

How to play Callbreak

Callbreak is a trick-taking card game for four players, each playing alone. Everyone gets 13 cards and calls how many tricks they will win. Spades are always trump. Make your call and you score it, plus 0.1 for each extra trick; miss it and you lose your call. After five rounds, the highest total wins.

Goal

Win at least the number of tricks you called in every round, and finish five rounds with the highest score.

Setup

- Four players, each for themselves. There are no partners.
- A standard 52-card deck; each player gets 13 cards.
- Ace is high and 2 is low. Spades are always trump.
- A hand with no spade at all is thrown in and dealt again.

How to play

1. Look at your hand and count your sure winners: high spades and aces.
2. Call how many tricks you will win, from 1 to 8.
3. One player leads the first trick by playing any card.
4. Follow the suit led, and beat the winning card if you can.
5. With none of the suit led, you must play a spade, higher than any spade already played if you can.
6. The highest spade wins; with no spade, the highest card of the suit led wins. The winner leads next.
7. After 13 tricks, score the round. Play five rounds.

Key rules

How many cards does each player get in Callbreak?

Each of the four players gets 13 cards, so the whole deck is dealt and every round has 13 tricks. A hand without a single spade is thrown in and dealt again, because spades decide so many tricks.

What does calling mean in Callbreak?

Calling is the bid. Before play, each player says how many tricks they will win, from 1 to 8 in the Classic rules. You play for yourself, so your call is only yours. Calling too high is risky, because missing it costs your whole call.

Do you have to beat the card on the table?

Yes. In Classic Callbreak, when you follow suit you must play a card that beats the winning card if you have one. If you have none of the suit led, you must play a spade, and beat any spade already played when you can.

How is Callbreak scored?

If you win at least your call, you score the call plus 0.1 for each extra trick: call 4 and win 6 for 4.2 points. If you win fewer tricks than you called, you lose your call: minus 4. After five rounds, the highest total wins.

Is Callbreak the same as Spades?

They are close cousins: 13 cards each and spades as trump. The difference is that in Callbreak everyone plays alone, you must try to beat the trick, and scoring uses your call plus tenths instead of 10 points per trick and bags.

What are other names for Callbreak?

Callbreak is also called Call Break, Call Bridge, Lakdi or Ghochi. It is popular in Nepal and India, and house rules vary between tables, for example how high you may call.

Winning and scoring

Made call: the call plus 0.1 per extra trick. Missed call: minus the call. Classic plays 5 rounds and the highest total wins. Deal Circle Callbreak lets you switch house rules such as playing to a target score, the big call of 8, or redealing a hand with no face card.

Tips

- Aces of side suits and high spades are your safest tricks.
- A short side suit is useful: once you run out, your small spades can win tricks.
- Count spades as they fall: there are only 13.
- Late in a round, lead the suit others have run out of only if you want them to trump it.
- Watch other players' calls: a player chasing a big call will spend high cards early.

Avoid these mistakes

- Calling every high card as a sure trick.
- Forgetting that you must beat the winning card when you can.
- Wasting a big spade on a trick another spade has already won.
- Calling low on purpose: extra tricks are worth only 0.1 each.

Words to know

Call: Your bid: the tricks you promise to win.

Trick: One round in which each player plays one card.

Trump: Spades, which beat every other suit.

Round: One deal of 13 tricks; Classic plays five.