

Hearts

The rules on one page

Players

4 is best. 3 or 5 also work, and 6 to 10 with two decks.

You need

A standard 52-card deck, plus paper and a pencil for the score

Goal

Avoid winning hearts and the queen of spades in your tricks

Game ends

When someone reaches 100 points. The lowest total wins.

Setup

1. Take the jokers out of a standard 52-card deck. Have paper and a pencil ready. Everyone plays alone and keeps their own score.
2. Anyone can deal the first hand. After each hand the deal moves one seat to the left.
3. Shuffle and deal the cards one at a time, face down and clockwise, starting on the dealer's left. With 4 players everyone gets 13 cards.
4. Sort your cards by suit. Aces are high and 2s are low. There is no trump suit.

How to play

1. **Pass 3 cards.** Choose 3 cards and pass them face down: to the left on the first hand, to the right on the second and across the table on the third. Nobody passes on the fourth hand. Then the cycle starts again.
2. **Lead the 2 of clubs.** Whoever holds the 2 of clubs after the pass leads it. Going clockwise, each player plays one card and must follow suit, which means playing a card of the suit led, if they can. The highest card of the suit led wins the trick, and the winner leads next.
3. **Play any card when you cannot follow suit.** If you have no card of the suit led, you may play any card. This is your chance to get rid of hearts and the queen of spades. The first trick is the exception: on it you may not play a heart or the queen of spades unless your hand holds nothing else.
4. **Wait for hearts to be broken.** You may not lead a heart until hearts are broken. They are broken once a heart has been played on an earlier trick, which usually happens when a player cannot follow suit. From then on anyone may lead a heart. If your hand holds only hearts, you may lead one even before they are broken.
5. **Lead the queen of spades when you like.** Spades may be led on any trick after the first, the queen included. She wins a trick only when spades are led and nobody plays the king or ace of spades.

6. Score the hand. After 13 tricks, each player counts the point cards in the tricks they won: 1 point for each heart and 13 for the queen of spades. Add the points to each player's total. The deal then moves left.

7. Shoot the moon. Winning all 13 hearts and the queen of spades in one hand is called shooting the moon. The player who does it scores 0 for that hand, and every other player scores 26.

Which way to pass, with 4 players

Hand	Pass 3 cards to
1st	The player on your left
2nd	The player on your right
3rd	The player across from you
4th	Nobody. Keep your cards.
5th	Start again: to the left

When you may play a heart or the queen of spades

What is happening	A heart or the queen of spades
First trick, and you have a club	Not allowed. You must play a club.
First trick, and you have no clubs	Not allowed, unless your hand holds nothing else
A later trick, and you cannot follow suit	Allowed. So is any other card.
You are leading after the first trick, and hearts are not broken	The queen may be led. A heart only if you hold nothing but hearts.
You are leading after the first trick, and hearts are broken	Either may be led

Scoring

Points for one hand

In the tricks you won	Points
Each heart	1
The queen of spades	13
Any other card	0
All 13 hearts and the queen of spades (shooting the moon)	0 for you, and 26 for every other player

The game ends after the hand in which any player reaches 100 points or more. The player with the lowest total wins.

