Spades: the rules

Four players in two teams, partners opposite · 52 cards · spades are always trump · from spadesonline.co

The deal

Deal all 52 cards, one at a time, so everyone has 13. The deal passes to the left after each hand.

Bidding

- Starting left of the dealer, each player bids once: the number of tricks they expect to win, from 0 to 13. There is no passing.
- Partners add their bids together: that is the side's contract.
- Nil (a bid of 0) means you promise to win no tricks at all. Your partner's bid stands on its own.
- Blind nil is bid before looking at your cards. It is allowed only when your side is behind by 100 or more. After bidding, your partner passes you 2 cards and you pass 2 back.

Play

- The player left of the dealer leads first. Spades may not be led until a spade has been played on another suit (spades are broken), unless the leader has only spades.
- Follow suit if you can. If you can't, play any card. A spade beats every card of the other suits.
- The highest spade wins the trick; with no spade, the highest card of the suit led. Ace is high. The winner leads next.

Scoring

Contract made	10 points per trick bid, +1 per extra trick (bag)
Contract set (too few tricks)	minus 10 points per trick bid
Nil made / failed	+100 / -100
Blind nil made / failed	+200 / -200
10 bags	minus 100, extra bags carry over

- A failed nil bidder's tricks do not count toward the partner's bid, but they do count as bags.
- First side to 500 wins. If both pass 500 on the same hand, the higher score wins. A shorter game to 250 is common.

Cutthroat (solo) spades

Four players without partners. Each player bids, scores and counts bags alone, with the same scoring. There is no blind nil.

Rules follow Pagat.com and Bicycle. Play free online at spadesonline.co.