

Hearts

PLAYERS 4 (3 to 5 possible)

DECK 52 cards, no jokers

TYPE Trick-taking

LEVEL Medium

GAME Until someone reaches 100

THE GOAL

Avoid taking hearts and the queen of spades. The lowest score wins.

SETUP

Four players, each playing alone. One 52-card deck without jokers. There are no trumps.

THE DEAL

Deal all the cards one at a time: 13 each. Then everyone passes three cards: left on the first hand, then right, then across, then no pass, and repeat.

A TURN

- The holder of the 2 of clubs leads it to the first trick.
- Follow suit if you can. If you can't, play any card, but no hearts or queen of spades on the first trick.
- The highest card of the suit led wins the trick. Its winner leads next.

SPECIAL CARDS

- No leading hearts until a heart has been played on another suit, unless you hold nothing but hearts.
- The queen of spades costs 13 points on her own.

SCORING

- Each heart: 1 point. Queen of spades: 13. Every hand has 26 points.
- Shooting the moon: take every heart and the queen and you score 0, everyone else 26.

WINNING

When someone reaches 100 points, the game ends and the lowest score wins.

HOUSE RULES

- **Omnibus Hearts.** The jack of diamonds is a bonus card: whoever takes it subtracts 10 points.
- **Spot Hearts.** Hearts cost their face value (the 2 costs 2, the ace 14) and the queen of spades 25.
- **Moon option.** A player who shoots the moon may choose to subtract 26 from their own score instead of adding 26 to everyone else's.