

Forty-Five

2-10 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Score 45 points by winning tricks worth 5 points each.

SETUP

- 2-10 players, deal 5 cards each.
- Turn up a card to set the trump suit.
- Unique ranking: 5 of trumps > Jack of trumps > Ace of Hearts.

SCORING

- Each trick = 5 points.
- First to 45 wins.

Tip: The 5 of trumps is always the most powerful card in the game.

ON YOUR TURN

- Must follow suit only if trumps are led.
- Highest card wins the trick.
- Winner leads next.

Forty-Five is the national card game of Ireland, a trick-taking game with a unique card ranking that changes based on the trump suit and card color. The first player or team to reach 45 points wins.

Objective

Win tricks containing high-value cards to be the first player or team to score 45 points.

Setup

1. **Players:** 2-10 players (often played in partnerships of 2 or teams).
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck.
3. **Deal:** Deal 5 cards to each player in batches. Turn up one card to determine the trump suit.

Gameplay

1. **Step 1:** The player to the dealer's left leads the first trick with any card.
2. **Step 2:** Players must follow suit if a trump is led. If a non-trump is led, players may play any card.
3. **Step 3:** Card ranking is unique: the 5 of trumps is always the highest trump, followed by the Jack of trumps, then the Ace of Hearts (always third-highest trump).
4. **Step 4:** The highest card wins the trick. The trick winner leads next.

Scoring

- Each trick won is worth 5 points. The highest trump in play earns an additional 5 points.
- The first player or team to reach 45 points wins the game.

Variations

- **Auction Forty-Fives:** Teams bid for the right to name trumps, adding a strategic bidding phase.
- **Spoil Five:** A related game where if no one wins 3 tricks, the round is 'spoiled' and redealt.

Tips and Strategies

- The 5 of trumps is the most powerful card, so protect it or use it to capture high-value tricks.
- Remember that the Ace of Hearts is always the third-best trump regardless of the actual trump suit.
- In non-trump leads, you have freedom to play anything, giving you strategic flexibility.

Tips & Strategy

Master the unusual card ranking, especially remembering that the Ace of Hearts is always the third-highest trump. The 5 of trumps dominates every hand.

The freedom to play off-suit when a non-trump is led gives you enormous flexibility. Use this to dump losers or play trumps strategically.