CARD GAMES

How to play German Rummy (Rommé)

A classic German card game with two decks and jokers: collect sets and runs, make a first meld worth 30 points and be the first to get rid of all your cards.

Players	You need	Game length	Difficulty	Ages
2–6	Pen & paper and Two decks of cards with jokers	30–90 min	Takes some practice	8+

RULES IN 60 SECONDS

Play with 110 cards. Everyone gets 13 cards, the starting player gets 14 and first discards one. Each turn, draw a card, meld sets and runs and discard one. Your first meld needs at least 30 points. Then you may lay off and swap jokers. The first player out wins the round. Cards left in hand count as penalty points.

01 — GOAL

Be the first to get rid of all your cards

You lay your cards on the table in sets and runs and try to be the first player with no cards left in your hand. Anyone still holding cards gets penalty points for them. After the agreed number of rounds, the player with the fewest penalty points wins.

This guide covers German Rummy (Rommé), the version played in Germany with two decks and six jokers. For the standard game with one deck, see Rummy.

02 — SETUP

13 cards each, 14 for the first player

You need two 52-card decks and 6 jokers, 110 cards in total.

1. The dealer deals 13 cards to each player, one at a time. The player to the dealer's left gets 14.
2. The rest go face down in the middle as the draw pile.
3. The player with 14 cards starts by discarding one card face up. This starts the discard pile.

In this version, nobody may meld until every player has had one turn.

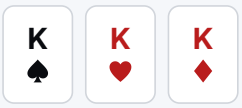
Some groups play with only 4 or 2 jokers. Others deal 13 cards to everyone and turn over the top card of the draw pile to start the discard pile.

03 — MELDS

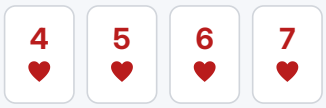
Sets, runs and jokers

- **Set:** three or four cards of the same rank in different suits, such as three kings. Each suit may appear only once.
- **Run:** three or more cards in an unbroken sequence in the same suit, such as the 4, 5 and 6 of hearts.
- **Ace:** goes either before the 2 (A-2-3) or after the king (Q-K-A).
- **Joker:** can stand in for any card. When you meld it, you say which card it represents.

A set: same rank, different suits



A run in one suit



04 — FIRST MELD

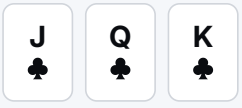
Your first meld needs 30 points

The cards you meld for the first time must be worth at least 30 points in total. Until then, you can't lay off anywhere.

Card	Value
Jack, queen, king	10
Number cards 2–10	Face value
Ace before the 2	1
Ace after the king or in a set	11
Joker	Value of the card it replaces

Other versions: Some groups need 31 or 40 points for the first meld, or don't allow jokers in it. Agree on the rules before you play.

A first meld worth 30 points: jack, queen, king



05 — YOUR TURN

Draw, meld, lay off, discard

1. **Draw:** Take the top card of the draw pile or the discard pile.
2. **Meld** (if you want): Lay sets or runs face up in front of you.
3. **Lay off** (after your first meld): Add matching cards to your own melds and to other players' melds.
4. **Swap a joker** (after your first meld): If you have the card that a melded joker stands for, swap it for the joker.
5. **Discard:** Finish by placing one card face up on the discard pile.

Important: In this version, you must meld a joker you've swapped, or lay it off on an existing meld, in the same turn.

06 — END OF ROUND

Go out and count penalty points

The player who discards their last card calls out “Rommé” and wins the round. Everyone else counts the cards left in their hand as penalty points.

Card in hand	Penalty points
Joker	20
Ace	11
10, jack, queen, king	10
Number cards 2–9	Face value

Hand Rommé: If you meld all your cards in a single turn and discard your last card without having melded before, you've made a Hand Rommé. The 30-point minimum doesn't apply. In this version, the other players' penalty points are doubled.

07 — SCORING

Who gets what

Joker in hand	20 penalty points
Ace in hand	11 penalty points
10, jack, queen or king in hand	10 penalty points
Number card 2–9 in hand	Face value
Hand Rommé	Round counts double

08 — TIPS

Play smarter

- Get rid of jokers and aces in time: left in your hand, they cost 20 and 11 penalty points.
- Collect face cards for your first meld: three face cards in a run are already worth 30 points.
- Watch which cards the other players take from the discard pile.
- Don't wait too long to make your first meld, because you can only lay off after that.