

Espresso

Chaos in the café

Based on Ligretto by Michael Michaels 1988

2-6 Players
10 + years
60 minutes for a game

There are 6 decks of 36 cards each (for a total of 216 cards in the box).

Game Idea

The objective of the game is to play as many of your cards as possible to the center of the table and be the first to get rid of your ESPRESSO stack.

Game Preparation

Each player receives 36 cards with identical backs (e.g. Pizza) and shuffles them well. Afterwards each player deals 9 cards face down then turns the stack over (number side up) and places it in front of them. This is their ESPRESSO stack.

From the remaining cards, each player now deals 3 help cards and places them face up next to each other to the right of the ESPRESSO stack. The rest of the cards are kept in a stack face down in the player's hand.

Note: for fairer play, it is recommended to keep the row of cards face down until all players are ready to begin.

Game Play - Espresso Normalo

One of the player calls: "ESPRESSO!" and the game starts. All players now try to play their cards to the stacks in the center of the table. The first card played to the table must be a "zero". At that point, players may place cards on top of the "zero" in numerical order ("one", "two", "three", etc., up to "eight"). By doing so, the players must take care that the number card he places is the next number in sequential order and that the color of the card is also matching the color of the original "zero" played. The backs of the cards are irrelevant at this stage of the game.

You can always play the top card of your ESPRESSO stack, any of your 3 help cards, and certain cards from your hand.

ESPRESSO stack

The object of the game is it to get rid of your ESPRESSO stack. Thus, it makes more sense to play cards off the top of this stack before playing help cards or the cards from your hand.

Auxiliary cards

The 3 help cards must at all times be placed face-up next to the ESPRESSO stack. Therefore, if one of the help cards is played to the common stacks in the center of the table, the top card of the ESPRESSO stack is moved into its place. (In other words, the ESPRESSO card becomes the new help card.)

Cards in the hand

If a player cannot play a card from his ESPRESSO stack or any of the help cards, he may play from the cards in his hand. He takes off the top three cards of the deck in his hand and places them, number face-up, in front of himself. The card on the top of this pile may be played as well to the center of the table if it fits.

You can continue to play cards from your personal pile and count another 3 cards to the pile from the deck in your hand.

If all cards in your hand have been played on the personal pile, you may pick up the personal pile, shuffle it, and make it the new deck of cards in your hand. You may again turn three cards over from it and start a fresh personal pile.

If only one or two cards are left in the deck in the hand, then it is more practical if you pick up the personal pile and place it underneath those one or two cards.

NOTE: It can occur that a player could cycle through his entire deck in hand/personal pile without being able to play. He may then shuffle the personal pile and once again turn three cards to start a fresh personal pile.

Rules in the chaos

All players play at the same time. Every one can play a card that fits: a red 1 on a red 0, a blue 5 on a blue 4, and a yellow 8 on a yellow 7. Zeros may always be played, in order to start a new stack in the center of the table. If two players want to put the same card on the same stack, the faster one wins. The slower player must take his card back.

Important: To play cards to the table, only one hand may be used. The other hand holds the deck.

Finito

When you take the last card off your ESPRESSO pile, either by playing it to the center of the table or by moving it onto an empty help card space, you call out "FINITO!" Everyone else must stop playing cards immediately. The round is over, and it's time to count points.

Points

The cards in the center are sorted now according to the backs. Each of these cards counts one point (e.g. 9 cards with the back PIZZA = 9 points for the PIZZA player) for the respective player. The player that called "FINITO!" receives an additional 5 points. The points per round are noted on a score pad.

The next round

Each player receives the cards with his "food" on the back side (e.g. PIZZA). The cards are again shuffled and dealt as at the beginning of the first round. With the call "ESPRESSO!" a new round is started.

Winning the Game

The points from each play round are added. The player, who first scores 100 points or more, wins.

Espresso Zero - variant

The card stacks in the center of the table may begin with a "zero" or with a "one".

The cards with a "zero" are now Jokers. A Joker may be played on any card except the "eight".

A player may only play a "zero" as a Joker if he can then place the next card on the Joker. The second card played may be of any color - there can be changes of color in a common stack. It is possible to play more than one "zero" card into a stack - but you can not play a "zero" directly on another "zero".

Example: A player may begin with a blue "zero" followed by a green "one".

Example: A player play a yellow "zero" on a red "five", then immediately plays a red "seven" on the yellow "zero".

All other rules are as in ESPRESSO NORMALO.

Espresso Chaos - variant

Normally the cards of the other players are taboo. Everyone has enough to do just keeping up with their own cards. But sometimes, you see a card which would fit a stack in the center of the table, but the player who owns it doesn't see it. If he played it, you would be able to play your cards!

With this variant, you may "steal" face-up cards of other players in order to IMMEDIATELY play them to the center of the table. You may then return to playing your own cards.

Attention: Cards must always be played with the same hand (the hand not holding your deck). Otherwise, still more chaos would ensue.

All other rules are as in ESPRESSO NORMALO.