

Old Maid/Chase the Ace

Players: 2+

Type: Shedding, Matching

Objective

To shed all your cards and avoid being the player left with the one unmatchable card.

The Deal

Before dealing, either remove the ace of clubs, the queen of clubs or add a single joker. Either of these actions will produce an odd number of cards and will result in either an ace, queen or joker that will not be able to be matched. The unmatchable card is known as the 'old maid'.

All the cards are then dealt out to all players. Some players may have more cards than others - this does not matter.

The Play

Once all cards have been dealt, players look at their cards and discard any pairs they have (e.g., two kings, two sevens, etc.) face-up in the middle of the table which now forms a discard pile. Players do not discard three of a kind.

Beginning with the dealer, each player takes turns offering his hand face-down to the person on his left. That person selects a card and adds it to his or her hand and then checks to see if the selected card makes a pair with their original cards. If so, the pair is discarded face-up into the discard pile. The player who just took a card then offers his or her hand to the person to their left and so on. A player is allowed to shuffle his hand before offering it to the player on his left.

If a player gets rid of all of their cards, they are safe and take no further part. The turn passes to the next player on their left who spreads his or her cards for the following player to draw one. Eventually all players except one will have no cards. That one player will be left with the unmatchable card; they are "stuck with the old maid" and lose.

Variants

Some variants of the game require a pair of cards to be the same colour i.e. Spades (♠) with clubs (♣) and diamonds (♦) with hearts (♥). As an example, a 7♦ therefore could only be matched and discarded from the players hand if the same player also had the 7♥.