

Sinker

Sinker is a trick-taking card game for 3 to 4 players. Each player bids downward to win as lower tricks as possible, that is to "sink" not to win tricks. But, beware, if you would take more tricks than you bid, you will get drowned in the deep sea of tricks!

Players and Cards

From 3 to 4 people can play. A 32 card deck is used, the cards of each suit rank from high to low: Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8, 7. There is no trump suit.

Deal

Each player draws a card. The player with the highest card deals first.

The dealer shuffles and cuts all cards, then deals the cards singly until everyone receives 7 cards (for 3 players) or 6 cards (for 4 players). The undealt cards are placed in a face-down stack.

Exchange

Beginning with the player to the left of the dealer, continuing clockwise, each player can only once discard any number of cards (including zero) face down in the middle of the table, and draw the same number of cards from the top of the stack, as long as the stack remains. A player cannot draw less than they discarded.

Bidding

The bidding begins with the player to the left of the dealer. Each bid represents the highest number of tricks the bidder will try to take; i.e., **the bidder should not take more tricks than they bid.** A player who does not wish to bid can pass but cannot bid again in that auction.

The possible bids are as follows, from weak to strong: 3, 2, 1, Zero, Double-Zero, All, and Double-All. After the first bid, following bidders can only call stronger bids than before. All is an exceptional bid that the bidder will try to take all tricks. Double-Zero and Double-All can be called only when the corresponding bid (Zero to Double-Zero, All to Double-All) is already called.

The last (strongest) bid becomes the contract that the bidder has to make. Only after bidding All or Double-All, the bidder can take all the discarded cards into their hand and discard again the same number of cards, so as to make their hand stronger.

If everyone passes, the play will begin, called Diving.

Play

The bidder leads to the first trick. In Diving, the player next to the dealer leads to. Players must follow suit if they can. A player with no card of the suit led may play any card. A trick is won by the highest card of the suit led. The winner of a trick leads to the next. The play continues until all tricks

are played, except when All or Double-All is contracted, where the play ends as soon as any opponent wins a trick.

Bidder's scoring

For normal bids (from 3 to Double-Zero), the bidder wins if they take at most as many tricks as they bid. For All and Double-All, the bidder wins if they take all tricks. The bidder scores (10 minus the contract value) points in normal bids if they win, or minus that amount if they lose. If the contract was All, the bidder scores 15 points. For Double-Zero and Double-All, the bidder scores double points as they bid (or minus that amount if they lose).

Opponents' scoring

For normal bids, each opponent scores -1 point for each trick that player took (not that ALL opponents score -1 per trick). For All and Double-All, -1 point of trick is not scored as normal, and if they win a trick, all opponents score: 7 points (All) or 15 points (Double-All) in 3-player game; 5 points (All) or 10 points (Double-All) in 4-player game. In other words, 15 or 30 points for those bids are equally divided by the number of opponents.

In Diving, all players who win the most tricks equally score -10 points.

End of the game

As many as you would like. I would recommend playing as many rounds in multiple of the number of players.

Sinker is awarded the 2nd prize of Japan Trick Taking Party Game Award 2017.

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