

# ITALIAN PLAYING CARDS



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## HISTORY

Italian playing cards first appeared in the late 14th century when each region within Italy was a separately ruled province.

There is no official playing card pattern for the country of Italy and each region uses its own type of cards/style.

16 accepted patterns of Italian playing cards divided into 4 Regional styles

Northern Italian

French

Spanish

German

# PLAYING CARD MANUFACTURER

Modiano S.p.A

Located in Trieste Italy

Modiano is an iconic business entity in Italy having been in business for over 140 years.

Modiano distributes regional decks to all regions within Italy.

[www.modianocards.com](http://www.modianocards.com)



# ITALIAN REGIONAL CARD DECK STYLES



## NORTHERN ITALIAN REGIONAL STYLE

Northern Italian regional style includes Triestine, Trevigiane, Trentine, Bergamasche, and Bresciane

Northern Italian decks are primarily played in the north eastern portion of the country. They feature the Spanish style suits of coins, cups, swords and batons (also known as clubs). There are 40 cards in the deck.



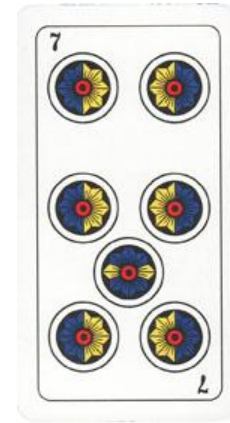
King of Cups  
Triestine



Cavallo of swords  
Bresciane



Fante of batons  
Trevigiane



7 of coins  
Bergamasche

## SPANISH ITALIAN REGIONAL STYLE

Spanish-Italian regional style includes Napoletane, Sarde, Siciliane, Piacentine, Romagnole.

The Spanish-Italian style decks are primarily used in the Southern Half of the country including the Island of Sicily. They feature the Spanish style suits of coins, cups, swords and batons (also known as clubs). There are 40 cards in the deck.



King of Cups  
Siciliane



Cavallo of swords  
Sarde



Fante of batons  
Napoletane



7 of coins  
Piacentine

## FRENCH REGIONAL STYLE

French regional style includes Genovisi, Lombarde, Piemontesi and Toscane.

The French style decks are primarily used in the North Western half of the country. They feature the French style suits of spades, clubs, hearts and diamonds. There are 40 cards in the deck. This style is similar to the American deck of card.



King of Clubs  
Toscane



Queen of hearts  
Lombarde



Fante of Spades  
Genovesi



7 of Spades  
piemontesi

## **GERMAN REGIONAL STYLE**

German regional style which include Salisburghesi

The German style playing cards are only played in the Central Northern most section of Italy and is used by a minority of the population.

## **THE NAPOLETANE DECK OF CARDS**

Most widely used Card Deck in Italy

Each deck contains 40 cards with Four Suits

Swords ("*spade*")

Clubs ("*bastoni*")

Cups ("*coppe*")

Coins ("*danari*")

**Clubs  
(Bastone)**



Il Azzo  
"The Ace"



2



3



4

**Coins  
(Denarii)**



Il Azzo  
"The Ace"



2



3

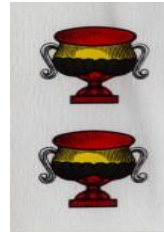


4

**Cups  
(Coppe)**



Il Azzo  
"The Ace"



2



3

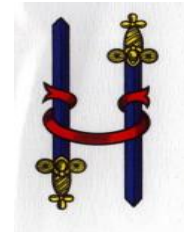


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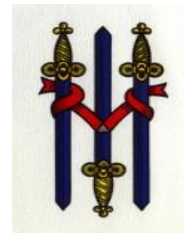
**Swords  
(Spade)**



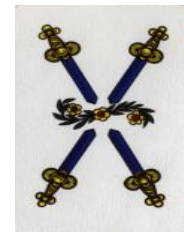
Il Azzo  
"The Ace"



2



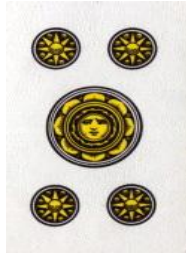
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5



5



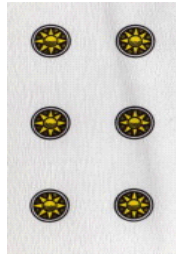
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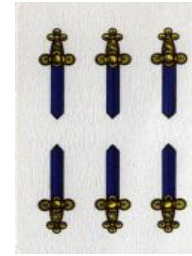
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6



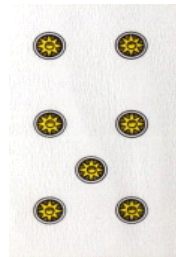
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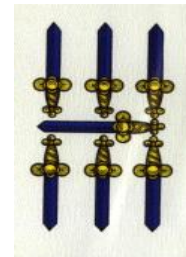
7



7



7



7



La Donna (8)



La Donna (8)



La Donna (8)



La Donna (8)



Il Cavallo (9)



Il Cavallo (9)



Il Cavallo (9)



Il Cavallo (9)



Il Re (10)



Il Re (10)



Il Re (10)



Il Re (10)

## COMMON ITALIAN CARD GAMES

La SCOPA  
BRISCOLA  
TRESETTE  
TERZIGLIO

**La Scopa** – Discussed in further detail below.

**Briscola** is a Mediterranean trick-taking card game for two to six players, played with a standard Italian 40-card deck. Apart from the Northern Mediterranean, the game is also popular in Puerto Rico.

A Trick-Taking game is any one of a class of card games where play centers around a series of finite rounds or units of play, called tricks. The object of such games is then closely tied to the winning, or "taking", of these tricks, or of the cards played in taken tricks.

**Tresette** - The cards are ranked as follows from highest to lowest: 3-2-Ace-King-Knight-Knave and then all the remaining cards in numerical order from 7 down to 4. The game may be played with four players playing in two partnerships, or in heads-up play. In either case, ten cards are dealt to each player. In one on one play, the remaining twenty cards are placed face down in front of both players. The object of the game is to score as many points as possible until a score of 21 is achieved. Players must follow suit unless that suit does not remain in their hand, and players must show the card they pick up off the card pile to their opponent.

**Terziglio**, also known as Calabresella the little Calabrian, is an Italian trick-taking card game for three players.

## LA SCOPA

The name is the Italian verb meaning "to sweep" since taking a "scopa" means you have "swept" all the cards from the table.

La Scopa is one of the easiest Italian card games to play. Scopa is a trick-taking game. A Trick-taking game is any one of a class of card games where play centers around a series of finite rounds or units of play, called tricks. The object of such games is then closely tied to the winning, or "taking", of these tricks, or of the cards played in taken tricks.

It is most commonly played with a Napoletane deck but can be played with all deck types.

It can be played between two players or two teams of two players each, but can also be played with 3, 4, or 6 individual players. If 4 people play, then you will play as a team, and the person sitting opposite you will be your partner.

## CARD VALUES

The cards have point values for capturing, and a separate set of point values that are only used in scoring the Prime(Primera)

Card	Capture Value	Value in Prime
Re (King)	10	10
Cavallo (Queen)	9	10
Fante (Jack)	8	10
Seven	7	21
Six	6	18
Five	5	15
Four	4	14
Three	3	13
Two	2	12
Ace	1	16

## THE DEAL

The dealer starts each game by dealing 3 cards to each person face down in a counter-clockwise direction. The dealer after having dealt 3 cards to each player including himself will then leave 4 cards face up in the middle of the table.

If three or all four of the table cards are kings, the cards are thrown in and there is a new deal by the same dealer.

The object of La Scopa is to collect as many cards as you can based on value of the card in your hand with one or more cards that are face-up on the table.



## THE PLAY

A turn consists of playing one card face up to the table, which may capture one or more table cards. In the event of a capture, both the played card and the captured card(s) are taken and stored face down in front of one of the members of the team that made the capture. If there is no capture, the played card remains face up on the table. In either case the turn then passes to the next player.

## CAPTURE RULES

- 1 - If the rank (capture value) of the card played matches that of a table card, the table card is captured.
- 2 - If the card played matches more than one table card, then just one of the matching table cards is captured - the player of the capturing card chooses which.
- 3 - If the card played does not match any table card, but its capture value is equal to the sum of the capture values of two or more table cards, then that set of table cards is captured - if there are several possible sets which add up to the value of the played card, the player of the capturing card chooses which to take.
- 4 - if the capture value of the card played does not match any table card or sum of table cards, then there is no capture and the played card remains face up on the table.

## CAPTURE RULES.....continued

Important points to note:

There is no obligation to play a card which makes a capture - it is legal (and sometimes better play) simply to add a card to the table.

However if the played card does make a capture, the captured cards must be taken, even if the player would prefer to leave them on the table.

If a card matches both a single card and a sum of cards on the table, the single card must be captured, not the group.

### **Example.**

The table contains 3, 5, 5, Fante. Playing a 5 captures one of the 5s from the table at the player's choice. Playing a Re (king) captures both 5s. Playing a Fante (jack) captures the one on the table - the player is not allowed to take the 5 and the 3 instead.

After all the cards from the players hands have been played, the last player who made a capture also takes any face up cards remaining on the table.

## SCORING

Four points available to be won on each deal (called "punti di mazzo", literally "deck points")

**The Cards**. One (1) point is won by whichever team takes the majority of the cards. If they split 20-20 the point is not awarded.

**The Coins**. One (1) point is won by whichever team takes more cards of the coins suit (or diamonds if you are using international cards). If they split 5-5 the point is not awarded.

**The Seven of Coins**. One (1) point is won by whichever team takes the 7 of coins (diamonds), known as the '**sette bello**'.

**The Prime** (known in Italian as 'la primiera'). One (1) point is won by the team with the best prime. In practice this is usually the team with more sevens, but the actual rule is as follows. The "prime" for each team is determined by selecting the team's "best" card in each of the four suits, and totaling those four cards' prime point values. When calculating the prime, a separate point scale is used. The player with the highest number of points using this separate point scale gets one point toward the game score.

## SCORING.....continued

### The Prime Scoring

The most common version of the separate scale is:

- Seven (sette) = 21 points
- Six (sei) = 18 points
- Ace (asso) = 16 points
- Five (cinque) = 15 points
- Four (quattro) = 14 points
- Three (tre) = 13 points
- Two (due) = 12 points
- King (re) = 10 points

It is worth knowing that the ranking of the cards for the prime is 7 (highest), 6, ace, 5, 4, 3, 2, pictures (lowest) - so if you are tied on sevens, it is worth trying to capture sixes, then aces, and so on.

In addition to the four standard points, teams are awarded additional points for every "scopa" they took during game play.

## THE SWEEP (“La SCOPA”)

In addition to the four deck points (called “punti di mazzo”) mentioned above, you also win one (1) a point for each **sweep** (Italian “*scope*”.) You score a sweep when you play a card which captures all the table cards, leaving the table empty. Traditionally, the capturing card is placed face up in the trick-pile of the capturing side, so that the number of sweeps made by each side can easily be seen when the scoring is done at the end of the play. This is also done to taunt the other players

Taking the last cards from the table at the end of a hand never counts as a sweep, even if the last card played by the dealer does actually capture all the remaining table cards.

## WINNING THE GAME

The game is played until one team has at least 11 points and has a greater point total than any other team or player. It is important to note that no points, including scopa points, are awarded mid-round; they are all calculated upon completion of the round. For that reason, if the current score is 10 to 9, and the team with 10 points captures the seven of coins or a scopa, the team cannot immediately claim victory. It is still possible that the opposing team could end up with a tied or higher score once all points are calculated.

In some Italian cities, before the game the players can agree to play with the "cappotto" variant, in that scenario if a player is winning 7 points to 0, the game can be considered over and the player does not have to reach the total of 11 points.

It is also possible to agree on a different score, usually with increments of ten (for example, 21 or 31 points).

**LETS PLAY A ROUND**