



Hearts rules and how to play

To understand **Hearts rules**, you need to focus on how a round actually plays out. Hearts is a trick-taking card game where players compete individually and try to avoid collecting penalty cards.

There is no trump suit, and winning tricks is often a bad thing. The goal is to stay as low as possible in points while managing risk across multiple rounds.

Each round follows the same pattern: deal, pass cards, play tricks, then count points. Once one player reaches the target score, the game ends and the lowest total wins.

Setup and preparations

Setup element	Details
Players	4 (standard game)
Deck	52 cards, no jokers
Deal	13 cards per player
Goal	Avoid penalty cards
Target score	Usually 100

Before each round:

- Players sort their hand
- Select three cards to pass

Gameplay in Hearts – step by step

1 Pass cards

Each player chooses three cards and passes them. The direction rotates:

- Round 1: Left
- Round 2: Right
- Round 3: Across
- Round 4: No pass

Then the cycle repeats.

2 Lead the first card

The player holding the **2 of clubs** starts and must play it. This begins the first trick.

3 Follow suit

Players must follow the suit led if possible. If they cannot:

- They may discard any card
- On the first trick, hearts and the queen of spades cannot be played

4 Win the trick

The highest card of the suit led wins. There is no trump suit in Hearts. The winner collects the trick and leads the next one.

5 Breaking Hearts

Hearts cannot be led until they have been broken. This happens when a player discards a heart because they cannot follow suit. After that, hearts can be led normally.

6 Continue play

The round continues until all 13 tricks have been played.

7 Count penalty points

After the round ends, players score based on the cards they collected:

Each heart = 1 point

Queen of spades = 13 points

How to win at Hearts

Hearts is not about winning tricks. It is about avoiding the wrong ones over time.

After each round, players add their points to a running total. The game continues until one player reaches the agreed score, usually 100 points.

When that happens, the player with the lowest total score wins the game.

Shooting the moon in Hearts

Result	Effect
Player who shoots the moon	Scores 0 points
All other players	Receive 26 points

This move is difficult and risky. If it fails, the player often ends up with a very high score. When it works, it can shift the lead instantly.

Tips to improve your Hearts strategy

Tip	What it means in practice
Avoid early tricks	Let others take control early
Track played suits	Plan safe discards
Manage high cards	Be careful with high spades
Create void suits	Discard penalty cards later
Delay breaking Hearts	Do not open too early
Watch the queen of spades	Track who may take it
Control late tricks	Save safe cards
Read player behavior	Adapt to opponents

Alternative versions of Hearts

Omnibus Hearts: Jack of diamonds subtracts 10 points.

Black Lady (classic Hearts): Standard version of the game.

Partnership Hearts: Played in teams of two.

Online Hearts: Digital versions with timers and auto-scoring.

Overview of the Hearts game rules

Rule	Summary
Players	4
Deck	52 cards
Cards per player	13
Goal	Avoid penalty cards
Hearts	1 point each
Queen of spades	13 points
Passing	Rotates each round
Special rule	Shooting the moon
Leading hearts	Only after broken
Win condition	Lowest score at limit

Is Hearts worth playing?

Hearts is worth playing if you enjoy card games where control matters more than luck.

The rules are simple, but decisions during a round carry weight.

If you want a card game that stays engaging without being complicated, Hearts is a strong choice.

Welcome back to [Playiro.com](https://playiro.com) to learn more game rules in the future.