



Shoot the Moon

GAME INSTRUCTIONS

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2 to 6 individually, or divided into partnerships of two or three on a team if 4 or 6 play.

EQUIPMENT: One SHOOT THE MOON deck of 52 cards as follows – 4 colored sets of 12 cards (numbered 1 to 12 – red rockets, green crescent moons, purple stars, and blue full moons), 2 each of orange BIG MOON and orange LITTLE MOON cards and 40 Shoot the Moon chips.

OBJECT: Be the first to accumulate a total of 7 chips. In each round of play, try to win a chip by winning an odd number of tricks. If you win all 5 tricks, which is called “SHOOTING THE MOON,” you win 2 chips. Note: you never win a chip for winning an even number of tricks.

DEFINITIONS: SHOOT THE MOON is a trick-taking card game, and the following definitions will be helpful to those not familiar with trick-taking card games.

- **TRICK:** In turn, each player plays one card from their hand face up – this makes one trick.
- **ROUND:** A round (or hand) is made of 5 tricks, because each player has 5 cards to play.
- **SUIT:** A suit is made of cards of the same color and shape.
- **LEADING:** When a player starts a trick by playing a card, this is known as leading.
- **FOLLOWING SUIT:** After a player leads a card, each of the remaining players must now follow suit, which means, starting with the player to the left of the lead card player, each player must play the same color of card as led, if they have one.
- **TRUMP:** The red (rocket) cards are always the trump suit. These trump cards are more powerful than the other three colored card suits. If any red cards are in a trick, then the highest red card wins the trick.
- **SHOOT THE MOON:** If you win all 5 tricks, this is called “SHOOTING THE MOON” and you score double!

THE DEAL: Give each player 2 chips to start the game with. The dealer shuffles the cards, and deals out 5 cards, one card at a time, face down to each player. The rest of the deck is not used in the round. After the round is played, the player to the left of the dealer becomes the new dealer.

PLAY:

- The player to the left of the dealer leads one card from their hand by placing it face up in the center of the play area.
- Each player, starting to that player’s left, must now in turn lay down one card face up from their hand.
- Each player must follow suit or play a “moon” card. If it is not possible to follow suit, the player may play any card in their hand.
- When all players have played one card, the trick is complete.
- The trick is won by the highest numbered card of the suit that was led.
- If any red cards are played in the trick, the trick has been trumped, and the highest red rocket card wins the trick.
- The player who wins the trick gathers it and places it in a separate pile face down in front of them.
- The player who wins a trick leads a card from hand to start the next trick.

THE MOON CARDS: The MOON cards affect play in special ways, as follows:

BIG MOON CARDS:

- BIG MOON cards may be played at anytime, instead of a regular card, even if you have cards matching the color of the suit led.
- BIG MOON cards are the highest cards in the game, and they always win the trick.
- If both BIG MOON cards are played in the same trick, then the first BIG MOON card to be played wins the trick.
- If a BIG MOON card is led, there is no suit to be followed – a card of any suit can be played by all players.
- The “+1” on the card tells the player who wins a trick with a BIG MOON that he gains one chip from the supply, immediately.

- Winning two BIG MOONS in one trick means winning two chips immediately.

LITTLE MOON CARDS:

- You may play a LITTLE MOON card anytime, instead of a regular card, even if you have cards matching the color of the suit led.
- LITTLE MOON cards are the lowest cards in the game, and they can never win a trick.
- If a LITTLE MOON card is led (and only when it is led), it has a special effect on play: All remaining players can play any card they wish, and highest number card, regardless of color, wins the trick (Red cards are no more powerful than any other cards in this one case). If two or more cards tie for high card played, then the first one played wins the trick.
- The “-1” on each LITTLE MOON card tells the player who wins it in a trick that he must lose one chip immediately, back to the chip supply, if he has any.
- Winning two LITTLE MOONS in one trick means losing two chips immediately.
- NOTE: a player can never have less than zero chips

WINNING CHIPS:

- At the end of the round (hand), each player counts up their total number of tricks won.
- If an odd number (1 or 3) tricks have been won, then the player wins one chip.
- If the player SHOOT THE MOON winning all 5 of the tricks, then the player wins two chips.
- If the player wins no tricks or an even number of tricks (2 or 4), they do not win any chips that round (unless they collected a BIG MOON card).
- After all the chips won have been collected, a new round begins and the cards are shuffled and dealt again.
- **SPECIAL INSTANCE:** If a player wins a LITTLE MOON and has no chips during the round, but at the end of the round wins one or more chips for their tricks, they still score that chip. The LITTLE MOON counts against chips won in the current trick and is taken immediately, but a player cannot score less than zero.

THE WINNER:

- The first player to accumulate 7 chips (at the end of a round) wins the game.
- If more than one player ties with 7 chips, all continue with another round, and so on, until one player has at least 7 chips and 1 more than any other player.

ILLEGAL PLAY: If a player fails to follow suit when the player could follow suit, that player makes an illegal play. In this case, the hand is dealt over by the same dealer and replayed. The player making the illegal play is penalized by that partnership, giving up one chip.

INDIVIDUAL PLAY: Two to six players may play individually. With an odd number of players, the game must be played individually.

PARTNERSHIP PLAY: The most popular version of SHOOT THE MOON is played by four players, two partners against two partners. Partners do not sit directly next to each other. For example, if players 1, 2, 3, 4 are sitting around the table, players 1 and 3 are partners and players 2 and 4 are partners. With six players sitting around the table, players 1, 3, and 5 are partners and players 2, 4, and 6 are partners.

At the beginning of the game, each partnership receives a total of two chips, which are kept by one of the players of each partnership.

TWO-PLAYER RULES: All the rules remain the same, except the dealer deals out a total of three hands. The third hand is a “dummy” hand which is placed in a face-down pile between the two players. After each player has played a card, the top card from the dummy pile is turned up to become the third card in the trick. If the dummy wins a trick, then the dummy leads its next card to start the next trick. The player who did not deal the hand always plays next when Dummy leads. Dummy does not accumulate chips.



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