

# How to Play Bunco



## Bunco Game Set-up

Bunco is traditionally played with 12 players. You will seat three people each at four tables and one table will be considered the “head table.” Each table should be supplied with:

- 3 dice
- 4 score sheets (1 for each player)
- 2 pencils
- 2 notepads (1 for each team)
- 1 scratch pad for the scorekeeper (head table only)
- 1 bell (head table only)
- 1 fuzzy die (head table only)



## Getting Started With Bunco

The first step is determining which players will sit at the head table.

- 1 - Draw a star on the back of four out of 12 score sheets. This should be done so that the other players cannot see which sheets the stars were drawn on.
- 2 - Each player will pick a score sheet from the stack.
- 3 - The four players who took a sheet with the star on back will sit at the head table.
- 4 - The rest of the players will sit at the other tables and create teams. Team members should sit across, rather than next to each other.
- 5 - Each table should have a predetermined number aside from the head table (i.e. table two, table three)
- 6 - The players at each table will decide on a scorekeeper for their table.
- 7 - Have all players select a score sheet. Those who select a score sheet with a star sit at the head table. All other players select their seat at the other tables. The players sitting across from each other are teammates.



## Playing Without Twelve Players

If you have a situation where you have less than 12 players, you can split up the number of players by three. You need to have at least three tables to play, but you don't have to have four people at each table. On the other hand, if you have [more than 12 players](#), you can add more tables with up to four players each.



## Playing With an Odd Number of Players

You can play with an odd number of players if you use a “ghost.” The partner of the ghost rolls the dice and keeps score for the ghost.



## Basic Bunco Game Rules

**1** - The play starts when the scorekeeper at the head table rings the bell. Throughout the game, the head table will be in charge.

**2** - The players at each table take turns rolling the three dice at their table and marking their score on the score sheets.

**3** - During the first round, the players are trying to roll a “1.”

**a)** Points are scored for every “1” that is rolled. For example, a roll of 1-1-4 would be scored as two points since the “1” was rolled two times.

**b)** If all three die are a “1,” then the player has rolled a “Bunco” and gets 21 points. The player has to yell “Bunco” to get the points.

**c)** Only the player who rolled the Bunco gets the 21 points on their scoresheet.

**d)** If the player rolls the die and has three of a kind that are not a “1”, they get five points. For example, rolling 4-4-4 in round one would earn five points.

**e)** If the player rolls and gets no point, their turn is over and the dice goes to the next player sitting clockwise from them.

**4** - Once a team at the head table either rolls a Bunco or scores 21 and yells “game,” the head scorekeeper will ring the bell to end the round.

**a)** Note that until the head table rings the bell, the other tables should keep playing, even if a team at that table has hit 21 or a Bunco. The tables should keep accumulating points until the round is called by the head table.

**b)** If a player at one of the other tables has not finished their turn when the bell is called, they are allowed to do so and add their scores to their scoresheet.

**5** - At the end of the round, the players review their scoresheets:

**a)** If a player’s team won the round, they mark a “W” on their sheet.

**b)** If a player’s team lost the round, they mark a “L” on their sheet.

**c)** If it’s a tie, all four players will have a “roll-off.”

**d)** The players will roll the die based on the number for that round i.e. they will need to roll a two in round two, three in round three and so on.

**e)** The table scorekeeper goes first and rolls until they do not score and passes the die to the next person.

**f)** After all four have rolled and scored, the total is tallied and the team with the highest score wins. If there is still a tie, another roll-off is done and repeated until one team comes out ahead.

Example of a Bunco Individual Scoresheet						
Player Name: Alice						
Round	Die 1	Die 2	Die 3	Bunco	Total Pts	W/L
Round 1	1	1			2	W
Round 2	2				2	L
Round 3						L
Round 4				21	21	W
Round 5	5				5	L
Round 6						L
Totals	Wins:	Losses:	Buncos:1		30	

**6** - Now the teams will rotate between the tables in this order:

**a)** The winning team stays at the head table and the losing team moves to table two. The winning team will split up by having one player move to the next chair.

**b)** The losing team from the head table goes to table two.

**c)** The table two winning team moves to the head table and reforms teams.

**d)** The table three winning team moves to table two and reforms teams.

**e)** The table two losing team moves to table three and reforms teams.

**f)** The table three losing team stays where they are but reforms teams with the new players at the table.

**g)** The teams at each table appoint a new table scorekeeper and round two commences.

7- Each subsequent round is played the same way, but the number of the desired die changes. In round two, players will need to roll a two. In round three, players will need to roll a three, and so on.

## Ending the Bunco Game

When the players have decided to end the game with their last round, the scorekeepers should review the scoresheets to determine the winning team.

- 1) They will tally up the total number of wins and losses.
- 2) The players can determine the categories for winners, which may just be the player with the most wins, or it can also include multiple winners, such as the player with the most wins and the player with the most Buncos.
- 3) Some players include prizes for the most losses or the person who had the same amount of wins and losses, as well as prizes for people who played but didn't score at the top or bottom. Above all, the game should be fun for everyone so the group can be creative with their prizes and awards.

## Variations in Bunco Game Rules

There are many variations with Bunco that players enjoy. Some common ones are:

- 1) The number of rounds played per set can range from four to six or more.
- 2) The number of sets per game is usually three but can be more or less.
- 3) Players may decide to change how players move between tables after each round. "Traveling" can be added in, which involves an item such as the fuzzy dice or a plush toy or bean bag.
  - a) The players decide at the beginning of the game on a set die roll, such as three of a kind of any number, or three of one specific number (i.e. three sixes).
  - b) If a player rolls that number, they yell "traveling" and the item is placed by the player.
  - c) Whoever has the item at the end of the game wins the traveling prize.