



TAPAS

*A game of speed for 3 or 4 players, 15 minutes and a Piecepack
by Antonio Recuenco Muñoz*

A famous tapas bar whose lead bartender has just won the lottery and moved to the Seychelles is looking for a substitute who can serve varied tapas as fast as possible. Unfortunately, all applicants so far have been too inept to take the job. The bar must resume business as soon as possible and there is hardly any time to test the last applicants, so they will have to compete together in a single contest.

Components

A standard Piecepack.

Goal

The game will be won by the player that has assembled the largest amount of original tapas (see below).

Setup

- Each player chooses the pawn and die of one suit, and keeps both in front of their seat, clearly visible to all players.
- One player gathers all coins in both hands, shakes them and drops them at random on the table.
- The tiles are placed grid-side up on the table and shuffled. Each player draws one and places it suit-side up beside their pawn. Coins and tiles build the *pool*.
- Each player must then put one hand behind their back and touch their die with the other hand – as soon as all players are touching their die at the same time, the play starts.

Play

The game has no turns: As soon as all players touch their die with one hand, they must then use only that hand to flip coins or tiles in the pool, draw them or return them, and move them beside the player's own pawn in order to build tapas: a *tapa* is a group of three tiles and/or coins that follows any pattern involving either the suits or the values of the ingredients (all with the same suit/value, all in different suits, all even, all odd...). Players can only build one tapa at a time, and no more than three pieces can be seen at any time beside any pawn. Once the tapa is ready, its three elements are stacked and placed between the pawn and the player.

Going out: If one player believes that there are not enough materials to prepare more tapas, they will place their die at the centre of the table with the lowest possible number showing on the top side (0 if there are no other dice on the table, 1 if there is another die, 2 if there are two dice, etc). The play stops when the second-to-last player places their die at the centre of the table.

Final count: Once the play has finished, all leftover tiles and coins are removed from the table and the finished tapas are spread out in front of all players. The player with the lowest die describes one of their finished tapas. If one player discovers another tapa on the table that can be described with the same explanation, they call out "BIS" and point it out: all found tapas that fit the description will be then removed from the table. If no similar tapas are found, the described tapa is stacked again and kept. This procedure will be executed by all players (in clockwise order) until there are no tapas left to count. The player with most tapas left at the end of the count wins the game; ties are broken by the die with the lowest value.

Irregularities: If one player catches another player breaking the rules of the game, they must clap their hands. As soon as the clap sounds, all players must freeze and remain still until the trespass is explained and confirmed. If a player is indeed caught red-handed, play resumes when the clapping player claps again, but the offender will lose one tapa per breach of the rules when the final count ends. If there was no cheating, the play resumes with a second clap as well, but the clapping player will then lose one tapa at the final count. If a player fails to explain a tapa immediately, all other players must give thumbs down to have it discarded.

Expansions

More ingredients: For more complex tapas, further ingredients such as the Piecepack pyramids or the Piecepack matchsticks for each suit in the game can be added to the pool at the centre of the table. For each new ingredient added, the tapas will need one extra piece (four if there is one new ingredient, five if there are two...). A tapa can't have more than two pieces of the same ingredient.

More players: The game can be enjoyed by more players by simply adding more suits to the play (Four Seasons expansion, Playing Cards expansion, Packet...). These new suits also allow new combinations for the tapas. For more than seven players, once six dice are placed on the table, the seventh die will be placed with a 0 on the die showing 0, the eighth with a 1 on the previous die with a 1, and so on. For an easier visualisation, the dice can also be placed in a line.