

MACHIAVELLI

CARD GAME INSTRUCTIONS

HISTORY

Nicolo Machiavelli lived from 1469 to 1527. He was an Italian statesman and philosopher who is best known for writing *The Prince* which contained his theory of government and his master plan for seizing and holding power.

Machiavelli is the apt name for a card game we learned from a guest during a family vacation at our lodge in Belize. We rushed back from excursions to Mayan ruins and exotic jungle canoe trips as quickly as we could to play this seductive game. Our return flight brought us back to Miami where part of the family would fly to Los Angeles and part to San Francisco. We continued a passionate tournament playing on the floor of the airport terminal. I remember suddenly looking up and seeing the door to the L.A. flight closing and our nephew Christopher running with cards in hand to beg the attendant to hold it open.



We hope you have as much fun playing Machiavelli as we do!

The Coppola Family

RULES OF THE GAME

Played with 2-5 players. Best with 3 or 4 players.

Use two decks of playing cards and two jokers. Shuffle the two decks together thoroughly. Deal each player 12 cards face down. Place the remainder of the cards in a stack face down on the table. Take 4 cards from the top the stack and turn face up. We call these four “free” cards. (They are only dealt once, at the beginning of the game.)

The winner is the first person to play all of the cards in his/her hand.

A play consists of laying down at least three cards. Either three (or more) of the same suit in consecutive numbers (Example: 4, 5, 6 of hearts) or three (or four) of the same number in different suits (Example: 8 of hearts, 8 of spades, 8 of diamonds). The two jokers in the deck are “wild” cards and can substitute for any card in the deck.

The play begins with the first person to the left of the dealer and continues in turn around the table. The player makes a play from the 12 cards held in his/her hand. Any of the four cards dealt face up on the table may be incorporated into a play as they are “free” cards to be used by the first person who is able. If the player cannot make a play he/she must draw a card from the stack. The next player may make a new play from the cards in his/her hand and/or add cards onto the sets already laid down on the table. If a player is not able to play at least one card he must draw a card from the stack and wait until it is his turn again.

GAME DETAILS

1. When a joker is played, another player, in turn, may substitute the actual card and free the joker for his own use. However, he may take the joker only if he can use it immediately in the same turn, in a play using at least two cards from this hand.
2. The Ace is equal to a one and follows a king in a set such as king, ace, two of clubs, or ace, two, three of diamonds.
3. The “free” cards can be played when a player sees an opportunity during his turn. It counts as a play and the player need not draw.
4. When a player draws a card his turn has ended and he cannot play until his next turn.

What gives this game its name is that a player may split apart or join any cards on the table in order to use cards from his/her hand, as long as the cards remaining on the table at the end of his/her turn continue to form sets. After each play, the next player is presented with a fascinating new combination of possible plays and the opportunity to “seize power”.

SCORING

The highest number of games won determines the winner. Or players may score the cards remaining in their hands at the end of each game. We count the cards from the ace to ten as equal to five points, face cards equal 10 points each and the Joker equals 25 points. The player with the lowest number of points is the winner.

