

Oh Hell (Bidding Whist)

3-7 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Long

Score points by winning exactly the number of tricks you bid each round.

SETUP

- Deal a decreasing number of cards each round (starting from 10 down to 1).
- Flip top card of remaining deck to determine trump suit.
- Each player bids how many tricks they expect to win.

SCORING

- Meeting your bid earns 10 points plus 1 per trick won.
- Missing your bid costs 10 points per trick you are short.
- Bidding zero and winning none earns a 5-point bonus.

Tip: Bid conservatively in early rounds when more cards make outcomes less predictable.

ON YOUR TURN

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

Oh Hell is an exciting trick-taking card game where players bid on the number of tricks they will take each round. The game offers strategic gameplay and unpredictable twists, making it engaging for players of all skill levels.

Players

Oh Hell can be played with 3 to 7 players, but it is best with 4 or 5 players.

Deck

A standard 52-card deck is used. For games with 5 or more players, consider using two decks shuffled together.

Setup

1. **Dealing:** Deal a set number of cards to each player, starting with 10 cards for the first round. Decrease the number of cards dealt by one each subsequent round until the final round, where only one card is dealt to each player.
2. **Trump Card:** After dealing, flip the top card of the remaining deck face up to determine the trump suit for the round. Place it beside the draw pile.

Gameplay

1. **Bidding Phase:** Players take turns bidding on the number of tricks they expect to win in the round. The bidding starts with the player to the dealer's left and proceeds clockwise. Each player must bid between 0 and the total number of cards dealt. The total of all bids shouldn't equal the number of cards dealt in the round.
2. **Trick-Taking Phase:** The player to the left of the dealer leads the first trick by playing any card. Players must follow suit if possible; otherwise, they may play any card. The highest card of the led suit wins, unless a trump card is played, in which case the highest trump wins. The winner leads the next trick.
3. **Scoring:** Players who meet their bid receive 10 points plus 1 point for each trick won. Players who fail to meet their bid receive -10 points for each trick they are short. Bidding zero and winning no tricks earns a bonus of 5 points.
4. **Winning the Game:** The game consists of a predetermined number of rounds, typically equal to the number of cards dealt in the final round. The player with the highest total score wins.

Variations

- **Nello:** A variation where there is no trump suit for the round.
- **Rock and Roll:** A variation where the number of cards dealt to each player decreases and then increases each round.
- **Exchange:** A variation where players exchange cards with their opponents before the bidding phase.

Tips for Beginners

- Pay attention to the cards played in each round to better predict which cards remain in play.
- Consider the number of players and cards dealt when making your bid.
- Be cautious when bidding zero tricks, as failing to win any tricks can result in a significant point penalty.

Tips & Strategy

Be strategic in your bids, taking into account the unique scoring system. Adapt your play based on the bids of opponents and the trump suit.

Oh Hell involves strategic bidding and adaptability in trick-taking. Players must balance risk and reward in predicting the number of tricks they will take.