

Brûlot

3-6 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Avoid winning tricks that contain penalty cards.

SETUP

- Use a standard 52-card deck with 3 to 6 players.
- Deal cards evenly; leftover cards form a widow pile.
- The top card of the widow determines the trump suit.

SCORING

- Aces: 4 points, Kings: 3, Queens: 2, Jacks: 1.
- All other cards carry no penalty value.
- Lowest penalty total after all rounds wins.

Tip: Void a suit early so you can dump penalty cards when that suit is led.

ON YOUR TURN

- The player to the dealer's left leads any card.
- Follow suit if possible; otherwise play any card including trump.
- The highest trump or highest card of the led suit wins the trick.

Brûlot is a traditional French-Canadian card game where players attempt to avoid taking specific penalty cards while strategically passing unwanted cards to opponents. It combines elements of trick avoidance with hand management in a fast-paced format.

Objective

Avoid collecting penalty cards during play. The player with the fewest penalty points at the end of the agreed number of rounds wins the game.

Setup

1. **Players:** 3 to 6 players.
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck.
3. **Deal:** Cards are dealt evenly among all players. Any remaining cards are placed face-down as a widow pile.
4. **Trump:** The top card of the widow pile determines the trump suit for the round.

Gameplay

1. **Leading:** The player to the dealer's left leads the first trick by playing any card.
2. **Following suit:** Each subsequent player must follow suit if able. If unable, they may play any card including trump.
3. **Winning tricks:** The highest trump card wins the trick. If no trump is played, the highest card of the led suit wins.
4. **Penalty cards:** Certain cards carry penalty points, and the goal is to avoid winning tricks that contain them.
5. **Burning:** A player who holds no cards of the led suit and no trump is said to be 'burned' and must reveal their hand.

Scoring

- **Aces:** 4 penalty points each.
- **Kings:** 3 penalty points each.
- **Queens:** 2 penalty points each.
- **Jacks:** 1 penalty point each.
- **Other cards:** No penalty value.

Variations

- **No-trump Brûlot:** Played without a trump suit, making hand management even more critical.
- **Partnership Brûlot:** Teams of two share their penalty totals, adding a cooperative dimension.

Tips and Strategies

- Lead with low cards early to draw out high penalty cards from opponents.
- Keep track of which suits have been exhausted by other players to avoid being stuck winning late tricks.
- Save your trump cards for situations where you need to escape winning a trick loaded with penalties.

Tips & Strategy

Focus on voiding a suit early so you can discard penalty cards when that suit is led. Pay close attention to trump management throughout the round.

Experienced players count penalty cards as they are captured. Knowing how many points remain in unplayed cards helps you decide when to take risks late in a round.