

Hearts

3-6 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Easy

Duration: Medium

Have the lowest score by avoiding hearts and the Queen of Spades.

SETUP

- Deal all 52 cards evenly to 4 players (13 each).
- Pass 3 cards to another player (direction alternates each hand).

SCORING

- Each Heart is worth 1 penalty point.
- Queen of Spades is worth 13 penalty points.
- Shooting the Moon (taking all penalty cards) gives 26 points to everyone else.
- Game ends when someone hits 100; lowest score wins.

Tip: Pass high hearts and the Queen of Spades early to reduce risk.

ON YOUR TURN

- Player with 2 of Clubs leads the first trick.
- Follow suit if possible; otherwise play any card.
- Hearts cannot be led until they have been 'broken'.

Hearts is a classic trick-taking game commonly played by four players. The objective is to avoid capturing certain cards that carry penalty points.

Objective

The goal in Hearts is to have the lowest score at the end of the game. Penalty points are incurred for capturing specific cards during tricks, and players aim to avoid these cards.

Setup

1. **Players:** Hearts is played with four players.
2. **Deck:** A standard 52-card deck is used.
3. **Passing Cards:** In the first hand, each player passes three cards to the player to their left. In subsequent hands, passing alternates between left, right, across, and no passing.

Dealing

The dealer shuffles the deck and deals the entire deck, one card at a time, to the players.

Gameplay

1. **Leading Tricks:** The player with the 2 of clubs leads the first trick. Players must follow suit if possible; otherwise, they can play any card (except on the first trick, where hearts and the Queen of Spades may not be played).
2. **Breaking Hearts:** A player cannot lead with a heart until hearts have been "broken" — that is, until a heart has been discarded on a previous trick.
3. **Avoiding Penalty Cards:** Hearts and the Queen of Spades carry penalty points. Players try to avoid capturing these cards in tricks.

Scoring

- **Hearts:** Each Heart card captured during a trick adds 1 penalty point.
- **Queen of Spades:** The Queen of Spades adds 13 penalty points if captured.
- **Other Cards:** Cards other than Hearts and the Queen of Spades have no point value.

Shooting the Moon

If a player captures all the hearts and the Queen of Spades in a single hand, they shoot the moon. Each of the other players receives 26 penalty points.

Winning the Game

The game is typically played to a predetermined point total, such as 100 points. The player with the lowest score wins.

Tips for Beginners

- Be cautious of capturing hearts and the Queen of Spades.
- Strategically pass cards to weaken opponents or improve your hand.
- Pay attention to cards played by opponents to gauge potential penalty cards.

Variations

Explore variations like "Cutthroat Hearts" or "Spot Hearts" for different dynamics.

Tips & Strategy

Manage your hand carefully to avoid taking penalty cards. Sometimes it's strategic to 'shoot the moon' and try to collect all the penalty cards.

Balancing aggression and caution is key in Hearts. Be mindful of the cards played by opponents and adapt your strategy accordingly.