

# Toruro

(rules edited from instructions sent by Andres Pabon)

A trick-taking gambling card game for 5+ players.

## Components

You'll need a Spanish deck of cards (although, if you can't get one, you can substitute it with an Italian deck; or, in the most extreme cases, you can use a standard Poker deck removing the 8s, 9s and 10s), some standard Poker chips (or pennies/dimes/quarters, if you prefer), and a sheet of paper and a pen to keep track of the lulo list.

## Rank of cards within each suit

The ace is the highest card in any suit, but the next-to-highest rank is the 3. Then, in order of rank (from highest to lowest) are the rey (king), caballero (knight), sota (jack), 7, 6, 5, 4, and finally, 2. The fact that the 3 is such a high-ranked card is a very important one in this game.

## The Three Pots: Cabeza, Barriga, Cola

At the start of each round, the dealer (which will be rotated counter-clockwise every round) will place three of the lowest-valued chips in three separate pots in the center of the table. These starting pots are called the cabeza (head), barriga (belly), and cola (tail). The first trick taken will win the cabeza, the second, the barriga, and the third the cola.

The first round, the dealer's chips will be the only ones available for claiming, but on all following rounds, there will be at least one player with a debt in the Lulo list. Any player, starting with the dealer, who owes one of the least-valued lulos can choose to pay it (and no other player can pay it this round... they must wait until the next rounds). The player paying the lulo must place the full debt divided in the three pots any way he/she likes. The player could place, for example, all the chips on the cabeza, evenly divided amongst the three of them, most on the cola and a few on the barriga or any other combination. After the full debt has been payed to the pot, the lulo is scratched from the list.

## The Deal

Three cards are dealt to each player, and finally a card is placed face up near the pots. The suit of the card is the trump suit. Also, if the card rank is a sota or higher, the 7 on this suit is considered as this face-up card. For example, if the card is the 3 of copas, any player with the 7 of copas can play his/her card as the 3.

## Deciding Whether to “Go”

Starting with the player on the dealer's left, each player must now decide whether or not they're going to try to take any of the pots (which is called "ir" or going). If you decide to “go,” you will play this round and you will risk being placed on the Lulo list if you do not take at least one trick. If you decide not to go, you sit out this round of three cards.

Once all players have made their choice, each player who "goes" may exchange cards. You may exchange none, 1, 2 or all 3 cards. If you're exchanging 3 cards, you are dealt 4 and then pick the best 3 and return the remaining one. After all players "going" have changed their cards, the card playing starts with the first player on the dealer's left who is "going".

## Playing The Tricks - Leading Trump & High Cards

On the first round, the starting player must: Place the Ace of trump if he/she has it; or place either the 3 or the King of trump if he/she has them both. In any other case, he/she can play any card at all. On the second round, the leading player must play his/her highest ranked trump card (if he/she has any trump cards at all).

The leading player plays his/her card, and all the other players must follow suit if possible. If they can't, they must play a trump card, if available. Also, a special rule must be followed if the leading card is a trump: all players must play a higher card than those already played, if possible.

The player with the highest card (the highest trump if trumps were played, or the highest card in the leading suit in any other case) takes the trick and the next available pot: the cabeza on the first trick, the barriga on the second and the cola on the third. He/she also becomes the leading player and must play his/her next card according to the rules stated above.

## The Lulo List

Now the fun part. Any player decided to “go” and did not take any pot **OR** any player who misplayed a rule (not starting with a high card if he/she had to do it, not playing a trump if available, not playing a higher trump, or not starting the second trick with highest trump), commits "lulo” and is placed on the dreaded Lulo list. This player now owes the total amount of money available for this round (that is, the initial pot placed by the dealer, plus any lulo money payed by another player in any round but the first). The amount of the lulo is written down on the lulo list and the player must pay it when given the chance. Remember: lulos must be payed starting from the lowest-valued ones, so each time, the stakes are a little bit higher!

## **Game End**

The game only ends whenever all players are free from debt and owe nothing.

## **House Rules**

1. Every tenth lulo is a freebie: so if you already have 9 lulos (payed or not) and once again you commit lulo, this one's for free (but obviously, the next one isn't). This also applies for the twentieth, thirtieth and so on...
2. If the trump card is an Ace, everyone must "go".
3. On the very first round, everyone must "go" so that there are some lulos to pay for starters!
4. If the game is dragging too much, start paying 2 or even 3 lulos at the same time. The stakes become much higher, but the game ends quicker.

Andres' personal rule (this one is only applied by me, so it's not an official rule):

5. If the trump is cups, I'll always go!!! :)