

MATT SIMS & DAVID HARDING

TANGO

— RULE BOOK —



TANGO

A trick-taking game for two by Matt Sims and David Harding

2 Players • 30 minutes • Ages: 10+

It takes two to tango, but only one dancer will stand tall in this trick-taking game for two players. Players play cards, both from their hand and their face-up display, in order to perform the best possible dance moves. Plan ahead as best you can, but remember your opponent knows some of the steps you will take! Will you be named the lord or lady of the dance?

● Contents ●

41 Dance cards (1-10 in four suits and 1 Rose card)



4 Rose tokens (2 per player)

4 Scoring cards (2 per player)



This player has 13 points >



< This player has 7 points

● Set Up ●

Each player takes 2 Rose tokens and places them face down in front of themselves. They also take their 2 Scoring cards and place them nearby for later. Then a player is selected to be the dealer and the **round** is prepared...

1. The dealer shuffles the deck of 41 Dance cards and draws a card, which is placed at one side of the playing area, face up. If the drawn card is the Rose card, shuffle it back into the deck and draw a new card. This card, will be known as the Dance Style card. The suit of the Style card tells the players which suit is currently the **trump** suit.
2. The dealer then deals each player ten of the remaining forty cards, to form their hands. These cards should never be shown to the other player.
3. The remaining twenty cards are then dealt out in the following manner: First, the dealer places five cards in front of each player, face down in a row. Then, the dealer places a card face up on top of each of these cards. The ten cards now on the table in front of each player are “owned” by them and can only be played by them. ***Note:** The face down cards should never be looked at by either player until they are revealed (explained later).*

Each player starts with 10 cards in their hands.



The Rose tokens start face down.



Each player has 5 piles of 2 cards in front of them, with the top cards face up.



In this example, the yellow 6 is the Style card. Yellow is the trump suit at the moment.

Leave some space on the table to play cards.



Put the Scoring cards aside for now.



● Playing a Trick ●

The dealer will then **lead** the first **trick** (and lead the dance!) by playing a card from their hand, face up, to the centre of the table. Their opponent will then play a card from their hand. Next, the lead player will play one of the face up cards from the piles in front of them. Then, their opponent will do the same. This is how all the tricks in *Tango* are played—first, a card is played by each player from their hands, then, a card is played by each player from the face up cards in front of them. In other words, four cards are played in every trick—two of which are from the players' hands, and two from their visible cards on the table. Ten tricks are played in a **round**.

When selecting the card to play, the following rules must always be followed:

- The first card played to a trick can be any card from the lead player's hand.
- The following three cards played to the trick **MUST** be of the same suit of the first card played, if possible.
- If this is not possible, the current player can play any card available to them (from their hand or from their cards on the table, depending on which step of the turn it is) to the trick.

- The Rose card has no suit and therefore can be played to any trick. However, if played, its value is considered to be the lowest played card of the current trump suit (effectively a 0 in whatever the Style card determines the trump suit to be).

● Winning a Trick ●

Once the four cards in a trick have been played, the winner of the trick will be the player who played the highest numbered card that matched the suit of the first card played to the trick, unless there were one or more cards of the same suit as the Style card played. In that case, the player who played the highest numbered card in that (trump) suit will win the trick.



Glossary

- **Lead:** The lead player is the starting player for a trick. The first card they play in a trick is the lead card. It's suit is called the lead suit.
- **Trick:** A trick is a term used to describe one complete turn or hand in a trick-taking card game. After playing cards to the table, one player will be named the winner of the trick.
- **Trump:** The suit of cards that is higher in rank than all the other cards.
- **Round:** In *Tango*, a round of play is complete after ten tricks have been played (and players have run out of cards).



Matt (top) is playing David (bottom). Matt plays the green 7 to lead off. David has three green cards in his hand and chooses to play the green 2. Matt then must play one of the cards in front of him. He could play the green 10, but that seems to be a waste as he can already see he will win the trick (he can see David has no green cards or yellow Style cards in front of him). So, he plays the green 8. David doesn't have a green card in front of him, so he can't play one. He plays the purple 4. Matt wins the trick, as the green 8 he played was the highest card of the lead suit, and no Style (trump) cards were played.

● At the end of every trick ●

1. The player who won the trick takes the four cards played and places them nearby, in a face down pile. (These cards will be used later to determine scoring—keep all the cards you win throughout a round in their separate piles of tricks.)
2. Then, both players will reveal any face down cards now visible on the table in front of them (if the card on top of it was played during the trick), turning them face up. It is possible both players will have a different number of cards face up on the table.
3. Finally (and importantly!), the loser of the trick may swap the Style card at the side of the playing area with another card from their hand. The new Style card may be of the same suit or a different suit, thereby changing what the trump suit will be for the next trick! (The Rose card cannot be traded with the current Style card.)

The winner of the trick will lead in the next trick.

● Round End & Scoring ●

Play continues until all ten tricks are played. At the end of the round, players score points based on the cards they have collected from winning tricks. (Icons on the cards help you to remember how to score):

- Each trick won is worth 1 point.
- All 1s, 2s and 8s are worth 1 point each: ●
- All 9s & 10s are worth -1 point each: ☒
- The Rose card is worth 2 points: ● ●

(The current Style card is not scored by either player.)

Players may keep track of their points using their scoring cards. In the case of a tie, the player who has collected the Rose card wins.

The winner of the round flips one of their Rose tokens over to the “Rose” side.

For example, if this was a trick that was revealed during end of round scoring, the player who won this trick would earn...



1 point for winning the trick, 2 points for the Rose card, 1 point for the Red 2, 1 point for the Green 8, -1 point for the Green 10... for a total of 4 points, just for this trick!

After scoring, players play a second round, with the dealer's opponent now shuffling and dealing the cards as at the start of the game. Scoring cards are reset to zero.

● Game End ●

Play extra games, alternating which player deals each round until one player has both their Rose tokens face up (having won two rounds of the game). The first player to earn two Roses wins the game!

Longer game variant: Play multiple rounds, adding cumulatively to the players' scores from round to round. To win a Rose token, you must be the first to earn 20+ points. If both players reach 20 points in the same round, the player with the most points will flip their Rose token. (If it's a tie, play another round.) After each Rose token is awarded, return all scores to 0.



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Matt thanks: Thank you to Jesus who loved, saved, and rescued me. Thank you to my wife Rachel who is my best friend and teammate in all of life. Thank you to my five boys, Noah, Caleb, Kaladin, Isaiah, and Ezra - my greatest dream is to help you become good men. Thank you to my family who marked every gathering by playing 500, Rook, and Cribbage late into the night. Finally, a huge thank you to David from Grail Games. You believed in "Tango" enough to bring it to life, and I can't wait for families, couples, and friends to create their own late-night memories over the game.

David thanks: Matt for making the game dance; Dickens, Dawkins and Bryson for making my mind dance; and Jennifer for never asking me to dance (I don't dance).

All illustrations created with Supertipo Veloz by Joan Trochut.



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