

Rules for the Game of

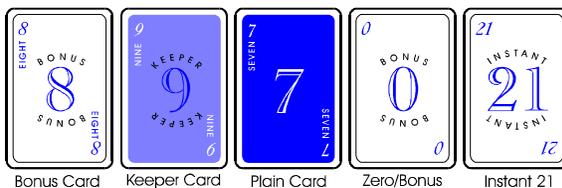
# STACK 21™

**PLAYERS:** 2 to 4 players.

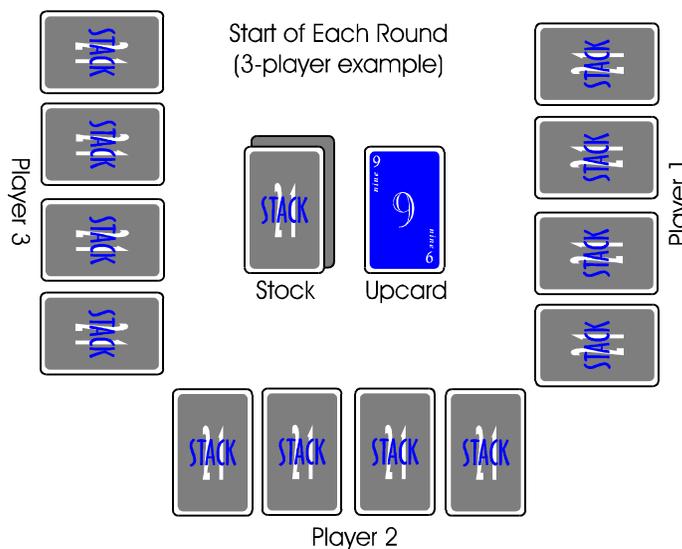
**OBJECT:** To score points by making Stacks counting exactly **21**, and to prevent your opponents from doing the same.

**EQUIPMENT:**

104 playing cards, ranked Ace through 10, of the following types: **Bonus**, **Keeper**, and plain cards. There are also **Zero/Bonus** and **Instant 21** cards.



**STARTING THE GAME:** Each player draws a card. Highest card (counting Aces as 1) deals first. Dealer shuffles the deck and deals clockwise, beginning with the player to his/her left. Each player is dealt 4 cards, **face down**. These form the start for each player's 4 Stacks. (Players may view their own cards at any time.) The remainder of the deck is placed face down in the center to form the stock. The top card of the stock is turned face up as the upcard.



**FIRST TURN OF EACH ROUND:** The player to the left of the dealer goes first. Play proceeds clockwise. Each player, in turn, draws the top card of the stock and must **keep** it.

NOTE: ALL CARDS MUST BE PLACED SO THAT EVERYONE CAN SEE HOW MANY CARDS ARE ON EACH STACK, AS SHOWN HERE



**ALL OTHER TURNS:** At your turn, you may:

- ♦ draw the top card of the stock and **keep** it, *or*
- ♦ draw the top card of the stock and **give it away**, *or*
- ♦ **take the upcard** to make an immediate 21, *or*
- ♦ **combine** two of your **active Stacks**.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**BONUS CARDS:** Award extra points if used to make a 21.

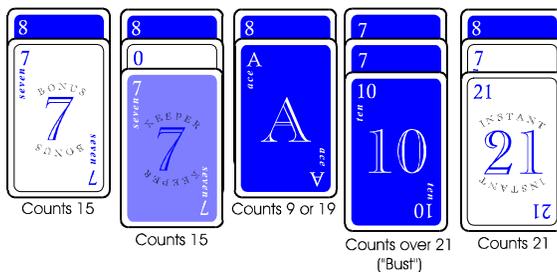
**KEEPER CARDS:** These cards may not be **given away**.

**ZERO/BONUS CARDS:** Award extra points if used to make a 21, but do not add to the **count of the Stack**.

**INSTANT 21 CARDS:** Instantly bring any Stack upon which they are placed to 21.

**COUNT OF STACKS:** The sum of the values of its cards. An Ace ("A") counts 1 or 11, at the holder's option. Any Stack counting over 21 (counting any Aces as 1) is a **Bust**.

**ACTIVE STACKS:** An active Stack is one that counts less than 21.



When a Stack counts 21 or higher, it becomes **inactive** and cards cannot be added to it. When all of your Stacks become inactive, you sit out the remainder of the **round**.

**ROUND:** Each round starts when the cards are dealt and ends when all Stacks have become inactive. At the end of each round, the cards are collected and shuffled.

**KEEPING A CARD:** To keep a card that you have drawn, place it face down onto one of your own active Stacks. If the Stack counts 21 or higher, turn it face up for all to see. (If it counts exactly 21, congratulations!)

**GIVING AWAY A CARD:** To give away a card that you have drawn, place it face up onto **one** Stack of any opponent.

**ACCEPTING A CARD:** You must accept a card that is given to you if it does not bust the Stack to which it is offered. (If the card brings the Stack to exactly 21, turn it face up, and don't forget to gloat!)

**REFUSING A CARD:** You must refuse a card that is given to you if it would bust the Stack to which it is offered. The giver must then take back the card and place it face up onto one of his/her own Stacks (even if it busts the Stack). The card may not be given away a second time.

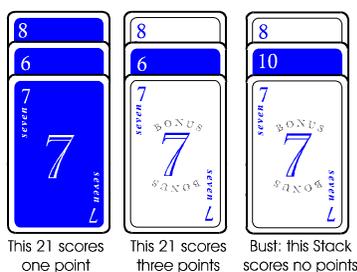
**TAKING THE UPCARD:** At your turn, you may take the upcard **instead** of drawing from the stock, but only if you use it to make 21 immediately. (The same rules apply if the upcard is a Bonus or Keeper card.) **EXCEPTION:** When the upcard is a Zero/Bonus, you may take it and keep it, face up, on any of your active Stacks, even though it can never bring a Stack to 21. Whenever the upcard is taken, it is immediately replaced from the top of the stock.

**COMBINING TWO STACKS:** At your turn, you may combine two of your active Stacks **instead** of drawing. (This is usually done only when two of your Stacks combine to total 21.) Note that combining Stacks leaves you with one less Stack (and hence one less opportunity to score). You may **not** combine three or four Stacks in a single turn.

**PLAYING OUT:** When only one player has active Stacks remaining, that player plays out the round. The player turns up his/her remaining Stacks for all to see. The player must draw from the stock and keep each card, until all of his/her Stacks become inactive. (The upcard cannot be drawn and Stacks cannot be combined while playing out.)

**SCORING: Scores are tallied only at the end of each round.**

- ◆ Score 1 point for each Stack that counts exactly 21 (or is an instant 21).
- ◆ Score one **extra** point for each Bonus card in a 21 (or instant 21) Stack. (A Bonus card in a Bust Stack scores no points.)
- ◆ Score 2 additional points for a *Perfect Round* if **all four** Stacks count 21. (A perfect round is not possible if Stacks have been combined.)



**WINNING THE GAME:** Twenty-one (21) points are needed to win the game. If two or more players have 21 or more points at the **end** of a round, highest score wins. However, if there is a tie for the lead at the end of the round, the game continues. **All** players participate in another **complete** round (even if they have less than 21 points.)

**SHORTER/LONGER GAMES:** If you find the game too long (or too short), you may agree to play to fewer (or more) than 21 points.

**TEAM PLAY:** Four players may choose to play as two teams. Teammates sit across from one another and may not give away cards to each other. Scores are kept per team, not per player. 42 points (twice 21) are needed to win the game.

**SPARE CARDS:** If you lose or damage a card, mark up one of the blank cards for use as a spare.