

La Casa



By Roger Meloche

A traditional, team based or head to head trick-taking game with twist. A new Situation arises with each round which must be dealt with, and could even turn the game upside down. The only thing that doesn't change is the struggle to be the dominant Mafia family.

The art for the card faces was created by Imane Moussaid

La Casa

- Four players team up, and play two against two.
- Two players can also play head to head.
- There is even a solo variant outlined in the supplementary rule book.

In this game, you are Mafia families, competing to win the most Challenges (*Tricks*) each round and score points. A unique Situation is revealed each round which can change one of the basic rules, alter the objectives, or even turn the game upside-down. The only thing that doesn't change in this game is the constant struggle for dominance between the competing families.

A Few Notes:

Text in blue refers to terms used in traditional trick-taking games. Feel free to ignore these notes.

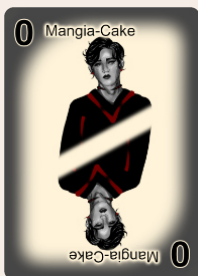
For clarification on the terms used and the Italian words, please refer to the glossary at the end of this rule book.

An in-depth explanation of the various game scenarios, card descriptions and alternate game variants, as well as the solo variant are all covered in the supplementary rule book.

The Main Deck



This is the **Main Deck** which players use for the challenges. It consists of 4 Families (*Suits*) and a special Mangia-Cake card. Each Family consists of members ranked from #1 to #7, with the Nonni (*Grandparents*) ranking the highest. Within each Family there are two #4 cards, Zia & Zio (*Aunt and Uncle*), as well as two #6 cards, Mamma and Papa (*Mother & Father*).



The Mangia-Cake

The Mangia-Cake card comes from no specific Family. It will always become the lowest ranking member of the Ruling Family. (*Lowest Trump*) If there is no ruling family elected, then the Mangia-Cake is the only member of the Ruling Family in the deck.

The Casa



Situations



Main Deck



Reminder Card

The Current Dealer Manages the Casa

A Ruling Family Reminder Card is partially tucked under the Casa. This reminds the players who the current Ruling Family is.



Front

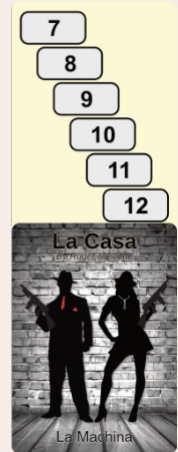


Back

Each team or player gets a pair of counting cards which are used to track their score from 0 to 12.



Score Cards



The Situations

A new Situation revealed each round. Rules or procedures outlined in these cards will override the basic rules and must be followed throughout the round.

Situations are specific to certain player counts.

- Solo Play
- Two Players
- Teams (*two teams of two players each*)

Use only the scenarios for your specific player count.

Only **six** Situations are used for each game. They are randomly chosen and placed face down beside the Main Deck in the Casa to form the Situation Deck for the game. The remaining cards are set aside and not used.



Situations



Capitano Coup

There is a power struggle among the Capitanni (Flavor Text)

Deal 2 additional Cards to each player. (Additional Set-Up Instructions)

NO Election is Held (The Dealer Leads) (Election Notes)

When a Capitano is played, that family becomes the Ruling Family until another Capitano is played to change it. (Description)

Whoever wins the most Challenges scores one point. (Additional Notes)

Solo Mode (Solo Mode)

Two Players (Two Players)

Team Mode (Team Mode)

Note: Your first round or two can be played without revealing a Situation card. This results in a lighter game and can give new players a chance to learn the basic rules.

How to Play

A player is selected to be the first Dealer. They will Manage the Casa for this round. The Casa consists of the Main Deck, the Situation Deck and the Reminder Card.

Each Round consists of 5 phases:

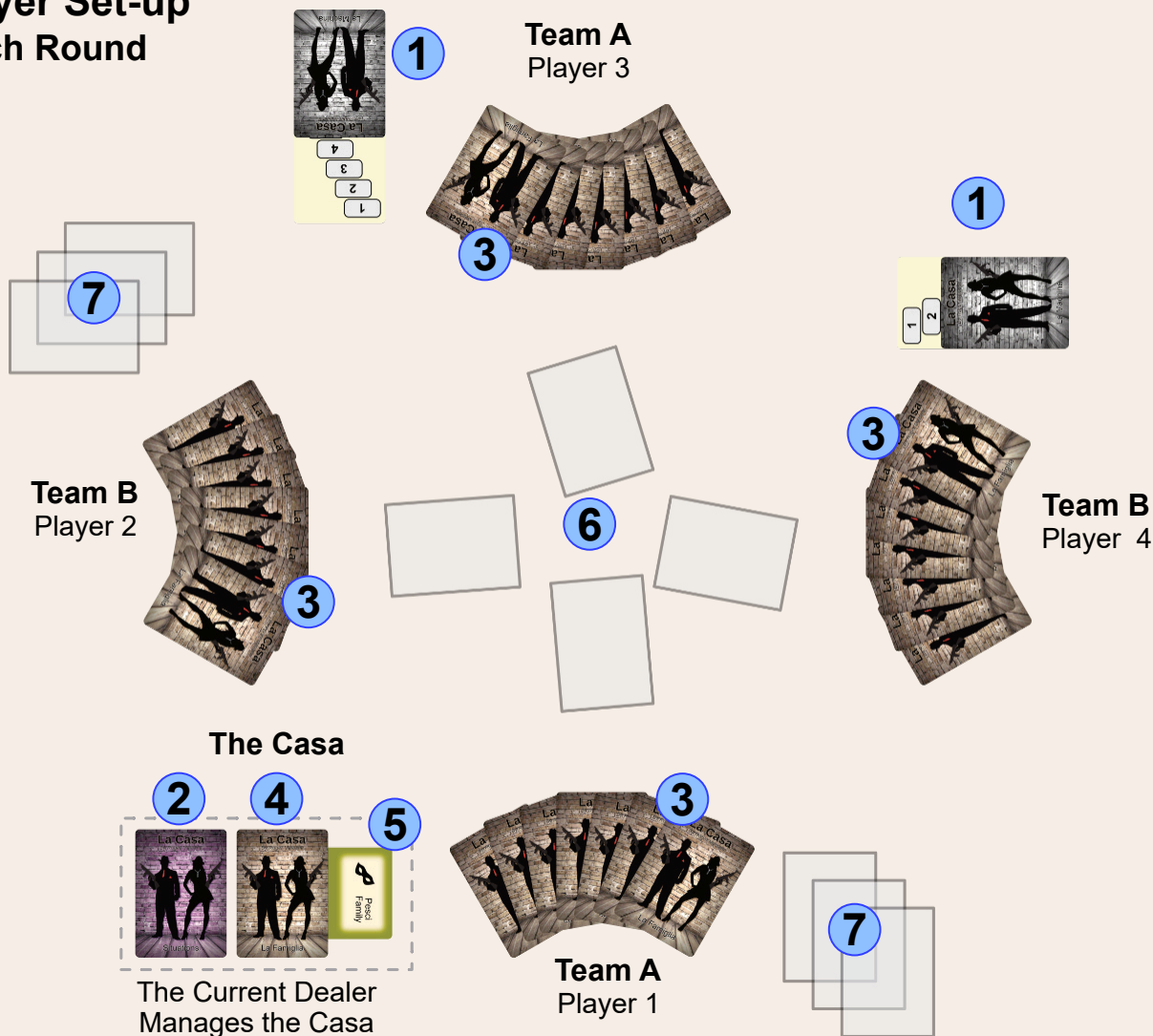
- A** A Situation for the round is revealed.
- B** The Dealer deals out the cards from the main Deck, following any special set-up instructions for the Situation, then places the remaining cards (*Kitty*) next to the Situation Deck.
- C** An Election is held to determine the Ruling Family (*Trump*). (*Note: The Situation might alter or even eliminate the Election.*) The reminder card is tucked partially under the main deck to show which Family (*Suit*) is the Ruling Family (*Trump*)
- D** The Challenges (*Tricks*) are then played and resolved, one at a time, by the players until all the cards have been played.
- E** Teams, or Players, count up their successful challenges (*Tricks*) and score any points they have earned.

The player to the current Dealer's left will become the Dealer for the next round.

The game continues until the end of the Round in which the last Situation card is revealed.

The Team or Player with the highest score wins the Game.

4 Player Set-up Each Round



- 1 Each Team has a pair of Counting Cards for tracking their score throughout the game.
- 2 The Situation Deck is placed next the current Dealer and the **Situation is revealed**.
- 3 The Dealer deals out the hand of **7 cards** to each player for the round. *(Unless instructed otherwise by the Situation)*
- 4 The remaining cards are placed face down in the Casa near the current Dealer.
- 5 The Ruling Family Reminder Card is tucked underneath the main deck in Casa so that it displays the current Ruling Family once one is elected.
- 6 The Challenges are played out in the Central Play Area.
- 7 Each Challenge won by a team is stored off to the side for scoring at the end of the round.

2 Player Set-up Each Round



- 1 Each Team has a pair of Counting Cards for tracking their score throughout the game.
- 2 The Situation Deck is placed next the current dealer and the **Situation is revealed.**
- 3 The Dealer deals out a hand of 6 **cards** to each player for the round.
- 4 The Dealer then deals out a Tableau of 5 cards face down covered by 5 cards face up for each player. (*Unless instructed otherwise by the Situation*)
- 5 If a Situation specifies that two more cards are given to each player, they are added to each player's Tableau. (*One face up and one face down.*)
- 6 The remaining cards are placed face down in the Casa, next to the Situation Deck.
- 7 The Ruling Family Reminder Card is tucked underneath the Casa so that it displays the current Ruling Family once one is elected.
- 8 The Challenges are played out in the central area.
- 9 Each Challenge won by a team is stored off to the side for scoring at the end of the round.

A B The Reveal and Deal

Each round, the top card of the situation Deck is flipped over and read aloud by the Dealer. Any additional set-up or Election instructions on the Situation card are followed in order from top to bottom. The Dealer deals out the cards and manages the Casa and Situation Decks as shown in the set-up reference sheets. Any rule changes or round objectives described on the Situation Card will be active throughout this round. The Situation card will be removed from the game at the end of the round.

C The Election

Unless Specified differently on the Situation Card, an Election will be held to determine the Ruling Family for this round.

- After the Deal, the top card main deck in of the Casa (*Kitty*) is flipped face up. This is the Family (*Suit*) which is currently Nominated for election.
- Starting from the Dealer's left, each player decides to Elect the Nominated family to become the Ruling Family (*Trump*) or Pass the decision to the next player on their left.
- If any Player chooses to Elect the Nominated Family, they take the face up card from the Casa add it to their hand. They then discard any one of their cards face-down on to the main Deck in Casa.

Note: When a Player in a **Two Player** game Elects the Ruling Family, taking the card, they can place it face up in their Tableau if they wish. The card that was in the Tableau is discarded to the Casa.

- If, however, all players pass, including the Dealer, the card is flipped face down again and left in the Casa. A Second and final Election Round is started by the player to the Dealer's left.
- Each player can now elect one of the three remaining families or pass the decision to the next player.
- If the decision makes it back to the Dealer again, the Dealer **must** elect a Ruling Family.
- The Dealer will then place the Ruling Family Reminder Card partially under the Casa so that the current ruling family is visible to all players.

Note: If the Mangia-Cake card is revealed as the Nominated Family, it is flipped face down and there will be no Ruling Family for the Round. The Dealer will lead the first challenge.

D The Challenges

The Player who Elected the Ruling Family starts off the first Challenge by playing a card, face up, to the Central Play Area. Each other player in clockwise order will also play one card. The winner of the Challenge (*Trick*) is determined and the winning Team or Player gathers these cards and stores them in a stack, face down for scoring at the end of the round. The player who won the last challenge will start the next Challenge by playing a card.

Note: In a **Two Player** game, a player can either play a card from their hand or a face up card from their Tableau. After the Challenge is resolved, any face down cards, in either players Tableau which were uncovered, will be turned face up before starting the next Challenge.

The first card played will Lead Challenge and can be any card the player chooses. **Any additional cards played after this must be from the Same Family (*Follow Suit*) if at all possible.** This tradition MUST be adhered to unless a Situation instructs the players otherwise.

The Winner of each Challenge is determined as follows:

- The Highest ranked card of the Ruling Family. (*Highest Trump*)
- If no Ruling Family cards are played, then the highest ranked card of the Family which led the Challenge. (*Highest lead suit*)
- If two cards of the same rank and same Family are played, the last card played will win the tie.
- Any cards which are not from the Ruling Family and don't match the Family leading the challenge are worth nothing, and cannot win the challenge.

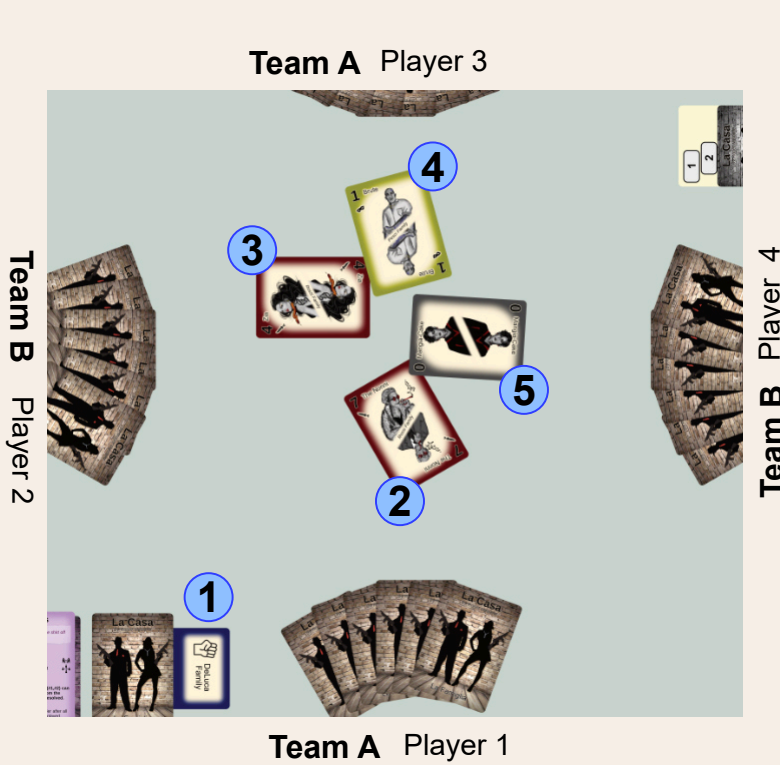
The Challenge phase continues this way until all the cards have been played.

E Scoring

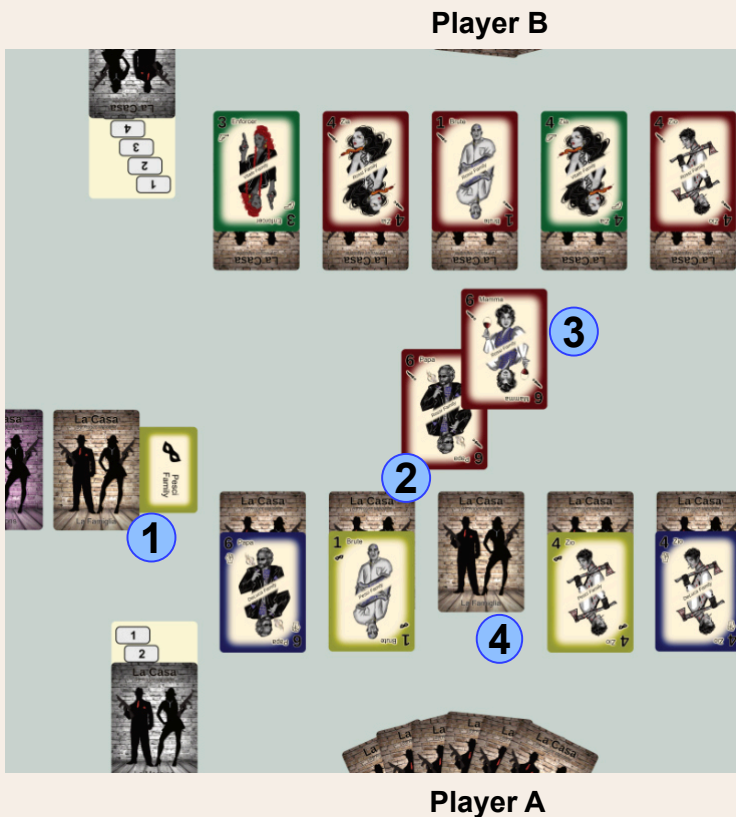
Each Team or player will count the total number of Challenges (Tricks) they have won. The Team (or Player) who Elected the Ruling Family must have won the Majority of the Challenges in order to score ONE point. If they fail to do so, then the opposing Team (or Player) will score TWO points.

Note: A Situation Card could modify any of the above rules regarding Challenges and Scoring, as well as winning objectives for the round in which it is revealed.

Some Examples of Challenges



- 1 The Deluca Family (Blue) is the current Ruling Family for this round.
 - 2 Player 1 from Team A leads the Challenge with a Nonni (#7) Red card.
 - 3 Player 2 must also play a Red card and plays a Zia (#4)
 - 4 Player 3 has no Red cards and decides to play a worthless card because his teammate is currently winning the challenge.
 - 5 Player 4 from Team B also has no Red cards so she plays the Mangia-Cake card. Since this is the only card From the Ruling family played, Team B wins this challenge.
- Player 4 from Team B will lead the next challenge.



- 1 The Pesci Family (Yellow) is the current Ruling Family for this round.
 - 2 Player A leads with a Papa (#6) Red card because Player B has three lower ranked Red cards in their Tableau.
 - 3 Player B, however, has a Mamma (#6) in their hand and plays it. Player 2 wins the tie and wins the challenge.
 - 4 Player A will now flip the uncovered card in the Tableau face-up.
- Player B will lead the next challenge.

Glossary of Terms

Casa - Italian word for “House”. This is the stack of excess cards left over after dealing. It is traditionally called the “Kitty”

Carita - Italian for Chairity.

Challenges - A part of a round where each player plays one card, trying to win with the highest ranking card.

Dealer - Each round, a selected Player will deal out the cards and manage the Casa and Situation decks.

Election - A Phase of each Round where the Ruling Family is selected.

Family - One of the four “Suits” found in the main deck of cards.

Figura - An Italian phrase for a competition for status. Often referred to when giving gifts.

Famiglia - Italian for “The Family” Sometimes used to refer to Mafia families.

Mamma - Italian for “Mother”

Mangia-Cake - Italian Canadian slang term for a non-Italian outsider.

Nonni - Italian for “Grandparents”

Papa - Italian for “Father”

Round - A repeating portion of the game where new cards are dealt, the challenges are performed and points are scored.

Ruling Family - The family which currently out-ranks all of the other families in a given round. It is traditionally called the “Trump” suit.

Situation Cards - A card which specifies special rules or objectives, over and above the standard rules. The Situation will be in effect for the current round.

Tableau - The cards played from the table in the Two Player version of the game.

Trick-Taking Games - A traditional style of games where players compete in a number of winner take all challenges or tricks. The number of tricks won are usually determines a player’s score.

Zia - Italian word for “Aunt”

Zio - Italian word for “Uncle”