Hearts: the rules

A trick-taking game for 4 (or 3 to 5) where you try not to score. One standard deck, no jokers. Lowest score wins.

Deal

- 4 players: 13 cards each.
- 3 players: take out the 2 of Diamonds and deal 17 each.
- 5 players: take out the 2 of Clubs and 2 of Diamonds and deal 10 each. The 3 of Clubs leads.

Pass three cards

Choose three cards and pass them face down, before you look at the ones you receive. Hand 1: left. Hand 2: right. Hand 3: across. Hand 4: no pass. Then repeat. With 3 players: left, right, no pass.

Play

- Whoever holds the 2 of Clubs leads it. Play goes clockwise, one card each.
- Follow the suit that was led if you can. If you can't, play anything.
- The highest card of the suit led takes the trick. Aces are high and there are no trumps.
- The winner leads the next trick.
- First trick: nobody may play a heart or the Queen of Spades, unless that's all they hold.
- Breaking hearts: you can't lead a heart until one has been played on an earlier trick, unless you hold only hearts.

Score

- Each heart you took: 1 point.
- The Queen of Spades: 13 points.
- Shooting the moon: take all 26 points in a hand and you score 0, while everyone else scores 26.

Winning

Add each hand to a running total. When anyone reaches 100, the game ends and the lowest total wins. If there's a tie, play another hand.

Agree these before you start

- Are points allowed on the first trick?
- Does the Queen of Spades break hearts?
- After a moon shot, may the shooter take 26 off their own score instead?

Hearts score sheet

Hand				
1 Left				
2 Right				
3 Across				
4 None				
5 Left				
6 Right				
7 Across				
8 None				
9 Left				
10 Right				
11 Across				
12 None				
13 Left				
14 Right				
15 Across				
16 None				
17 Left				
18 Right				
19 Across				
20 None				

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