turn.

Deal. Distribute the tiles as evenly as possible among the players; for example, five players take 5 tiles each, leaving 3 in the boneyard. Any leftover tiles stay in the boneyard, unused.

Play. The holder of the largest double begins by playing it. Thereafter each player adds a tile to **either end** of the line, matching the touching ends (doubles are placed crosswise). When a player plays a **double**, they may immediately play a **second tile** that turn. A player who cannot play passes.

Scoring. The winner is the player who dominoes, or — if the game is blocked — the player with the lowest remaining pip total.

Tiddly-Wink (American)

5–8 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

A pooled, single-arm dash: three tiles each, and a double earns an extra play.

Deal. Each player gets exactly **3 tiles**. The rest stay in the boneyard, unused.

Play. Each player antes a stake into a central pool. The player with the largest double leads it; if no one holds a double, draw a tile from the boneyard and its higher end becomes the lead. This is a **single-arm** game: after the opening tile, every tile is added to the **same one open end** of the line, matching that end. A player who cannot play passes. When a player plays a **double** (placed in line), they may immediately play a **second tile** that turn. The round ends when a player dominoes or nobody can play.

Scoring. The player who dominoes wins the pool. If the game is blocked, the player with the smallest pip total in hand wins the pool.

Cross-layout games, where the opening double branches into arms —

Sebastopol

4 | After Church | learn ●●○

A four-armed block game that opens with the top double as a spinner.

Deal. Each player draws **7 tiles**.

Play. The holder of the [6-6] sets it in the center of the table. Going clockwise, each player must then play a tile of the **sixes suit** onto the [6-6] until there are **four tiles around it**, making it a spinner with four arms; a player who cannot add a six before all four arms have been started must pass. Once all four arms exist, each player adds a tile to the end of any arm, matching the touching ends. Other doubles are placed crosswise and do not branch the layout.

Scoring. When a player dominoes, they score the total pips remaining in the other players' hands. If the game is blocked, the player with the lowest total wins and scores the others' totals minus their own (a tie for lowest means no score). Play to **60 points**, or more by agreement.

Three-handed version. Deal 7 tiles each; a player who cannot (or will not) play draws from the boneyard until able or the boneyard is exhausted. If no one holds the [6-6], the game is started with the next-highest double that a player holds. (In an alternative three-handed version each player is dealt 9 tiles with one left in the boneyard; the [6-6] holder sets it and then draws the boneyard tile to restore their hand to nine.)

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *Named for the Siege of Sevastopol in the Crimean War (1854–55) — as are several other 'fortress' domino games.*

Maltese Cross

2–4 | After Church | learn ●●○

A cousin of Sebastopol whose four arms must each be capped with a double.

Deal. 2 players take **7 tiles**; 3–4 players take **5 tiles** each. The rest form the boneyard.

Play. The holder of the **highest double** sets it in the centre as the spinner. Going clockwise, each player must then play a tile of the **same suit** onto the

spinner until **four arms** surround it (phase one); a player who cannot must draw one tile from the boneyard, setting it if it plays, otherwise keeping it and passing. Once all four arms are started, each player must add a **double, turned crosswise, to the end of an arm**, until all four arms carry a double (phase two). Thereafter, further doubles are turned crosswise and non-doubles are played in line from the ends of the arms.

Scoring. A player who dominoes scores the total pips in the other players' hands. If the game blocks, the player with the lowest total wins and scores the others' totals minus their own. Play to **60 points**, or more by agreement.

Partnership & Regional Block Games

The Latin and Caribbean tradition — four players in two partnerships, matching the ends and playing to a points target, each region with its own flavour.



The Puerto Rican point games, growing in elaboration —

Latin Partnership Dominoes

4, in two fixed partnerships | After Church | Learn ●●○

The four-hand partnership game at the heart of Latin and Caribbean play.

Deal. All 28 tiles are dealt out — **7 to each player**. There is no boneyard.

Play. In the first deal of a session, the holder of the [6-6] begins and must lead it. In later deals the turn to start passes to the right and the starter may lead any tile. On your turn add one tile to the line, matching the touching ends; doubles are conventionally placed crosswise. You must play if you legally can; if you cannot, you pass (traditionally by knocking the table). The deal ends when a player plays their last tile, or when all four players pass in succession (a blocked game).

Scoring. The deal is won by the **team of the first player to empty their hand**. A blocked game is won by the team whose unplayed tiles have the **lower pip total** (a tie means no score for that deal). The winners score the pip total of the **losing team's** unplayed tiles (their own unplayed tiles do not count). The first team to reach **100 points** or more wins the match.

Doscientos (200)

4, in two fixed partnerships | After Dinner | learn ●●○

Partnership dominoes played to 200, counting up everyone's leftover pips.

Deal. All 28 tiles are dealt — **7 to each player**. No boneyard.

Play. In the first game, the holder of the [6-6] starts by leading it (or, by agreement, players draw for the start and the starter leads any tile). The **winner of each game starts the next**, and may lead any tile. Add one tile per turn to either end, matching ends; doubles are placed crosswise. Play if able, otherwise pass. The game ends when a player empties their hand or all pass in succession.

Scoring. The winning team of each game scores the total pips of **all** unplayed tiles held by all four players. A blocked game is won by the team with the **fewer** unplayed pips, and the member of that team with the lower count starts the next game. Ties in a blocked game are resolved by prior agreement (commonly: no score and the [6-6] holder starts next, or the team that played first wins). The first team to reach **200 points** wins.

A BIT OF HISTORY

🎲 *A Puerto Rican mainstay.*

Quinientos (500)

4, in two fixed partnerships | After Dinner | learn ●●○

Doscientos writ large — to 500, with fat bonuses for a capicú or a chuchazo.

Deal. All 28 tiles are dealt — **7 to each player**. No boneyard.

Play. The holder of the [6-6] starts the first game by leading it; thereafter the winner of each game starts the next and may lead any tile. Add one tile per turn to either end, matching ends; doubles are placed crosswise. Play if able,

otherwise pass. A game ends when a player empties their hand or the game is blocked (won by the team with fewer unplayed pips).

Scoring. The winning team of each game scores the total pips of **all** four players' unplayed tiles, plus these bonuses:

- **First-game bonuses of the match:** +100 for winning the first game, +75 the second, +50 the third, +25 the fourth (none thereafter). These bonuses are not awarded if the corresponding game was blocked.
- **Capicú:** +100 if the winner's last tile is a **non-double** that could have been played on either open end of the line.
- **Chuchazo:** +100 if a player wins by playing the double-blank [0-0] (the *chucha*) as their last and only remaining tile. (Winning with any other double playable on either end is a *dominao* and scores no bonus.)

The first team to **500 points** wins.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *Puerto Rico's 'five hundred,' the island's great tournament game, rich with its own vocabulary.*

A partnership game scored to five —

Milo

4, in two fixed partnerships | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

A quick partnership game to five, with a bonus for matching both ends at once.

Deal. All 28 tiles are dealt — **7 to each player**. No boneyard.

Play. As in the Latin partnership game: the first game is started by the holder of the [6-6] leading it (thereafter the winning team starts). Add one tile per turn to either end, matching ends; doubles crosswise. Play if able, otherwise pass. The game ends when a player empties their hand or is blocked.

Scoring. The winning partnership scores **1 point** for going out. If the game is blocked, the partnership with the smaller unplayed pip total scores **1 point**. If the winning tile makes **both open ends of the line show the same suit**, the winners score **2 points** — this is a “Milo” and may be announced like “domino.” The game is played to **5 points**.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *Played in parts of Africa and Indonesia.*

The Jamaican family — partners, then cut-throat, then shutout —

Jamaican Partner Dominoes

4, in two fixed partnerships | After Church | learn ●●○

Jamaica’s partnership game — played fast, silent, and hard, all the way to ‘six love.’

Deal. Each player receives **7 bones**.

Play. The first hand begins with the holder of the **[6-6]**, who “poses” (plays) it. (In informal play the [6-6] holder may instead announce “sporting” and start with a different bone; in tournaments they must pose the [6-6].) In later hands the team that won the previous hand starts — the partners may briefly discuss which of them will pose, but may not reveal which bones they hold, and the starter may pose any bone. If the previous hand was tied, the [6-6] holder poses it. On your turn, add a bone to either end of the line so the touching ends match; doubles are placed crosswise. Players may not signal or talk about their bones during play. If you cannot play, you pass. The hand ends when a player plays all their bones, or the game is blocked.

Scoring. If a player empties their hand, that player’s **team** wins. In a blocked game, the hand is won by the **team of the individual with the fewest spots** on their unplayed bones (their partner’s bones do not matter); if two

opponents tie for fewest spots, the hand is a tie. The winning team normally scores **1 point**, or **2 points** if the winner went out by playing the **key bone** — the single remaining bone that could legally be played when both open ends were different “hard ends” (an end where six of a suit’s tiles are already down). The aim is to reach **6 points while the opponents have 0** (“six love”). Whenever the other side wins a hand, the score resets to 0–0 and the next hand is started by the [6-6] holder.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *In Jamaica the tiles are ‘bones,’ and winning six–nil is the coveted ‘six love.’*

Jamaican Cut Throat Dominoes

2–4, each playing for themselves | After Church | learn ●●○

The every-player-for-themselves version of the Jamaican game.

Deal. With 2 players, 14 bones each (or, by prior agreement, 7 each with the rest in a boneyard to be drawn when a player cannot play). With 3 players, remove the double-blank and deal 9 bones each. With 4 players, 7 bones each.

Play. As in the Jamaican partner game but each person plays alone. Add a bone to either end, matching the ends; doubles crosswise. If you cannot play, you pass (in the 2-player draw version, draw from the boneyard until you can play or it is empty). The hand ends when someone plays all their bones, or is blocked (won by the player with the fewest spots).

Scoring. Each player keeps a tally of hands won. The first player to reach **6 wins** is the overall winner, provided at least one other player still has zero wins. If every player wins a hand before anyone reaches 6, all scores reset to zero.

Chiva (Shutout)

4 in partnerships | After Church | Learn ●●○

A Puerto Rican shutout game: win the run before an opponent scores at all.

Deal and play (4 players). Deal 7 tiles each. Play exactly as a partnership shedding game: the [6-6] holder starts the first game; add tiles to either end matching the ends, doubles crosswise, pass if unable. A game is won by the team of the player who empties their hand; a blocked game is won by the team with the lower pip total, and that team's lower-count player starts the next game.

Deal and play (2–3 players). A draw game: each player takes 7 tiles; a player who cannot play draws from the boneyard until able to play or the boneyard is empty, then passes.

Scoring. The object is to win a set number of games **in a row** while an opponent has none: **4 games** in the four-player match. In the three-player game the object is to win 4 games while another player has zero; if all three players win a game before anyone reaches 4, all scores reset and the match restarts.

A Haitian partnership game that allows table signals —

Haitian Dominoes

4, in two fixed partnerships | After Church | Learn ●●○

Haiti's partnership game — and yes, partners are allowed to signal.

Deal. Each player draws **7 tiles**. A player dealt five or more doubles may demand a reshuffle, in which case all tiles are mixed and redealt.

Play. In the first round the holder of the **[6-6]** starts by playing it. In later rounds a member of the team that won the previous round starts (the partners may discuss who will start but may not reveal specific tiles). Add a

tile to either end, matching the ends; doubles crosswise. Partners are allowed to **signal their strength** with gestures as they play onto a number: a fist on the table means “strong in this number, plenty more”; sliding one finger means “at least one more of this number”; showing an open palm means “none more of this number.” (Partners may secretly agree to swap these meanings.) The round ends when a player empties their hand or the game is blocked.

Scoring. A player who plays all their tiles wins and their team scores **1 point**. **Dekabès:** if the winning last tile is a non-double whose two ends match the two open ends of the line, the team scores **2 points**. A blocked game is won by the individual with the fewest spots, scoring **1 point** for their team. If a blocked game is tied between opponents, there is no score; the same team starts the next round, which is then worth **2 points** to its winner. The first team to reach **4 or more points** wins; a losing team’s score resets to zero whenever the other team wins a round.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *In the Haitian game, hand signals between partners are part of the fun, not cheating.*

Matador & the Totals-Matching Games

Here the touching ends must add up to a fixed total rather than match, and special ‘matador’ tiles play anywhere at all.



Matching by the ‘rule of seven,’ from the plain game to two elaborate relatives —

Matador

2–4 | After Church | learn ●●○

The odd one out — ends must total seven, and four wild ‘matadors’ play anywhere.

Deal. Each player draws **7 tiles**. The rest form the boneyard.

Play. Players draw for the lead (some require the leader to set their highest double). Add a tile to either end of the line so that the number on the end of the line and the touching number on the new tile **add up to 7** (so a 1 is followed by a 6, a 2 by a 5, a 3 by a 4). Doubles are played **in line** (not crosswise) and have no special role. There are four **matadors** — the tiles totalling seven ([1-6], [2-5], [3-4]) and the double-blank [0-0]. A matador may be played on **any** open end regardless of the total-seven rule, laid with either of its ends in line so that its other end becomes the new open end. Because nothing adds with a blank to make seven, a **blank end can be continued only by a matador**. You are never forced to play a matador; you may draw a tile instead. (Sources differ on drawing: some let a stuck player simply pass; others require drawing until a playable tile is found or the boneyard is down to two tiles.) The hand ends when a player dominoes, the game blocks, or everyone passes in one round.

Scoring. Each player totals the pips left in their hand. The lowest total wins and scores the sum of the losers' totals minus their own; a tie for lowest means no score. Play to **100 points**.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *Matching to a total rather than a like number is one of the oldest twists in dominoes.*

Leyden

2 | After Church | learn ●●○

A two-handed matador game built as a four-armed cross.

Deal. Each player takes **6 tiles**; the remaining 16 form the boneyard.

Play. The player with the **lowest double other than [0-0]** leads it to start the first round; thereafter the loser of the previous round leads and must lead a double other than [0-0] (drawing from the boneyard to obtain one if necessary; if both players refuse to lead, redeal). The first double is the **spinner**: the first four tiles must be played on its four sides to start the arms of a cross before any arm is extended. Matching follows the **rule of seven** — the touching end of a new tile and the open end of the arm must total 7 (1–6, 2–5, 3–4); for the first tile on each arm, the tile's inner end plus the spinner's number total 7. Doubles are played **in line** and have no special role. The four **matadors** — [1-6], [2-5], [3-4], and [0-0] — are wild and may be played on any open end (or to start an arm) regardless of the seven-rule; a matador may be laid in line or crosswise (if crosswise, the next player chooses which of its ends is the open end), while the [0-0] is laid in line. A **blank end can be continued only by a matador**. On your turn you may draw as many tiles as you like but must leave at least two in the boneyard; a player with no play must keep drawing until able or until only two tiles

remain (then pass). The hand ends when a player dominoes or the game blocks.

Scoring. Each player adds the pips left in their **own** hand to their score; the first player to reach **100** is the loser. If both exceed 100 in the same round, the lower total wins; a tie at or over 100 means no winner. (*Günther Senst's variant: the highest double leads any double but [0-0]; the winner of a round scores the combined pips in both hands, and the first to 100+ wins.*)

A BIT OF HISTORY



Named for the Dutch city of Leiden.

Nos

3-5 | After Dinner | learn ●●●

An elaborate Dutch game in which the 'set' player picks which of seventeen games you'll play.

Deal. Each player takes **8 minus the number of players** in tiles — 5 tiles for 3 players, 4 for 4, 3 for 5 — and the rest (12–13 tiles) form the boneyard. In the first hand the player holding the **highest double** is “on set”; in later hands the previous hand’s **biggest loser** (most pips left in hand) is on set.

The set. The player on set **plays a double** (drawing one from the boneyard if they hold none) and is paid by each opponent — the pip value of one end of a double played from hand, double that for a drawn double, but the set player instead **pays** each opponent the full pip value if a drawn opening tile is not a double. They then **announce the game** (see below). A player holding several doubles may **declare** them at this point for a set payment from each opponent.

The seventeen games combine three choices: **geometry** (a single **line** with two ends; a **cross** — the first four tiles start four arms off the opening double; a **double cross** — each arm’s second tile must itself be a double; or,

only from the [0-0], a **triangle** built with the other three matadors); **matching rule** (**ordinary** = equal touching ends, or **matador** = touching ends totalling 7, in which the [0-0], [1-6], [2-5], and [3-4] are wild “matadors” playable on any end); and optional **conditions** (which side of a line must be built first, and/or a switch between ordinary and matador partway). The named games are: (1) ordinary; (2) ordinary cross; (3) ordinary double cross; (4) matador; (5) matador cross; (6) matador double cross; (7) ordinary cross then matador; (8) ordinary cross then matador double cross; (9) matador cross then ordinary; (10) matador cross then ordinary double cross; (11) ordinary or matador with conditions; (12) volapük (ordinary on one side, matador on the other) and its cross forms; (13) triangle; (14) triangle double cross; (15) triangle then ordinary; (16) triangle then ordinary cross; (17) any double, matador “first here then there,” then ordinary cross.

Play. After the set, play goes clockwise. A turn is: optionally **draw** tiles (always leaving at least two in the boneyard), then **play one tile** if possible; a player who cannot play when only two tiles remain must pass. A player who plays a **double immediately after the predecessor’s tile** may claim from that predecessor the pip value of one end (7 for the [0-0]); a double that fits the opening tile may be played at once out of turn (the player then misses their next turn, saying “I wait”).

Nos, blocking, and scoring. The **first** player to shed all their tiles calls “**Nos**” and takes **5 points from each opponent**; later players who go out score nothing extra. A player who believes no further play is possible may **close**: if right, each opponent still in pays them 20; if wrong, they pay 40 to each. At the hand’s end each player counts the pips left in hand (the [0-0] counts **14**), and each player pays every player with a **lower** count the difference. Chips are settled in multiples of 20, any remainder decided by a game of Billitonnen. (Nos also carries an extensive schedule of 40-point penalties for procedural errors.)

A BIT OF HISTORY

🎲 *Reconstructed from a 1967 Dutch book — a genuine museum piece, still played (barely) at one society club in The Hague.*

The Fives Family (Scoring Games)

Score as you go, whenever the open ends total a multiple of five (or, in a couple of these, of three). A cribbage board earns its keep here.



Counting the ends, with no spinner —

Muggins

2-4 | After Church | learn ●●○

Score whenever the two open ends of the line total a multiple of five.

Deal. With 2 players, 7 tiles each; with 3 or 4 players, 5 tiles each. The rest form the boneyard.

Play. The first player in the first hand is chosen by lot; thereafter the player who went out in the previous hand starts, and after a blocked hand the lead is again chosen by lot. The lead may be any tile. Add a tile to either end so the touching ends match. Doubles are turned **crosswise** and count as the total of their pips when they sit at an open end, but they are **not** spinners and do not branch the line. A player who cannot play must **draw** from the boneyard until they get a playable tile (played immediately, ending the turn) or the boneyard is empty, after which a player unable to play passes. The hand ends when a player dominoes or all are blocked.

Scoring. After each tile is played, total the **two open ends** of the line. If that total is a multiple of five (5, 10, 15, or 20), the player immediately scores that number of points. A double at an open end counts its full pips (so [5-5] contributes 10, [6-6] contributes 12). When the hand ends, each player totals the pips left in their hand, rounds to the nearest multiple of five, and

subtracts that from their score. The game is played to **200 points** (three or four players) or **250 points** (two players); four may play as partnerships to 250.

All Threes

2-4 | After Church | learn ●●○

Muggins with threes in place of fives — score the multiples of three.

Deal. With 2 players, 7 tiles each; with 3 or 4 players, 5 tiles each. The rest form the boneyard.

Play. The first player in the first hand is chosen by lot; thereafter the player who went out starts, and after a blocked hand the lead is chosen by lot again. Lead any tile. Add a tile to either end so the touching ends match. Doubles are turned crosswise and count their full pips at an open end, but are not spinners. A player who cannot play draws from the boneyard until they can play (playing it at once) or the boneyard is empty, then passes if still unable. The hand ends when a player dominoes or all are blocked.

Scoring. After each tile is played, total the two open ends of the line. Score **1 point for each three** contained in the total: a total of 3 scores 1, 6 scores 2, 9 scores 3, 12 scores 4, 15 scores 5, 18 scores 6 (the maximum). A double at an open end counts its full pips. The player who runs out of tiles scores **1 extra point** (alternatively, one-third of the pips held by the player with the most unplayed pips, rounded to the nearest whole number). Play to an agreed target such as 100 or 200 points.

Fives and Threes

2-4 | After Church | learn ●●○

Britain's great pub game: score the threes and fives in the open ends, to exactly 61.

Deal. Mix the tiles face down. With 2 players, 7 tiles each; with 3 or 4 players, 5 tiles each. The rest form the boneyard — there is **no drawing** in this game, so those tiles are out of play.

Play. The first player in the first hand is chosen by lot (for example each draws a tile and the highest starts); thereafter the turn to start passes to the left. Lead any tile. Play is clockwise. Each player in turn must play a tile if able, adding it to one end so the touching ends match; a double is turned crosswise and counts its full pips when at an open end. A player who cannot play must **knock** (pass); it is illegal to knock when able to play. Play continues until a player chips out or all are blocked; in the four-player partnership game, play continues until **both** members of one team have chipped out.

Scoring. After each tile is played, total the two open ends. Score the number of **fives and threes** in the total: 3 → 1, 5 → 1, 6 → 2, 9 → 3, 10 → 2, 12 → 4, 15 → 8 (three fives and five threes), 18 → 6, 20 → 4. A double counts its full pips only when at an open end. Chipping out scores **1 point** (in partnerships, when both partners are out); a blocked game scores nothing for going out. Keep score on a cribbage board: the first player or team to reach **exactly 61** wins, and any score that would overshoot 61 is disregarded. If neither side reaches 61 when play ends, redeal and continue. (Championship play often deals 9 tiles to two players or 6 each to four, and may play to 31 or 121.)

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *The classic English pub-league game, played on a cribbage board up and down the country.*

Add a spinner, so the layout branches —

All Fives

2-4 | After Church | learn ●●○

A fives-scorer with a single spinner branching the layout into arms.

Deal. With 2 players, 9 tiles each; with 3 players, 7 each; with 4 players, 5 each. The rest form the boneyard. (A common alternative is 7 / 5 / 5.)

Play. The first player in the first hand is chosen by lot; thereafter the player who dominoed starts, and after a blocked hand the lead is chosen by lot again. Lead any tile. A player who is **able to play must do so** — you may not draw first in the hope of a better tile. The **first double played (and only the first) is the spinner**: the first and second tiles played against it go on its two long sides, then the third and fourth tiles go on its ends, so the layout can grow into as many as four arms. Every other double is turned crosswise and counts its full pips while it sits at the end of an arm, but does not branch. A player who cannot play draws from the boneyard until they get a playable tile (played at once) or the boneyard is empty, then passes if still stuck. The hand ends when a player dominoes or all are blocked.

Scoring. After each tile is played, total the **open ends** of the layout — that is two, three, or four arm-ends. If the total is a multiple of five (5, 10, 15, ... up to 35), the player scores it. A double at an arm-end counts its full pips. The spinner's two ends count until a tile is played against its second side, after which it stops counting (even though its ends stay open); the third and fourth arms count once they are begun. When the hand ends, the winner — the player who dominoed, or the player/team with the fewest pips in a blocked game — scores the opponents' remaining pips, rounded to the nearest multiple of five. Play to **250 points** (two players) or **200 points** (three or four). (It is common to divide every score by five and play to 61 on a cribbage board.)

Sniff

2-4 | After Church | learn ●●○

A fives game built around ‘the Sniff’: the first double, whose ends keep counting all game.

Deal. With 2 players, 7 tiles each; with 3 players, 6 each; with 4 players, 5 each. The rest form the boneyard.

Play. The first player in the first hand is chosen by lot; thereafter the player who dominoed starts, and after a blocked hand the lead is chosen by lot again. Lead any tile. Add a tile matching an open end. The **first double played is the “Sniff.”** In the common American form, the Sniff is turned crosswise and acts as a spinner, but — unlike an ordinary spinner — its two ends **continue to count** toward the total even after tiles have been played against both of its sides. (In a British in-line form, the Sniff is laid in line and one tile may be added to each of its two sides; the open ends of those two tiles then count toward the total for the rest of the game, but the Sniff’s arms cannot grow further.) Second and later doubles are turned crosswise, count their full pips while at an arm-end, and are neither spinners nor a Sniff. A player who cannot play draws from the boneyard until they can (playing at once) or it is empty, then passes. The hand ends when a player dominoes or all are blocked.

Scoring. After each tile is played, total the open ends (two, three, or four). If the total is a multiple of five (5, 10, 15, ... up to 30), the player scores it. A double at an arm-end counts its full pips. When the hand ends, each player’s remaining pips are rounded to the nearest five and **subtracted** from their score. Play to **200 points** (three or four players) or **250 points** (two players).

Five Up

2-4 | After Church | learn ●●○

Every double is a spinner — the busiest and most open of the fives games.

Deal. Each player draws **5 tiles**. The rest form the boneyard.

Play. The first player in the first hand is chosen by lot; thereafter the player who dominoed starts, and after a blocked hand the lead is chosen by lot again. Lead any tile. Add a tile matching an open end. **Every double is a spinner:** when a double is played, the first and second tiles added to it must go against its two long sides before a third tile may be played against an end, so arms can grow from a double in up to four directions. A double counts the total of its pips on both exposed ends until tiles have been played against **both** of its sides, after which it no longer counts toward the total (although its ends remain open for play). A player who cannot play draws from the boneyard until they get a playable tile (played at once) or the boneyard is empty, then passes; an empty boneyard does not stop the hand. The hand ends when a player dominoes or all are blocked.

Scoring. After each tile is played, total all the open arm-ends. If the total is a multiple of five, the player scores that total **divided by five**. A double at an arm-end counts its full pips. At the end of the hand, each player's remaining pips are totaled, rounded to the nearest five, divided by five, and **subtracted** from their score. The game is played to **61 points** (a cribbage board is ideal). The final hand is played out; if one or more players reach 61 or more, the highest score wins, and ties are broken by further hands.

Partnership games with no boneyard, where a double or a score earns another turn —

Seven Rocks

4, in two partnerships | After Church | learn ●●○

A no-boneyard partnership fives game, also called Decimal or Texas Dominoes.

Deal. 7 tiles each; there is no boneyard.

Play. The first lead is by lot; thereafter the player who dominoed leads (by lot after a blocked hand); the lead may be any tile. Match the ends; doubles are

turned crosswise and count the total of their pips. The **first double played (and only the first) is the spinner** — first two tiles on its sides, then two on its ends, giving four arms; once both sides of the spinner are built on it counts like any other turned double (its ends remain open for play but it now scores as a plain double). A player who cannot play passes (there is no boneyard).

Scoring. After each play, if the open ends (two, three, or four) total a multiple of five (5–30), the player scores that number; a double at an arm-end counts its full pips. At the hand's end each player totals their remaining pips, rounds to the nearest five, and **subtracts** it from their score. Play to **250 points**.

Seven-Toed Pete

4 | After Church | learn ●●○

A fives race — score, or play a double, and you go again.

Deal. Four players take **7 tiles each**; there is no boneyard.

Play. The first lead is decided by lot; thereafter the lead rotates. The lead must be a **double or a scoring tile** ([0-5], [1-4], [2-3], [4-6], [5-5]); a player holding none passes the lead onward. Match the ends of the tiles; doubles are turned crosswise. The **first double played (and only the first) is the spinner** — the first two tiles against it go on its sides, then the next two on its ends, forming a four-armed cross. A **scoring play** is one that makes the open ends of the layout total a multiple of five (a double at an arm-end counts both its ends; a double stops counting once tiles are on both its sides). A player who cannot play at all passes. **Whenever you play a double or make a scoring play you take another turn**, and keep taking turns until you make a play that neither scores nor is a double. If your **last** tile scores or is a double you are “**washed up**” and the others play on. The hand ends

when the game blocks, or when a player dominoes with a last tile that neither scores nor is a double.

Scoring. Score the open-ends total whenever it is a multiple of five; the winner (the player who dominoes, or the fewest pips if blocked) scores the pips left in the opponents' hands. Usually all scores are **divided by five** (rounding an end-total to the nearest five first) — so 3 points for making the ends total 15, and 7 for winning when opponents hold 33 pips.

2–3-player version. Deal 7 tiles each and put the rest in a boneyard. A player who cannot play (including a first player with no double or scoring tile) draws until able; a player whose last tile scores or is a double draws for the extra turn; leave two tiles undrawn with two players, one with three. When the boneyard is empty, a stuck player passes.

Horse Race (Race Horse)

2–4 | After Church | learn ●●○

The wide-open fives game where every double branches the tree.

Deal. 2 players take **7 each**; 3 players **6 each**; 4 players **5 each**. The rest form the boneyard.

Play. The first lead is by lot; thereafter the previous hand's winner leads (again by lot after a blocked hand); the lead may be any tile. Match the ends.

Every double is a spinner, turned across the end it joins and counting the total of its pips on both exposed ends; when a second tile is added to a double it goes on the free **side**, after which the double stops counting.

Playing a double or making a scoring play earns another turn, continuing until you make a play that neither scores nor is a double. A player who cannot play **draws** from the boneyard until able (the drawn tile is played at once, ending the turn even if it scores) or the boneyard empties, then passes.

Scoring. After each play, if the arm-ends total a multiple of five, peg **the total $\div 5$** (e.g. 4 for a total of 20; a double at an arm-end counts its full pips). The winner (the player who dominoes, or fewest pips if blocked — ties both score) pegs the opponents' remaining pips rounded to the nearest five and divided by five. Play to **61 points**. (*Variation: do not divide scores by five; instead, at the hand's end each player subtracts their own remaining pips, rounded to the nearest five, from their score, and the game target is raised to 200–250.*)

A relative that scores for matching the ends rather than making fives —

Bergen

2–4 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Score for making the open ends match — ‘double-headers’ and ‘triple-headers.’

Deal. With 2 or 3 players, 6 tiles each; with 4 players, 5 each. The rest form the boneyard, but **two tiles of the boneyard are reserved and never drawn** (stack them together to mark them).

Play. The player with the **lowest double** leads it; play continues clockwise. Add a tile to either end, matching the touching ends; doubles are placed crosswise but are not spinners. A player who cannot play draws from the boneyard until able or until only the two reserved tiles remain, after which a player unable to play passes.

Scoring. You score **2 points** for a **double-header** — a play that makes both open ends of the line show the same number. You score **3 points** for a **triple-header** — a play that makes one end match a double standing at the other end (three exposed ends of the same suit, counting the crosswise double's two ends). A player within 2 points of winning scores only 1 for a double- or triple-header; within 3 points, only 2. The player who dominoes or wins a blocked round scores **2 points**. The game is **15 points** for two

players and **10 points** for three or four. In a blocked game the simplest and most common rule is that the player with the **lowest pip total** wins (a tie means no score).

Trains

Each player builds their own line of tiles out from a shared central double.



From a communal ‘foot’ to private trains, growing in intricacy —

Chicken Foot

2–4 | After Church | learn ●●○

Every double must sprout a three-toed ‘foot’ before play can move on.

Deal. Shuffle face down. Each player draws **5 tiles**. The rest form the boneyard (the “chicken yard”). The game is played in **7 rounds**, one for each double, starting from the **[6-6]** and working down to the **[0-0]**.

Opening a round. The holder of the round’s double places it in the centre (the [6-6] in round one, the next double down in each following round). If no one holds it, players draw in turn until it appears (or, by agreement, start the round with the next-highest double instead). The opening double must first be surrounded by a **matching tile on each of its four sides** before any other play: going clockwise, each player adds a tile of that suit to a free side; a player who cannot must draw from the chicken yard, playing it if it fits, otherwise passing. Play then radiates from the four exposed ends.

Play. In turn, add one tile to any open end, matching that end. A player who cannot play draws one tile from the chicken yard and plays it if possible, otherwise passes.

The chicken foot. Whenever a player lays a **double** (crosswise, against a matching end) they call “**Chickie [number]!**” — and **no tile may be played anywhere else** until that double is completed into a “foot”: **three more**

matching tiles are laid on its far side (one straight out and two angled, like a bird's toes). A player who cannot add to the open foot must draw and, failing that, pass. Once the three toes are down, normal play resumes from any open end. (If the three tiles needed to complete a foot have all already been played, the round ends there.)

Ending and scoring. A round ends when a player empties their hand or when no one can play. Each player scores the **pips** left in their hand, with the **[0-0] worth 50** (some play it as 25). After all seven rounds, the **lowest total wins**.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *Invented by Louis and Betty Howsley in 1986 — a modern classic.*

Mexican Train

2-4 | After Church | learn ●●○

Build your own train out from a shared engine; mark it open when you get stuck.

Deal. Shuffle face down. Deal **9 tiles each to 2 players, 8 each to 3, or 6 each to 4**. The rest form the boneyard (the “rail yard”). The game is played in **7 rounds**, the engine counting down one double each round from the **[6-6]** to the **[0-0]**.

The engine. Each round begins with a double placed in the centre as the **engine** — the [6-6] in round one, the [5-5] in round two, and so on down to the [0-0] in round seven. The holder of that double places it; if no one holds it, all players draw one tile simultaneously and repeat until it appears (redeal the round if it can never be drawn). *(A quicker option: whoever holds the highest double in hand starts the round with it.)*

First turn. Beginning with the engine-setter and going clockwise, each player builds their **own train** — a single line of tiles radiating from the engine toward themselves — laying **as many matching tiles as they can in**

one go. A player who cannot start a train marks its place with their personal marker.

Later turns (one play each). In turn, if you can, you must play **one tile** onto the end of an available line, in this order of obligation: (1) if a double anywhere is unsatisfied (see below), you **must** play on it; otherwise you may play on (2) the end of **your own** train, (3) the end of **another player's** train that carries a marker, or (4) the **Mexican Train** — a communal line that any player may start (its first tile must match the engine) and that is thereafter open to everyone. If you cannot play, **draw one tile** from the rail yard and play it if possible; if you still cannot, place your **personal marker** on your own train (opening it to all) and pass. Playing on your own marked train removes your marker; playing on another's marked train removes theirs.

Doubles. A double is laid crosswise and **must be “satisfied.”** The player who lays it takes an **extra tile immediately** (which may, but need not, go on the double), and until a tile is added to that double, each following player is **obliged to play on it** — drawing, and marking their own train, if they cannot. Mark the open double so everyone can see the obligation.

Ending and scoring. A round ends the instant a player lays their last tile (scoring **0**) or the game blocks (rail yard empty and no one can play). Every other player scores the **total pips** left in their hand. After all seven rounds, the **lowest total wins**.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *A private-train game that swept American game nights from the 1990s on.*

Garrafina

2-4 | After Church | learn ●●○

A Spanish trains game — private trains that open the instant you have to pass.

Deal. Each player draws **7 tiles** (the player who shuffled draws last). With four players all 28 tiles are dealt; with three players the 7 leftover tiles form a face-down heap (the *montón*); with two players there are **two** such 7-tile heaps.

Starting. In the first hand the holder of the **highest double** leads it (the [6-6] in the four-player game). In later hands the role of starting player rotates anticlockwise — the previous starter shuffles, and the next player to their right becomes the new starter and leads **any** double. If the starting player holds no double, they pass and the next player to the right leads a double (and so on), though the original starter still shuffles for the following hand.

Play. Each player builds their **own train** outward from the central double, so the layout radiates as a star; play is anticlockwise and **you must play if you can**. The first tile of your train must match the central double; each later tile must match the free end of your own train. Further doubles are laid across the line but **start no new branches**. Normally you extend **your own** train, which is **private**. A player who cannot play **passes** — and a passed train becomes available: on your turn you may instead play on **another player's train if that player has passed and its end number has not changed since**. (If a player passed because they had no tile for the central double, another player may **start their train for them**.) The moment a non-double is added to a passed player's train — changing its end number — it becomes **private again** until its owner passes once more. (Spanish players simply remember which trains are open; if you prefer, mark an open train with a coin and remove it when someone plays there.)

Ending and scoring. Play ends when a player lays their last tile, or the game blocks (no one can play). The winner is the player who went out, or — if blocked — the one with the **fewest pips** left. Each loser loses points equal to their remaining pips (or, in a blocked game, the difference between their total and the winner's), and the winner scores the sum of those losses, so the

scores always total zero. A blocked-game tie for fewest pips means **no winner and no score**. Play an agreed number of deals (say 12) or until someone reaches +100, whichever comes first.

Three- and two-player heap exchange. With three players the *montón* may be taken **once per deal, unseen, in exchange for a whole hand**: the starting player, if they have no double, may discard their hand and take the heap (then lead a double if they now have one); or the player who leads the opening double may immediately swap their **other six** tiles for the heap; or a later player may swap their seven-tile hand for the heap just before their first turn. Discarded tiles are out of play. **If a player who took the heap loses, their loss is doubled** and added to the winner's score. The two-player game works the same way with **two** heaps — a player may even exchange twice — with the loss **doubled** for one exchange or **quadrupled** for two.

Correlativa (Mexican variant). Played the same way, but the three- and two-player games use **no heap exchange**: the undealt tiles form a **boneyard**, and a player who cannot play **draws** from it one tile at a time until able to play or it is empty (then passes).

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *A Spanish favourite; its Mexican cousin is called Correlativa.*

Trick-Taking & Trump Games

Card games in disguise. The tiles behave like a deck — they fall into suits, one suit is named trump, and you gather tricks. If your family plays Euchre or 42 around the kitchen table, you’re already home.



Plain trump games — name a trump and take tricks —

Domino Euchre

2–4, best as four in two partnerships | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

The card game Euchre in tiles — bowers, ‘going alone,’ and all.

Deal. The deal passes left each round. Each player gets **5 tiles**. The dealer turns one boneyard tile face up as the **turn-up**; its higher end proposes trump, and it stays exposed.

Ranking. In non-trump suits the double is highest, then 6 down to blank. The **trump suit has eight tiles**: the **double of trump (“right bower”)** is highest, then the **double of the suit one below trump (“left bower”)** — if blanks are trump the [6-6] is the left bower — then the remaining trump tiles. Any non-double tile containing the trump number is always a trump.

Bidding. Beginning left of the dealer and going clockwise, each player either **accepts** the turned-up trump (optionally declaring “**alone**”) or **passes**; accepting ends the auction. If all four pass, the turn-up is discarded and, starting again at the dealer’s left, each may **name a different trump** or pass — if all pass again the hand is void and redealt. When the turn-up trump is accepted, the dealer takes that tile into hand and discards one face down.

Play. The trump-maker leads (announcing which suit a non-trump, non-double lead belongs to). Players must **follow suit** if able; otherwise they may trump or play anything. A trick is won by the highest trump, else the highest tile of the suit led; its winner leads on. If the maker went “alone,” their partner sits out. Five tricks are played.

Scoring. Game is **5 points**. The trump-making side scores **2** for all five tricks (a “march”), **1** for three or four tricks; taking fewer than three, they are “**euchred**” and the opponents score **2**. Playing **alone**: all five tricks = **4**; three or four = **1**; fewer than three = euchred, opponents score **2**.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 Adapted from Euchre in 19th-century America, for households that frowned on cards.

Domino Loo

2-4 | After Church | learn ●●○

A trick-and-pool gambling game: win no trick and you’re ‘loosed.’

Deal. The deal passes left each round; for a pooled game each player stakes chips first (see scoring). Each player gets **5 tiles**; the dealer turns a boneyard tile face up to set trump (its higher end). In turn a player may **take the “miss”** — discard the hand and draw a fresh one (draw six and discard one with 2–3 players; draw all seven remaining and discard two with four) — or, with 3–4 players, **drop out** of the hand. If the dealer keeps their hand they may swap the turn-up tile for a discard.

Play. Tiles rank blank (low) to 6 (high), the double highest in its suit; trump tiles are always trumps. Play is largely forced, in order: you **must lead a trump if you hold two or more**; you **must lead a trump after winning a trick**; you **must follow suit** if able; unable to follow, you **must trump**; only with no trump and none of the suit may you play anything (and you are **not**

obliged to beat tiles already played). A trick is won by the highest trump, else the highest tile of the suit led; the winner leads on, announcing which end sets the suit.

Scoring. The pool holds five chips from each player plus five from the dealer. After play each player takes **one-fifth of the pool per trick** won. A player who stays in but wins **no trick** is “**loosed**” and must pay the whole pool amount into the next pool (pools can balloon quickly, so a cap is wise). *Two-player variant:* play for points — 1 per trick, -5 for being loosed, game to 15. A closely related game, **Rounce**, uses pre-dealt “dummy” hands, lets a stuck player play any tile, and has everyone start at 15 and subtract 1 per trick (first to zero wins).

A BIT OF HISTORY

After the old gambling card game Loo.

Bid for a contract, then take tricks —

Moon

3 | After Church | learn ●●○

Bid, name a trump, and take tricks — or ‘shoot the moon’ for all seven.

The set, suits, and rank. Remove every tile of the zero suit **except the [0-0]**, leaving 22 tiles. There are seven suits (0–6); the **double is the highest tile of its suit**, and each non-double ranks within a suit by its other end. When a number is trumps, every tile containing it is a trump; the zero “suit” has only the [0-0].

Deal. Each player draws **7 tiles**; the one leftover tile stays face down in the middle.

Bidding. Clockwise, each player once either passes or bids a number from **4 to 7**, or **21** (“shooting the moon,” a bid to win all seven tricks); each bid must

beat the last. The high bidder takes the middle tile, then discards one tile face down. Before leading, they name trumps: any of the seven numbers, or **doubles** (the seven doubles ranked [6-6] high down to [0-0]) as a separate suit, or **no trump** (“follow me”).

Play. The high bidder leads any tile. If a trump is led, others must follow with trumps if able; if a non-trump is led, its higher end sets the suit to follow. A player unable to follow may play anything. The highest trump wins, or if none is played, the highest tile of the suit led; the winner leads on.

Scoring. If the bidder wins at least as many tricks as bid, they score the amount of the bid (no bonus for overtricks); if they fall short, they score **minus** the bid. Each of the other two players scores **1 point per trick** they win, regardless. The game ends when a player reaches **21 points** (a successful 21-bid wins outright).

Four-player Moon. Use the full 28-tile set; two partnerships; deal 7 each. The lowest bid is 4 (up to 7 or 21). The high bidder names trump and leads. If the bidding team wins at least the bid in total tricks, they score **1 point per trick they won** (which may exceed the bid); if they fall short they lose the amount of the bid; the other team always scores 1 per trick won. A successful 21-bid scores +21. The first team to **21 points** wins.

Texas 42

4, in two fixed partnerships | After Church | Learn ●●●

The great one — Texas’s own trick-and-trump game, taken seriously wherever it’s played.

Suits, rank, and values. There are seven suits — blanks, ones, twos, threes, fours, fives, sixes — and the **double is the highest tile of its suit**. Each non-double belongs to the two suits of its numbers, ranking within a suit by the other end. When one suit is trumps, **every tile containing that number is a trump** (ranked by the other end, with the double highest). Two “count”

values matter: **[6-4] and [5-5] are worth 10 points** each, and **[5-0], [4-1], [3-2] are worth 5 points** each. Each of the 7 tricks is also worth 1 point, giving **42 points** in every hand.

Deal. Each player takes **7 tiles**, stood on edge so only its owner can see them.

Bidding. Each player, once, in clockwise order, either passes or makes a bid higher than the previous one. The lowest bid is **30** (a contract for the bidder's team to win at least 30 points), rising to 41, then **1 mark** (equal to 42), 2 marks, and so on; a bid of 1 mark or more contracts to win **all** the points, or to play a special contract. The highest opening bid is 2 marks (except to play Plunge). If all four pass, the tiles are reshuffled and redealt.

Play. The high bidder names the trump suit (or a special contract) and leads to the first trick. Players must **follow suit** if able; a player who cannot follow may play anything. A trick is won by the highest trump in it, or if it contains no trump by the highest tile of the suit led; the winner leads to the next trick. (When a non-trump is led, its higher end determines the suit.)

Special contracts (only after bidding 1 mark or more): **Nello** — the bidder tries to lose every trick, their partner sits out, there are no trumps, and doubles form their own suit; **Plunge** — the bidder must hold at least four doubles and bid at least 4 marks, the partner names trump, and the team must win all seven tricks; **Sevens** — every tile played must be as close as possible to a total of 7 pips, and the team must win all seven tricks; **No Trump ("Follow Me")** — no trump suit, with doubles either high or low as announced.

Scoring. Scores are kept in marks. A bid of 30–41 scores **1 mark** if the team makes it; higher bids score the number of marks bid. If the bidding team is **set** (fails), the opponents score the marks the bidders would have won. The game ends when a team reaches **7 marks**. (A common alternative keeps score in points rather than marks.)

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *The story goes that 42 was invented in 1887 by two Texas boys switched for playing cards; in 2011 it became the official State Domino Game of Texas.*

Score melds first, then play for tricks —

Domino Pinochle

3 | After Church | learn ●●●

Score your melds first, then play for tricks — Pinochle in dominoes.

Deal. The dealer deals **9 tiles** to each player, three at a time, leaving one tile — the **widow** — in the boneyard. The deal and the chip supply rotate left each hand.

Melding. The dealer turns the widow face up and names its suit(s). Starting at the dealer's left, each player may lay down **melds** — three consecutively-numbered tiles of one suit (blank = 0), or three consecutively-numbered doubles ([0-0] lowest) — and the **widow may be used by any player** as if in hand. Melds are paid by the dealer in chips: two hand-tiles + the widow = **2**; three hand-tiles = **3**; three hand-tiles in the widow's suit = **4**; a widow that extends the sequence to four tiles = **5** (the same scale applies to double-melds).

Play. The player left of the dealer leads. A tile's suit is its **higher** end; within a suit the double is highest, blank lowest. Follow suit if able; the highest tile of the suit led wins the trick and leads on, through all nine tricks. The winner of the last trick takes the widow.

Scoring. After the tricks: each **trick = 1 point**; each captured "**nickel**" ([0-5], [1-4], [2-3]) = **5**; each captured "**dime**" ([4-6], [5-5]) = **10**. First to **250 points** wins — and since melds are counted before the tricks are played, a hand can be won in the meld phase.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 Modelled on the card game Pinochle.

A Hearts-style game — avoid taking the scoring tiles —

Eleven Point Black Tile

3-4 | After Church | learn ●●●

A Hearts-style game: dodge the double-blank and the threes, or take them all.

Deal. With 3 players, **9 tiles each** (one tile left face down); with 4 players, **7 each**. The first lead is chosen by drawing tiles (highest pip total). Each player then chooses **3 tiles to pass to the left**, placing them face down before picking up the three passed from the right.

Ranking. There are eight suits of seven tiles, and each tile belongs to two of them. In a number suit (0-6) the double ranks highest, then the others by the other end. The **doubles suit** contains all seven doubles, ranked [6-6] high to [0-0] low. There are **no trumps**.

Play. The first player may lead or pass the lead to the left. The leader plays a tile and **names which of its two suits** is in play (for a double, “doubles” or the number). Players must **follow suit** if able (if doubles were led, you must play a double if you can); a player who cannot follow discards any tile and cannot win. The highest tile of the suit led wins the trick and leads next. (With 3 players, the winner of the first trick takes the spare face-down tile.) Play continues until all tiles are played.

Scoring. The **counters** are the [0-0], worth **4 points**, and **each of the seven tiles of the 3-suit, worth 1 point** — 11 points per deal, and taking them is bad (lowest score wins). **Shooting the moon:** a player who takes all 11 points scores **0** and gives each opponent **22**. The game ends when a player reaches **61 or more**; the lowest score wins.

Variants. 21 Point Black

Tile: the counters are instead the ten tiles totalling 5, 6, or 7 pips (1 point each) plus the [0-0] worth 11 — 21 per deal, game to 210. *30 Point Black Tile:* as the 21-point game, plus the [1-1] worth 9 — 30 per deal, game to 210.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *Dominoes' answer to Hearts — right down to shooting the moon.*

An intricate two-hander after the card game Sixty-Six —

Bingo (dominoes)

2 | After Church | learn ●●●

A rich two-hander after the card game Sixty-Six (nothing to do with the caller's game).

Ranking and values. Blanks count as 7. The [0-0] (“Bingo”) beats every tile, even trumps. There are seven suits (1–6 and blank-as-7), one of them trump each hand; the double is highest in each suit, and a non-double non-trump tile belongs to its two suits. Point values: **double of trump = 28; other doubles = the sum of their ends** (so [0-0] = 14, or 28 if blanks are trump); **other trump tiles = the sum of their ends**; the two tiles whose ends total ten, [6-4] and [0-3], = 10 even when not trump; everything else = 0. Winning the **14th (last) trick = 10** extra.

Deal. Each player draws **7 tiles**; the non-leader turns a boneyard tile face up to set trump (its higher end). The winner of a deal leads the next.

Play. In **phase one** (while the boneyard lasts) the leader plays any tile and the opponent responds with any tile: the [0-0] wins any trick it joins; otherwise a trump beats non-trumps and the higher trump wins; with no trump, the **higher end of the led tile** sets the suit and the higher tile of that suit wins. The winner stores both tiles face down, both players draw (winner

first), and the winner leads on. **Phase two** begins when the boneyard empties (or a player “closes”): the second player must now **follow suit and win if possible** (the [0-0] counts as a blank-suit tile for following).

Declaring doubles. When leading, a player may show held doubles for a bonus — two = 20, three = 40, four = 50, five = 60, six = 70, all seven = 3 game points; +10 if the [0-0] is among them — the bonus counting once the declarer has won a trick.

Claiming and scoring. Tricks are kept face down and players must remember their point totals. A player who believes they hold ≥ 70 points claims, ending play; if right they win, if wrong the opponent wins. The winner scores **1 game point** (opponent had ≥ 30), **2** (opponent took a trick but < 30), or **3** (opponent took no trick); a wrong claim gives the opponent 2. A player may also “**close**” in phase one (turn the trump tile down and stop drawing) to try for a quick win. First to **7 game points** wins.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 A 19th-century American favourite once billed as ‘the king of domino games.’

Adding & Counting Games

Reach a target by the pip-arithmetic of the tiles.



Pip arithmetic, from landing on milestones to a full cribbage board —

Italian Dominoes

2–5 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Build a shared running total and score for landing exactly on the milestones.

Deal. Each player draws a hand — 2 players **8 tiles**, 3 players **7**, 4–5 players **4** each — and the rest form the boneyard. The lead passes left each hand.

Play. On your turn you either **draw a tile** from the boneyard or **discard one tile face up** onto the shared tableau (lay tiles side by side to keep the running count readable). As you place a tile, announce the **cumulative total** of all pips on the tableau. The round ends once the total reaches **100 or more**. There is no penalty for tiles left in hand.

Scoring. When the cumulative total lands **exactly** on a milestone, the player who placed that tile scores: **30 → 1 point, 50 → 2, 70 → 4, 100 → 8**. The first player to reach **50 points** wins. (*Variants: a player who sets a double may set a second tile as well; a four-player game may be played in partnerships.*)

Domino Twenty-One

2–5 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Blackjack with tiles — draw close to 21 without busting against the bank.

Stakes. One player is the **banker** and all bets are against the bank. A player pays a fixed price **per tile** held, and the banker matches it with the **square** of the number of tiles (a 2-tile hand pays $4\times$, a 3-tile hand $9\times$, and so on up to nine tiles).

Deal and play. Each player draws **2 tiles** to start. In turn, a player either **stands** or **takes a hit** (draws another tile, paying for it), continuing as long as they wish. Each time a player takes or refuses a tile they must expose one tile, keeping two face down. The banker plays last. A total over **21** is a **bust** and loses at once.

Scoring the tiles. A tile counts its **pip total** (0–12); a **double** may instead count **half** its pips ($[4-4] = 4$ or 8); a **blank end** may count **0 or 7** ($[0-4] = 4$ or 11); the $[0-0] = 0, 7, \text{ or } 14$. Aim for the highest total not over **21**. The banker pays players who beat the bank and collects from those who tie or fall short. A three-tile 21 containing the $[0-0] - [0-0]+[5-6]+[4-6]$, $[0-0]+[5-6]+[5-5]$, $[0-0]+[6-6]+[3-6]$, or $[0-0]+[6-6]+[4-5]$ — beats every other hand. The bank rotates left after each hand.

Domino Cribbage

2 | After Church | learn ●●●

Card Cribbage in tiles: peg to 61 with fifteens, runs, pairs, and a crib.

Deal. One player is the **dealer** (the role alternates each hand). Mix all 28 tiles; each player draws **6**. After looking at their hand, each player discards **2 tiles face down** into the **crib** — a four-tile hand that the dealer will score at the end.

Play. The dealer turns one boneyard tile face up as the **starter** (it counts for both players at the end; if it is a double, the dealer scores 1). The other 15 boneyard tiles are unused. The non-dealer plays a tile face up and calls its pip total; the dealer plays and calls the running total; and so on alternately, **never taking the running total past 31**. A player who cannot play without

exceeding 31 says “**Go**,” and the other continues while able. On reaching exactly 31 — or when neither can play — reset the count to zero (the opponent of the last to play goes next). Continue until all tiles are played. Scores made **during play** (from your own consecutive tiles, not the starter): bringing the total to exactly **15** = 2; a **pair** (a tile equalling the previous total) = 2, a **triplet** = 6, a **fourth** = 12; a **run** of three or more consecutive totals (in any order) = 1 per tile; reaching exactly **31** = 2; being nearest to 31 before a reset = 1; playing the last tile with a final total under 31 = 1.

Scoring after play (the “show”). Each hand is combined with the starter and scored: any combination of tiles totalling **15** = 2 each; a **run** of three or more = 1 per tile; a **pair** = 2, a **pair royal** (three equal totals) = 6, a **double pair royal** (four) = 12. Tiles may be reused in different combinations. The non-dealer counts their hand first, then the dealer counts their hand, then the dealer counts the crib as a separate hand. The first player to **61 points** (once around a cribbage board) wins; a longer game goes to 121.

A BIT OF HISTORY



Said to have been devised in RAF officers' messes during the Second World War.

Fishing (Capture) Games

Play a tile to capture matching tiles from a row on the table.



Capturing from the table, from simple flanking to totalling melds —

Castle Rock (fishing game)

2-6 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

A capture game — trap a tile between two of its suit and scoop it up.

Deal. Draw for dealer (highest tile). Each player gets a hand of **2 tiles**. Four tiles are drawn from the boneyard, laid in a row **side by side** face down (no one may arrange them), then turned face up in that random order. **Only the end of the row on the dealer's right is played on** — block the other end with a marker. The rest stay in the boneyard. The deal passes clockwise; the player left of the dealer begins.

Play. On your turn: (1) add one tile from your hand alongside the open end of the row; (2) optionally make one or more **captures**; (3) draw a replacement tile from the boneyard (nothing once it is empty, so hands then shrink). **A tile is captured when it lies between two tiles of the same suit**; if that middle tile is also of the same suit, you may optionally capture all three. Captures may be made **anywhere** in the row, need not be created by the tile you just played, and can be taken by a later player if missed. After a capture, squeeze the row closed; any new captures this creates may also be taken. Captured tiles are stacked face down in front of you. The hand ends when all hands are empty (uncaptured tiles remaining on the row).

Scoring. Each player scores **+1 per tile captured** and **–1 per tile left in the row** at the hand’s end (the leftover row is “the Devil’s hand,” so clearing it avoids the penalty — a player can even finish with a negative score). Game to **50 points**; if several pass 50 in one hand the highest wins.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 Built by Joe Celko on Fredrick Berndt's ideas (and not the same as the Castle Rock solitaire).

Canton

2–4 | After Church | learn ●●○

Play a tile to capture melds off the table — totals of ten and twelve.

Deal. Draw for the lead (highest tile). With 2 players, 7 tiles each; 3 players, 6 each; 4 players, 5 each. The rest form the boneyard.

Play. The layout is a single row built by placing tiles **side to side, not end to end**. The first player lays one tile face up and immediately draws a replacement. Each player in turn adds a tile to the left or right end of the row and, using the tile just played together with tiles at the end(s) of the row, may **capture a meld**; then draws a replacement. Capturing earns another turn (with another draw). The melds are:

- a **pair** — your played tile plus a tile from either end of the row, the two totalling **12** (worth 12 points);
- a **triplet** — your played tile plus the tiles at *both* ends of the row, or plus the *two adjacent tiles* at one end, the three totalling **10, 20, or 30** (worth 10, 20, or 30 points respectively).

Captured tiles are stacked face down in front of you and the points recorded at once. Once the boneyard is empty, play continues without drawing.

Scoring. Melds score as above. When a player empties their hand, play stops and that player additionally scores **1 point per pip** left in the other players' hands. A two-player game is played to **1,000 points** (use a lower target with more players).

A BIT OF HISTORY

🎲 *Fredrick Berndt's game, inspired by the Chinese Tsung Shap, 'disputing tens.'*

Draw-and-Discard (Rummy-Style)

Games

Draw and discard to collect matching sets.



Collecting Dominoes

2-4 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

A children's rummy — draw, discard, and collect tiles of a suit.

Deal. Arrange all 28 tiles face down in a hollow **square wall**, seven tiles to a side (Mahjong-style). Starting with the youngest player and going in turn, each player takes **three consecutive tiles** from the wall as their hand.

Play. On your turn, **draw a tile from the wall** and either keep it (adding it to your hand) or **discard it** face up to the centre. The next player may instead **pick up that discard** rather than draw from the wall. A discard not taken by the time the turn comes back round to its maker is **dead** — turned face down and out of play (you can never reuse your own discard). The game ends when the wall is exhausted.

Scoring. Divide your tiles into groups of the **same suit** (no tile in more than one group). A group scores per tile: two tiles = 2 each (4 points), three = 4 each (12), four = 6 each (24), five = 8 each (40), six or seven = 10 each (60 / 70). **Unmatched** tiles cost points: one unmatched = -1; two = -3 each; three or more = -5 each. The highest total wins.

Three Dozen

2-5 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

A rummy for stakes: be first to hold three ‘pairs.’

Deal. Each player puts up an equal stake. A random lead is chosen for the first hand. Each player is dealt **5 tiles**, except the lead, who gets **6**.

Play. The aim is to hold **three “pairs.”** A pair is either two **consecutive doubles** (with [0-0] counting as both highest and lowest — e.g. [6-6]+[0-0], [5-5]+[6-6], ...) or two tiles whose **pips total 12** (there are 34 such pairs; only [0-0]+[6-6] and [0-1]+[5-6] have a single possible mate). On the opening turn, if the lead can meld all three pairs at once they show them and win immediately; otherwise they show any one or two pairs and **discard one tile** to the centre. In turn, each player either **takes the last discard** (if it completes a pair) or **draws from the boneyard**, melds what they can, and **discards** one tile to the centre. Play continues until someone completes their **third pair**; if the boneyard empties with no winner, the discards are reshuffled into it and play continues.

Scoring. The winner collects the stakes — **from every player** if the winning third pair was completed with a tile drawn from the boneyard, or **only from the discarder** if it was completed with the last discard.

A BIT OF HISTORY

📖 *A Western take on the Korean pair-matching game Tjak-ma-tcho-ki.*

Hand-Forming & Gambling Games

Form the best hand from a few tiles, and bet on it.



Totalling to nine, Pai-Gow style —

Bandar Q

6–8, one acting as banker | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

A fast Indonesian banking game — two tiles, and closest to nine wins.

Betting and deal. Players place bets (between an agreed minimum and maximum) against the banker, who deals **2 tiles** to each player and to themselves. A hand's value is its **total pips modulo 10** — the units digit only (0–9); for example 16 pips counts as 6, and 23 pips counts as 3.

Payout. All hands are exposed and compared with the banker's:

- A player with **more** points than the banker, up to 8, wins even money (stake plus an equal amount).
- A player with exactly **9** when the banker has fewer wins **double**.
- A player **equal to or below** the banker loses their stake. (The banker wins ties.)

QiuQiu (Kiu Kiu)

2–6 | Lunchtime | learn ●●●

Indonesia's Pai-Gow-style gambler: split four tiles into two nines.

Deal and betting. Each player who wishes to play puts the agreed **ante** into the pot. The dealer deals **3 tiles face down** to each player. A first round of

poker-style betting follows (check, or bet; then fold, call, or raise). If all but one player fold, that player takes the pot without showing. Otherwise the dealer deals a **4th tile** to each surviving player, and a second betting round follows.

Hand ranking. At the showdown, each player splits their four tiles into **two pairs**; each pair's value is the **units digit of its pip total** (so the aim is 9). Compare the higher-valued pair first, then the lower. The best ordinary hand is **9-9**. Four **special hands** beat all ordinary hands, ranked highest to lowest: **Enam Dewa** ("Six Gods," the four tiles that each contain a six: [3-3], [4-2], [5-1], [6-0]); **Empat Balak** (any four doubles); **Murni Besar** (a hand totalling **at least 39** pips); **Murni Kecil** (a hand totalling **no more than 9** pips). Ties between special hands are impossible; a tie between ordinary hands splits the pot.

Showdown. The highest-ranking hand takes the whole pot.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 Hugely popular in Indonesia, where 'kiu' means nine — the perfect score.

Twist'em (Double-Hand Dominoes)

up to 8 plus a banker | Lunchtime | learn ●●●

A casino Pai-Gow game — set a top hand and a bottom hand against the bank.

Deal. Each player places a bet and receives **3 tiles**; one player (or the house) is the banker.

Play. Arrange your three tiles in a line, side by side, and read the pips **across the top row** and **across the bottom row** to form a **top hand** and a **bottom hand** — each tile may be flipped so that either of its numbers is on top. Each hand's value is its pip total **modulo 10** (drop the tens digit; 9 is high, 0 is low). Set both hands face down. The banker then exposes three tiles and

arranges them into a top and bottom hand the same way. (If a player accidentally sets the top hand to outrank the bottom, the dealer simply rotates the player's tiles 180°.)

Scoring. Compare your top hand against the banker's top and your bottom against the banker's bottom. **Both of your hands win** (or one wins and the other ties) → you win even money; **one wins and one loses** → the bet is a **push** (no money changes hands); otherwise you **lose** your bet. The banker wins when hands tie.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 A patented casino game in the Pai Gow family.

Poker hands made from twenty tiles —

Domino Poker

2-4 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Poker hands built from twenty tiles — royals, straights, and flushes.

Deal. Each player puts an **ante** into the pot. Deal **5 tiles** to each player (regardless of the number of players); the rest are left face down.

Play. Bet as in Straight Poker, clockwise from the eldest hand: on the first round with no bet yet, a player may **check** or **bet**; once someone has bet, each player may **fold**, **call**, or **raise**. Agree a minimum and maximum bet in advance. Betting ends when everyone still in has staked the same amount.

Hand ranking (highest to lowest): **Royal Hand** — all five doubles [2-2], [3-3], [4-4], [5-5], [6-6]; **Straight Sixes** — a run in the sixes suit; **Four of a Kind** — any four doubles; **Straight Fives** — a run in the fives suit; **Full House** — three doubles plus two tiles of one suit; **Straight Fours** — a run in the fours suit; **Three of a Kind** — any three doubles; **Flush** — five tiles of one suit, not in sequence; **One Pair** — any two doubles (ties go to the higher

double); **High Card** — otherwise the highest double, or if none, the highest pip within the highest suit.

Showdown. Surviving players expose their hands and the highest ranking hand takes the pot.

Other Games

A few that stand on their own.



A miscellany, simplest first — a War-like game, a memory game, a layout game, and a game of bluff —

Freeze Out

2 or more | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

A War-like children's game — the last matching tile takes the trick.

Deal. Distribute the tiles as evenly as possible among the players; retire any leftover tiles. Each player arranges their tiles **face down in a line** in front of themselves.

Play. The first player turns up the tile at the **right-hand end** of their line and calls out its **two suits** (one suit for a double). Each other player, in turn, turns up the right-hand tile of their own line. The **trick** — all the turned tiles — is won by the player who turns up the **last** tile belonging to one of the two suits the leader called; that player leads to the next trick. For example, if the leader plays [3-4] (calling threes and fours), then [3-5] takes the lead with its 3, [1-1] has no effect, and [0-4] finally takes the trick with its 4. Play continues until the tiles run out. (*Variant: the leader calls just one suit, and the trick goes to the highest tile of that suit.*)

Concentration

2 or more | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

The memory game: turn up pairs of tiles that total twelve.

Deal. No hands are dealt. Lay all **28 tiles face down** in a grid of 4 by 7.

Play. On your turn, expose any **two** tiles. If the two tiles' pips **total 12**, remove them and take another turn, continuing to expose pairs and collect them until you turn a pair that does not total 12; then turn those two back face down and pass to the next player. Play continues until the grid is empty. (Note that only some tiles pair uniquely — [0-0] must pair with [6-6], and [0-1] with [5-6] — while most tiles have several possible partners that total 12.)

Scoring. The winner is the first player to reach **50 captured tiles** (25 pairs) across successive deals, or another agreed total.

Sevens

2-3 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

A Fan-Tan layout game — build the pyramid and be first to run out.

Deal. Each player draws **7 tiles**; the rest form the boneyard.

Play. The holder of the highest double leads it; if no one holds a double, redeal until someone does. Play clockwise. The tiles are built into a fixed **triangular grid**: the seven doubles form the top row, and a double may be placed next to a double one rank higher or lower. A non-double is placed immediately **below** a tile already in the grid so that its smaller end matches that tile and its larger end is **one pip higher** — following this fixed pattern:

[0-0]	[1-1]	[2-2]	[3-3]	[4-4]	[5-5]	[6-6]
[0-1]	[1-2]	[2-3]	[3-4]	[4-5]	[5-6]	
[0-2]	[1-3]	[2-4]	[3-5]	[4-6]		
[0-3]	[1-4]	[2-5]	[3-6]			
[0-4]	[1-5]	[2-6]				
[0-5]	[1-6]					

[0-0]	[1-1]	[2-2]	[3-3]	[4-4]	[5-5]	[6-6]
[0-6]						

A player who can play **must** do so; a player who cannot must draw one tile from the boneyard instead, or simply pass if the boneyard is empty.

Scoring. The first player to play all their tiles wins.

Divide and Conquer

2 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

A two-player game of perfect-information bluff.

Deal. Each player draws 5 of the ten tiles.

Play. Both players secretly choose one tile from their hand and reveal them at the same time. The **higher** tile wins the point — **unless** the lower tile is an exact **divisor** of the higher, or is exactly **one less** than the higher, in which case the lower tile wins. (So 2 beats 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12; 7 beats 2, 3, 4, 5, 8; 6 beats 4, 7, 12; and so on.) Continue until all five tiles are played. Then the players **swap hands** and play a second round the same way.

Scoring. Score 1 point per tile won. Over the two rounds you must total **at least 6** to win the hand; 5–5 is a tie.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *A domino version of a Claude Soucie card game published by Sid Sackson.*

Solitaire (One-Player) Games

For playing alone with a double-six set and no special equipment.



Pairing & removing — Clear the set by taking tiles away.

Fair Lucy

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

Clear the whole set by lifting off pairs that total twelve.

Setup. Shuffle all 28 tiles face down and set out **seven stacks of three** face-down tiles in a row. Place each of the remaining 7 tiles face up, one on top of each stack.

Play. Remove any **pair of top (face-up) tiles whose pips total 12**, then turn face up the tile beneath each one you removed. Continue removing pairs that total 12 as they become exposed.

Goal. Remove all 28 tiles. Once the bottom tile of a stack is removed, that space stays empty and may not be refilled.

Luzon

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

A grid patience — remove bottom-row pairs totalling twelve.

Setup. Shuffle and lay out **five columns of five** horizontal tiles face down (25 tiles). Turn the remaining 3 tiles face up and set them to one side. Then turn all 25 tiles in the grid face up.

Play. Remove any **pair of tiles on the bottom row** of the columns that **total 12**; you may not remove two vertically-adjacent tiles from the bottom two rows of the same column at once. The 3 set-aside tiles may each be used to make a total of 12 with any tile in the layout, at any time you choose. If all five tiles of a column are removed, you may move any bottom-of-column tile into the empty space.

Goal. Remove every tile.

Polka Dot (Twelves)

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

Draw six, remove any pair totalling twelve, refill, and clear the deck.

Setup. Shuffle the tiles face down to form a boneyard, then draw **6 tiles** and set them face up in a single horizontal row.

Play. Remove any **pair of tiles that totals 12**, set the pair aside, and draw **2 fresh tiles** from the boneyard to replace them in the row. Continue removing 12-pairs and refilling.

Goal. Remove all the tiles. (Play with 4 or 5 face-up tiles for a harder game, or 7 for an easier one. On a larger set, pairs must total the value of the set's highest double — 18 for double-nine, 24 for double-twelve, and so on.)

Sympathy

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Remove each tile one pip smaller than another, down to the six-six.

Setup. Shuffle and draw **4 tiles** face up in a row.

Play. Remove any tile whose pip total is **exactly one less** than the pip total of any other tile currently in the layout. When no more can be removed,

draw **4 more** tiles, placing them on top of tiles still in the layout or into empty spaces, and continue.

Goal. Remove every tile except the [6-6].

Baronet

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

Count up as you flip; a tile leaves when its pips match the count.

Setup. Shuffle all the tiles and lay them face down in a line.

Play. Working from one end, turn tiles face up one at a time while counting aloud “**zero, one, two, three ...**”. Whenever the number you say equals the **pip total of the tile** you turn up, set that tile aside; then continue counting with the next tile. If the total does not match the count, turn the tile back face down. Count up to the value of the set’s highest double (**12** for double-six), then start the count again from zero, working repeatedly along the line.

Goal. Set aside (remove) every tile.

Good Neighbours

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Remove neighbourly tiles — any two adjacent tiles that share a suit.

Setup. Shuffle and draw **12 tiles**, laid face up in **two rows of six**; the rest form the boneyard.

Play. Remove any pair of “**good neighbours**” — two tiles adjacent horizontally, vertically, **or diagonally** that show the same suit on any of their ends. You may remove as many such pairs as you like but **must remove at least one** each turn. Then slide the remaining tiles up and toward the top-left corner to close the gaps, and draw from the boneyard (filling left-to-right, top-to-bottom) back up to two rows of six.

Goal. Remove all the tiles. (On the native double-twelve set the layout is three rows of four and you win by leaving a single tile; on double-nine, three rows of three, also leaving one.)

The Sultan

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

Lay the set in a row and discard matching neighbours until it's gone.

Setup. Shuffle all 28 tiles face down, lay them in a single row, then turn them all face up **without changing their order** (choose one flip direction and keep to it).

Play. Discard any **two adjacent tiles whose touching ends match** (the same number where the tiles meet). Do not discard adjacent tiles that match only vertically. After removing a pair, slide the remaining tiles together so the row is unbroken again, then look for the next matching pair.

Goal. Discard all the tiles, two at a time, in matching pairs.

Squeeze

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Squeeze out matching pairs and runs to clear the entire set.

Setup. Shuffle face down and draw **7 tiles**, placing them in a horizontal row.

Play. Remove any **pair of tiles that have a matching end** (at least one end of one tile equals an end of the other) and that are **separated by one or two tiles** in the row; you may also remove any **run of three or more tiles** in a row that all share matching ends. Where more than one play is possible, you choose. After removing tiles, squeeze the remaining tiles together and keep removing while you can. When no more plays remain, draw **7 fresh tiles** onto the right-hand end of the row and continue.

Goal. Remove every tile (finishing with one or two left is counted a very near win). Your final clear will need three or more tiles in a row with matching ends.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *Devised by David Galt in 1996.*

Castle Rock

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

The Accordion patience in tiles — remove the middle of a matching trio.

Setup. Shuffle all 28 tiles face down as a boneyard. Draw three tiles and place them face up in a row.

Play. Whenever the **first and third** of any three adjacent tiles share a common number, remove the **middle** tile, close the gap, and draw a new tile onto the right-hand end of the row. (Put generally: whenever a single tile is flanked by two tiles that share a number, that middle tile is removed.)

Whether or not you remove a tile, keep drawing new tiles from the boneyard onto the right end and removing tiles wherever the rule allows. If three tiles in a row all share the same number, you may remove either the centre tile **or** all three.

Goal. Work through the entire boneyard and remove **all** the tiles to win.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *Fredrick Berndt's domino take on the card solitaire Accordion.*

Arranging & building — Lay the whole set into an order or shape.

Stack

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●○○

Match every drawn tile to the growing line — one misfit and you’ve lost.

Setup. Shuffle and draw **4 tiles**, setting them face up in a single horizontal line. The rest form the boneyard.

Play. Draw one tile at a time from the boneyard and match one of its ends to **either open end** of the line; both ends may be built on. Each drawn tile that fits must be played.

Goal. Place all 28 tiles in the line. The game is lost the moment a drawn tile cannot be matched to either end.

Traffic

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Build ‘quads’ of four consecutive numbers until the deck is used up.

Setup. Shuffle the tiles face down. Draw **4 tiles** (double-six) and place them face up in front of you.

Play. Arrange the drawn tiles into “**quads**.” A quad is a pair of tiles whose four ends form **four consecutive numbers**, ascending or descending (a blank counts as 0) — for example **[1-2]** then **[3-4]** (1-2-3-4), or **[3-4]** placed before **[5-6]** (3-4-5-6). Each turn you must make **at least one** quad. You may not extend a run beyond four consecutive numbers (only two tiles per quad), and you may not move tiles already placed. Then draw 4 more tiles; any drawn tiles not yet used in a quad stay in play for later turns.

Goal. Use up all the tiles, having made at least one quad on every turn. The game is lost if a turn passes in which you can make no quad.

CrissCross

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Shed the whole deck across a four-armed cross.

Setup. Shuffle all 28 tiles face down to form a draw pile.

Play. Draw a tile and place it face up. Draw the next tile and either play it onto the first (matching an open end) or use it to begin an arm of a central **cross**. The tiles meeting at the centre of the cross do **not** have to match one another. Keep drawing tiles one at a time: each is either added to an open end by matching, or — if it cannot be played on an open end — used to start or extend the cross, until the cross has **four arms**. Once all four arms exist, tiles may be played **only** on the open ends. Any tile that cannot be played is set face down on a **scrap heap**, and you draw the next tile. When the draw pile is exhausted, shuffle the scrap heap to form a new draw pile and continue. You may reshuffle the scrap heap as many times as you like, until no further tile can be placed.

Goal and scoring. The aim is to place every tile. Your score is the number of tiles left unplaced — aim for **zero**. (It goes out roughly one game in five.)

Variations. Deal the first four tiles as the cross; or rule that doubles cannot start the cross (an unplayable double goes straight to the scrap heap); or build three or five spokes instead of four.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *One of a set of modern solitaires by Chris Smyth (2009).*

Up-Down-Stop

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Build two columns, up or down, with doubles as ‘stoppers.’

Setup. Shuffle all 28 tiles face down to form a draw pile. This game builds **columns** in which the *number value* of the tiles matters; each tile has two numbers, one of which is the “active” end that is built upon. At most **two columns** may be in play at once.

Play. Draw a tile and place it horizontally to start a column. Draw the next tile and either start a second column or add it to the first, placing tiles offset in a ladder so the column runs **up or down** (the two columns may run in the same or different directions). The sequence wraps around through the blank (counted as zero): going **up** it runs 3, 4, 5, 6, blank, 1, 2, 3 ...; going **down** it runs 3, 2, 1, blank, 6, 5, 4 Continue drawing: add each tile to a column, or, if it cannot be played, place it face down on a **scrap heap**. **Doubles are stoppers:** if the tile you draw is a double whose number matches the top of a column, place it on that column to **stop** it — this frees you to start a new column later (since only two may be open at a time). A double that cannot stop a column is discarded and takes no further part. When the draw pile runs out, shuffle the scrap heap **once** to form a new draw pile and continue.

Goal and scoring. The aim is to get all tiles into columns. Each tile left out counts one penalty point — except discarded doubles, which do not count. Aim for **zero**.

Variations. Allow only one column, or up to three; allow more than one reshuffle; allow the two starting tiles to be built in both directions.

A BIT OF HISTORY

 A Chris Smyth invention (2009).

The Seven Pis (π)

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Assemble the whole set into seven little π -shaped figures.

Setup. Shuffle all 28 tiles face down to form a draw pile. The layout is built into **π -shaped figures of four tiles** each; a double-six set makes **seven π 's**, using all 28 tiles.

Play. Draw **three** tiles as your hand. On each turn you must play **at least one** tile toward starting or completing any π : you may start one, two or three π 's, play two tiles to one π , and so on, keeping any unplayed tiles in hand. Where two tiles connect, their touching ends must **match**. Tiles cannot be moved once positioned (a tile played horizontally may be built upon from either side). At the end of each turn, draw back up to three tiles in hand. If at any point you cannot place a tile, the game ends.

Goal and scoring. Complete all seven π 's (place every tile). Your score is the number of tiles left in hand — aim for **zero**. Going fully out is genuinely difficult.

Variation. Play with a larger set, increasing the number and size of the π 's accordingly (for a double-nine set, make eleven π 's of five tiles each, with a three-tile back).

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *Another of Chris Smyth's solitaires (2009).*

The Big Clock

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Seat the doubles around a clock face, in their proper order.

Setup. Remove the [0-0]. Shuffle the rest face down. Draw **6 tiles** and lay them out as a **half-circle or straight row** marking clock positions 1 through 6, then place the [0-0] at the start of the layout. The remaining tiles form the boneyard. (On the native double-twelve set you instead lay 12 tiles in a full clock face, positions 1 to 12, with the [0-0] inside pointing at 12 o'clock.)

Play. Draw one tile at a time from the boneyard and **stack it on top of** any layout tile with which it shares a matching end. If you draw a double that cannot be placed, or a double is sitting in the wrong clock position (a “**double in trouble**”), you may move top tiles around the layout — any top tile onto any other top tile that has a matching end — as often as you like, even leaving an empty space, which you then fill with a new tile (ideally the correct double). A non-double that cannot be placed is set aside out of play.

Goal. Get all the doubles on top of the layout, in sequence by clock position ([1-1] at 1 o’clock up through [6-6] at 6). The game is lost if you draw a double that cannot be placed even after moving top tiles.

Dominoes Freecell

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●●

The Freecell patience in tiles — build each suit up in order.

Setup. Take out every tile that has a blank on one or both ends and lay them face up in numerical order — these are fixed **column markers** and never move. Shuffle the remaining tiles and deal them face up in columns beneath the blank markers, with the column under the [0-0] left **empty** and the others as equal as possible; on a double-six set this gives three columns of 3 tiles and three columns of 4. Place each tile with its **higher** number at the top: the top number is its **suit**, the bottom number its **rank**.

Play. Only the **bottom** tile of a column (or a movable run, see below) may be moved. There are four kinds of move:

1. Move the bottom tile to the bottom of another column whose current bottom tile is **one rank higher**, irrespective of suit.
2. Move the bottom tile **up** into the foundation area, placing it above a tile that is one rank **lower of the same suit**.
3. Move the bottom tile into an **empty** column.

4. If several tiles at the bottom of a column already run in **descending rank** (reading downward), irrespective of suit, you may move that whole run together to an empty column, or onto a bottom tile one rank higher than the top of the run.

Goal. Win by stacking every tile onto the foundations, each above the column of its own suit, in increasing rank. Play until you win or become stuck. (The double-six version is fairly easy; larger sets are harder.)

A BIT OF HISTORY

 *After the card game Freecell.*

Patience & stacking — Klondike-style piles.

Patience

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

A Klondike in tiles: free every tile into face-up, connected runs.

Setup. Shuffle face down and lay out **seven columns** of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 tiles. All tiles are face down except the **bottom (nearest) tile of each column**, which is turned face up.

Play. Move a face-up tile onto another face-up tile so that their touching ends match, building connected runs; keep each tile's orientation constant (never turn a tile end-for-end). When you move the exposed tile off a column, turn up the face-down tile now beneath it. An emptied column may be filled with any face-up tile, or with a connected sequence of tiles moved together.

Goal. End with every tile face up and joined in sequence.

The Buccaneer

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●○

Sort into seven stacks, each a double beneath three of its own suit.

Setup. Shuffle and lay out **seven stacks of four** tiles face down. Turn the top tile of each stack face up.

Play. Move any face-up top tile onto any **other** face-up top tile that shows the **same suit on either end**; turn up any face-down tile thereby exposed on top of a stack. No stack may ever hold more than **5 tiles**. If a stack's last tile is moved away, the empty space may be filled **only by a double** (taken from the top of another stack).

Goal. Finish with all tiles face up in seven stacks of four, each stack holding **one of the seven doubles at its bottom** and its other three tiles all sharing that double's suit on one end.

The Jubilee

1 | Lunchtime | learn ●●●

A Klondike-style patience — build the seven suit-runs up to their doubles.

Setup. Shuffle face down. Draw 7 tiles and lay them in a row with their long sides touching; draw 6 more and lay them on top, leaving the far-left tile uncovered; then 5, 4, 3, 2, and finally 1 — producing **seven stacks of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 tiles** (left to right). Turn the top (exposed) tile of each stack face up. Leave room alongside for **seven foundation piles**.

The winning formation. Each foundation is a single-suit run built from a blank up to that suit's double. A foundation is **started with a tile that has a blank end**, then built by keeping one number constant (the suit) while the other end climbs by one each tile — so for suit k it runs $[0-k]$, $[1-k]$, $[2-k]$, ..., $[k-k]$, and every foundation **ends with a double**. Completed, the seven foundations hold all 28 tiles (the blank foundation is just the $[0-0]$).

Play. Only the exposed (face-up top) tile of a stack may be moved. You may move it **onto a foundation**, if it is the next tile in that foundation's run (one end matching the foundation's suit, the other end one higher than the tile beneath it), or **onto the exposed tile of another stack**, following the same build rule (one end matching, the other one higher). Whenever moving a tile leaves a face-down tile exposed on top of a stack, turn it face up; you may not look at face-down tiles. There may never be more than seven stacks, and an emptied stack may be restarted **only with a double** taken from another stack's top.

Goal. Build all seven foundations up to their doubles — that is, transfer all 28 tiles from the stacks into the seven suit-runs.

(The Great Book of Domino Games defines this target only by a diagram; the explicit foundation and build rules given here come from the game's established online implementation, which realises that formation.)

Appendix A: Minor variants not listed separately

A few games you may have heard of are **not** given their own entry above because they are only minor variants of a game already covered — essentially the same game with one rule changed. They are listed here with the entry whose rules to use:

- **Passing Dominoes** (also called *The Passing Game*) — the **Draw** game, with the added option of passing even when you hold a playable tile.
- **Double Draw** — a **Draw** variant with a modified drawing rule.
- **Doubles in the Boneyard** — a **Draw** variant with a special rule for undrawn doubles.
- **Pass and Out** — a **Block** / **Draw** variant with its own passing rule.
- **Block with Spinners** — **Block**, played with the first double as a four-way spinner (so the layout branches, as in Sebastopol or All Fives).
- **Double Bergen** — **Bergen**, played with the first double as a spinner.
- **Hungarian Dominoes** — a Western-European regional form of the **Block** / **Draw** game.
- **Gaple** — the popular Indonesian form of the **Block** game.
- **Gallinazo** — a Colombian form of the partnership **Block** / shedding game.

Appendix B: Glossary of terms & mechanics

The first group defines the vocabulary common to most games; the groups after it cover the specialised terms and mechanics belonging to one family or a single game (named in each entry).

Common terms

- **Ante / stake / pool / pot** — tokens put up before play; the winner takes the pool.
- **Arm** — a branch of the layout growing out from a spinner or central double.
- **Blank** — an end showing zero. (In a few games a blank instead counts as seven — noted where it does.)
- **Blocked game** — a hand in which no one can play; almost always won by the lowest count.
- **Boneyard (stock, sleeping tiles)** — the undealt tiles, left face down to draw from where a game allows. Called the **rail yard** in Mexican Train and the **chicken yard** in Chicken Foot.
- **Counters / chips** — any small tokens used as stakes (the gambling and pool games) or as train markers.
- **Cribbage board** — a pegged scoreboard handy for the fast-scoring games (never required).
- **Crosswise** — a double turned at right angles to the line where it joins.
- **Domino! (chip out, go out)** — to play your last tile and end the hand.
- **Double** — a tile with the same number on both ends, [0-0] through [6-6]; there are seven.
- **Draw** — to take a tile from the boneyard.
- **End** — one of a tile's two halves, showing 0–6 pips.

- **Hand / deal / round / game / match** — a *deal* is one distribution of tiles; a *hand* or *round* is one play-through; a *game* or *match* runs to a target score over several deals.
- **Highest double leads** — a common way to decide the start: whoever holds the highest double plays it first.
- **Lead** — the first tile of a hand; the player who plays it is the leader.
- **Line of play (layout, chain)** — the connected run of played tiles.
- **Match** — to place a tile so its touching end equals the open end it joins. (The usual rule; a few families match by a *total* instead — see *rule of seven*.)
- **Open end** — an exposed number at the edge of the layout, where a tile may be added.
- **Partnership** — two players as a team, seated opposite, whose results are combined.
- **Pass (knock)** — to forgo a turn when unable — or sometimes unwilling — to play; “knocking” the table is the same thing.
- **Pip (spot)** — a dot on a tile. A tile’s **pip total** is the sum of its two ends; a player’s **count** is the pip total of their unplayed tiles.
- **Set (a double)** — to place the opening double of a hand (Sebastopol, Maltese Cross, Sedma, the train engines). (*For other senses see “on set” under Nos and “set/being set” under Texas 42.*)
- **Spinner** — a double that may be built on from all four sides, so the layout branches (see the Fives family, Sebastopol, Maltese Cross, Leyden).
- **Suit** — all the tiles bearing a given number. Every ordinary tile belongs to the two suits of its ends; a double belongs to one.
- **Tile** — a single domino piece, showing two numbers. In the Caribbean games (Jamaican, Haitian, Chiva) tiles are called **bones**.

Block, cross & single-arm games

- **The four arms** — the cross formed when four tiles are played around a central spinner before open play begins (Sebastopol, Maltese Cross).
- **Single-arm** — a line built in one direction only, from just one side of the opening double (One Arm Joe, Sedma, Tiddly-Wink American).

Partnership & regional games

- **Capicú** — going out on a *non-double* that could have been played on either open end; scores a bonus (Quinientos).
- **Chucha / chuchazo** — the *chucha* is the double-blank; a *chuchazo* is going out by playing it as your last tile, for a bonus (Quinientos).
- **Dekabès** — going out on a non-double whose two ends match both open ends of the line; scores double (Haitian).
- **Dominao** — going out on a *double* playable on either end; unlike capicú, no bonus (Quinientos).
- **Hard end** — an open end whose suit is used up (all six of that number already down), so it cannot be extended (Jamaican).
- **Key bone** — the single remaining bone playable between two different hard ends; going out on it scores double (Jamaican).
- **Milo** — a winning play that leaves *both* open ends showing the same suit; scores double and is announced like “domino” (Milo).
- **Pose** — to play the opening bone (Jamaican). **Sport / sporting** — opening with a bone other than the [6-6] when entitled to.
- **Shutout** — winning the required run of games while an opponent wins none (Chiva).
- **Signalling** — the partner gestures permitted in Haitian Dominoes (fist = strong in this number; one finger = at least one more; open palm = none more).

- **Six love** — winning to six points while the opponents are still on zero (Jamaican — the shutout aim).

Matador & Nos

- **Close** — to declare that no further play is possible (Nos) or that you have reached the winning total (Bingo); a correct close scores, a wrong one is penalised.
- **Matador** — a wild tile — the [0-0], [1-6], [2-5] and [3-4] — playable on any open end regardless of the totalling rule, and the only tile that can extend a blank end (Matador, Leyden; matadors are also the wild tiles in Nos's matador games).
- **Nos (the call)** — the shout made by the first player to shed all their tiles, who then collects from each opponent.
- **On set / the set** — in Nos, the player who opens the hand, chooses which of the seventeen games is played, and is paid for the opening double.
- **Rule of seven (total seven)** — the matching rule in which touching ends must add to 7 rather than be equal (Matador, Leyden).

The Fives family (scoring games)

- **Double-header / triple-header** — in Bergen, a play that makes both open ends equal (2 points) / makes an end match a double standing at the far end (3 points).
- **Doubles count full pips** — a double at an open end counts *both* its ends toward the total (so [5-5] contributes 10).
- **Extra turn** — playing a double, or making a scoring play, earns another turn (Seven-Toed Pete, Horse Race; and, for doubles, One Arm Joe and the Tiddly-Winks).
- **Scoring play (scoring the ends)** — a play that makes the open ends total a multiple of five (or, in All Threes and Fives and Threes, of three), scoring that total or a division of it.

- **The Sniff** — the first double played in Sniff: a spinner whose two ends keep counting toward the total for the rest of the game.
- **Washed up** — having gone out on a scoring or double play while the others keep playing (Seven-Toed Pete).

Trains

- **Chicken foot (“Chickie!”) / toes** — a played double must be completed by three matching tiles (the toes), forming a foot, before any other play may resume (Chicken Foot).
- **Engine** — the central double that starts each round (Mexican Train).
- **Marker** — a token showing a train is open (Mexican Train), removed when the owner next plays there. Garrafina needs none — players simply remember.
- **The Mexican Train** — the single communal train that anyone may start and build on (Mexican Train).
- **Montón (heap)** — the spare seven-tile hand a player may swap for, unseen (Garrafina). **Correlativa** is the Mexican form of Garrafina that replaces the heap exchange with an ordinary boneyard to draw from.
- **Private train vs. open (public) train** — a player’s train is private until they cannot extend it and mark it open to all; playing on it again makes it private (Mexican Train, Garrafina).
- **Satisfied double** — a double just played must be answered on the following turn; until it is, everyone is obliged to play on it (Mexican Train).

Trick-taking & card-style games

- **Alone (going alone)** — playing a hand without your partner, for a higher reward (Euchre).
- **Bid** — a contract to win a stated number of points or tricks (Moon, Texas 42).

- **Bingo (the tile)** — the double-blank in the game Bingo: the highest tile, beating everything.
- **Bower** — in Euchre, the two top trumps: the **right bower** (double of trump) and **left bower** (double of the suit just below trump).
- **Count tiles** — the scoring tiles in Texas 42 ([5-5] and [6-4] = 10; [5-0], [4-1], [3-2] = 5).
- **Counters** — the penalty tiles you try *not* to take in Eleven Point Black Tile (the [0-0] and the threes suit).
- **Declaring doubles** — showing doubles held in hand for a bonus (Bingo).
- **Euchred** — the trump-making side failing to take enough tricks, so the opponents score (Euchre).
- **Follow suit** — to play a tile of the suit led when able, as these games require.
- **Looed** — staying in a hand but winning no trick, incurring the penalty payment (Loo).
- **March** — winning all the tricks in a hand (Euchre).
- **Mark** — a game point in Texas 42; a bid of “one mark” contracts to win all 42 points.
- **Meld** — a scoring combination laid down before the tricks: three consecutive tiles of a suit, or three consecutive doubles (Pinochle).
- **The miss** — a spare hand a player may take in place of their own (Loo).
- **Nickel / dime** — captured count tiles worth 5 ([0-5], [1-4], [2-3]) / 10 ([4-6], [5-5]) in Pinochle.
- **Rounce** — a Loo relative using pre-dealt dummy hands, with all players counting down from 15.
- **Set (being set)** — a bidding side failing its contract, so the opponents score (Texas 42). (*Distinct from “the set” in Nos.*)

- **Shoot the moon** — to bid to win every trick (the 21-bid in Moon); in Eleven Point Black Tile, taking *all* the penalty tiles so the score lands on the opponents instead.
- **Special contracts** — Texas 42 bids of a mark or more: **Nello** (lose every trick), **Plunge** (hold four doubles and win all seven), **Sevens** (play tiles nearest a total of seven), **Follow Me / No-Trump** (no trump suit).
- **Trick** — one tile from each player, taken by whoever plays the winning tile, who then leads to the next.
- **Trump** — the suit that beats all others for the hand; every tile containing the trump number is a trump.
- **Turn-up** — the tile turned face up to propose or fix the trump suit (Euchre, Loo, Bingo).
- **The widow** — a spare tile set aside, taken by the bidder (Moon) or by the meld-winner and last-trick winner (Pinochle).

Adding & counting games

- **Banker** — the player everyone bets against (Domino Twenty-One; also the gambling games). **Hit / stand / bust** — draw another tile / stop / exceed 21 and lose (Domino Twenty-One).
- **The crib** — the four-tile bonus hand the dealer scores at the end (Domino Cribbage).
- **Milestone** — an exact running total that scores: 30, 50, 70, 100 (Italian Dominoes).
- **Pegging** — scoring during play as the running total is built (Domino Cribbage): **fifteen** and **thirty-one** score 2; **go** = calling that you cannot play under 31; **pair / pair royal / double pair royal** = two/three/four equal totals (2/6/12); a **run** of three or more consecutive totals scores 1 per tile.

- **Running total (the count)** — the cumulative pip total built up by the tiles played (Italian Dominoes, Domino Cribbage).
- **The show** — the after-play scoring of each hand and the crib against the starter (Domino Cribbage).
- **The starter** — the boneyard tile turned up to count in both hands at the show (Domino Cribbage).

Fishing (capture) games

- **The Devil's hand** — the tiles left uncaptured in the row at the end, deducted from every player's score (Castle Rock fishing game).
- **Fishing (capture)** — playing a tile to take matching tiles from the table.
- **Meld** — a capturing combination in Canton: a **pair** totalling 12, or a **triplet** totalling 10, 20 or 30.

Draw-and-discard games

- **Dead discard** — a discard not taken by the time the turn returns to its maker; it is turned face down and out of play (Collecting Dominoes).
- **Pair** — in Three Dozen, two consecutive doubles or two tiles totalling 12; hold three pairs to win.

Hand-forming & gambling games

- **Kiu (nine)** — the best value; a hand's worth is its **units digit** (pip total modulo 10), so 9 is highest (Bandar Q, QiuQiu, Twist'em).
- **Poker hands** — the ranking in Domino Poker: Royal Hand, Straight (Sixes/Fives/Fours), Four of a Kind, Full House, Three of a Kind, Flush, One Pair, High Card.
- **Special hands** — QiuQiu hands that beat any ordinary hand: **Enam Dewa** (the four six-bearing tiles), **Empat Balak** (four doubles), **Murni Besar** (≥ 39 pips), **Murni Kecil** (≤ 9 pips).

- **Top hand / bottom hand** — the two hands you set from your three tiles (Twist'em). **Push** — a tie in which no money changes hands.

Other games

- **Divisor / one-less rule** — in Divide and Conquer, the lower tile beats the higher if it exactly divides it or is exactly one less.
- **Triangular grid (Fan Tan layout)** — the fixed pyramid the tiles are built into, doubles across the top (Sevens).

Solitaire terms

- **Double in trouble** — a double that cannot be placed, or sits in the wrong clock position, licensing you to shuffle the pile-tops (The Big Clock).
- **Foundation** — a target pile built up in order: by suit and rank in Dominoes Freecell, and the seven suit-runs (blank up to the double) in The Jubilee.
- **Good neighbours** — two adjacent tiles (including diagonally) that share a suit, removed together (Good Neighbours).
- **π (pi) figure** — a four-tile shape; the game is to build seven of them (The Seven Pis).
- **Quad** — two tiles whose four ends form four consecutive numbers (Traffic).
- **Scrap heap** — the discard pile of unplayable tiles, reshuffled to keep going (CrissCross, Up-Down-Stop).
- **Stopper** — a double laid on a column to close it (Up-Down-Stop).
- **Total-12 pair** — two tiles whose pips sum to 12, removed together (Fair Lucy, Luzon, Polka Dot, and Concentration).