Solitaire is a [game](https://www.usatoday.com/story/graphics/2023/08/16/how-to-play-euchre-card-game/70473074007/) for killing time and playing with the most loyal companion known to man – yourself.

In 2020, Microsoft Casual Games reported that over 100 million hands of the online game are played every day. Since its conception on the software three decades ago, Microsoft Solitaire hosts over [35 million players each month,](https://news.xbox.com/en-us/2020/05/22/celebrating-30-years-microsoft-solitaire/) and that’s just on Microsoft. Today, there are dozens of online versions and apps for users to take their Solitaire games virtually.

**What is the goal of Solitaire?**

The goal of the single-player card game is to get rid of your cards and build the deck into a sequence and by suit from ace through king. The game is won when the whole deck of cards is built into the foundation.

**How to play Solitaire**

In order to win Solitaire, you need a solid understanding of the rules and structure of the game. Kings are the highest card in this game and Aces are the lowest.

[**Terms to know**](https://bicyclecards.com/how-to-play/solitaire/)**:**

* Tableau: The seven piles on the main table
* Foundations: The four piles of the sequence the player is trying to build from the tableau, beginning with the King. The four aces will go at the bottom of the foundation
* Stock: Also known as the hand pile, the remaining cards form the pile the player uses to bring additional cards into play
* Waste: Also known as the talon, the discarded cards from the stockpile that are not playable at the moment

**Setup**

* The tableau is set up by creating seven piles.
* Start from the left, place the first card faceup and deal one card facedown for the other six piles
* Move to the second pile, putting a card in the second pile faceup and dealing a facedown card to the remaining five piles
* Move to the third pile and put a card faceup, dealing a facedown card to the other four piles. As you deal, the cards in the tableau should not be directly on top of each other but should create a cascading column of cards.
* Repeat with each pile until the seventh pile has six cards facing down and one card facing up. Pile one should have one faceup card, pile two should have one facing down and one facing up, pile three should have two cards facedown and one card faceup, four will have three cards facedown and one faceup and so on.
* The remaining cards are the stockpile. There should not be any cards in the waste pile or the foundation yet.

**Play**

Your goal is to create a sequence among the seven piles in descending order (King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8 and so on), alternating colors.

If you move a faceup card onto another faceup card from the tableau, you can turn over the facedown card you’ve just unblocked.

If you’re left with an empty space in one of the piles, you can put a King (and only a King) in its place.

If you have aces, move them to the foundation, where you’ll eventually put all four aces. Here, you can start building up by suit in ascending order (Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on) The last faceup card on a sequence pile (or the most recent one put down in that pile) can be moved to the ace foundations. It’s generally a good idea to play lower cards here by suit in the ace foundations.

Use the stockpile to draw a card one at a time. If you can use it in one of your piles to create a sequence or count up by suit, do so. If you cannot use it, move it to the waste pile and draw again.

You can also stack columns by adding one sequence to another if the first faceup card matches the descending pattern. After you've shifted the column over, it will free up a facedown card, which you can turn over.

If you have used all of the cards in the stockpile and all the facedown cards are revealed, you should be able to successfully move all the cards to the ace foundations. This is how you win the game.

**Scoring**

Though not all players are in it to earn the most possible points, there is a definitive scoring system in Solitaire. Here is a guide to [standard scoring](https://australiancardgames.com.au/solitaire/) of Solitaire:

* Stock to tableau: 5 points
* Tableau to foundation: 10 points
* Turn over tableau card: 5 points
* Foundation back to tableau: -15 points
* Bonus points for timed games:  700,000/seconds played, plus 2 points deducted for every 10 seconds played

**How Solitaire evolved into one of the most popular card games to exist**

There are several theories for how the single-player game came to be.

One possible [origin is from an imprisoned French aristocrat in the Bastille (prison) who invented the game in the early 17th century, BBVA reports](https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/science/mathematics/much-more-than-diversion-mathematics-of-solitaire/). Another says the [first documented reference](https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/science/mathematics/much-more-than-diversion-mathematics-of-solitaire/#:~:text=The%20game%20of%20Solitaire%20was,nobles%20who%20were%20not%20related) to the game came in 1697 as an engraving of a French Princess playing a version of the game with holes and pegs. Others say it was invented by a French mathematician who created the game to entertain King Louis XIV.

Another story has it dating to the end of the 18th century in the Baltic region of Europe as a form of fortune-telling. As Britannica reports, if a game was able to be finished or won it would mean the player’s desire would come true. The game was also known as Patience around this time, but the two became interchangeable over the decades. The oldest collection of Patience games was [published in 1826](https://www.britannica.com/topic/solitaire-card-game) in Russia, and the first English language collection arrived in the 1860s.

There are hundreds of variations of the game on record, even utilizing [different shapes](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/21642/21642-h/21642-h.htm#flower) or [multiple card decks](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/21642/21642-h/21642-h.htm#empress) to get the job done.

As the digital age came into focus, Solitaire got a new home – the computer. Microsoft added Solitaire to computers in 1990. While many think the game was added for some downtime during the work day or as a fun solo game, it was actually designed to get users more digitally acclimated. Microsoft needed its users to get comfortable with drag-and-drop functions, so the popular game [became an online one](https://www.businessinsider.com/why-computers-comewith-solitaire-and-minesweeper-2015-8) with much success.

**How to play Solitaire online:**

You can always play Solitaire with a good old-fashioned deck of cards, but if you’re on the go and craving a card game there are ways to play online as well. There are dozens of [Solitaire apps available for mobile use](https://www.mobilityware.com/apple-arcade-launches-solitaire-and-sudoku-simple-by-mobilityware/), and computers even [used to](https://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/all/where-is-solitaire-in-windows-10/c50f84ff-f4c7-403b-af79-337582d6fb7b) come preinstalled with the beloved game.

**Free Solitaire game sites**

* Google’s [Solitaire](https://www.google.com/logos/fnbx/solitaire/standalone.html)
* [Solitaired](https://solitaired.com/)
* [Card Games.io](https://cardgames.io/solitaire/)
* [Solitaire Bliss](https://www.solitairebliss.com/)

**Can you play Solitaire with two people?**

Solitaire is designed to be a solo game, but there are variations of the concept that two or more players can enjoy. Nerts (also known as [nuts, pounce, or racing demon](https://bicyclecards.com/how-to-play/nerts)) is a competitive Solitaire game played with two to four players.

Each player gets their own deck in this game, ideally two different types so as to distinguish each player’s cards. The object of the game is to move as many cards out of your reserve as possible and move cards to the foundation.

**Setup**

* Sitting facing a central area accessible to all players, each player shuffles and deals thirteen cards from their own deck in front of them, face down into a pile.
* Turn the top card faceup. It should be the only one seen. This is the reserve.
* Deal a line of four cards facing up to the right of the reserve. This is the tableau.
* The remainder of the deck is the stock

**Play**

* Similarly to Solitaire, players are to build the tableau by alternating colors in descending order. Players can only play their own tableau, not their opponents.
* Players draw from their stock three at a time, using only the third card if playable or placing it in the discard pile. If the third card can be played, the second card is revealed and playable and so on.
* The top card of the reserve can be played on the tableau or when an empty space becomes available. (This is different from Solitaire, where only the King may be played in an empty space).
* When players draw aces, they move to the middle of the playing area to form a foundation. These foundations start with an ace and go in ascending order by suit. This is where the competitive aspect comes in – any player may add to a foundation pile to create the suit in ascending order, not just the player who put the first ace down. Duplicates cannot be added to a foundation pile.
* If all players are stuck after the hand has gone on for a while, they can agree to move the top card of the stock to the bottom of the stock, essentially reshuffling the deck so the third card drawn is different.

**Winning the game**

Players are competing to deplete their reserve first. Whoever does this calls out “Nerts!” and wins the game.

**Scoring**

If players choose to score the game, the cards contributed to foundations count the most. Players should separate their cards from the foundation back to the original cardholder.

* One point for each card played to the foundation piles
* Two points subtracted for each card left in their reserve
* Players begin a new hand until at least one player exceeds 100 points, at which time the highest scorer wins