



**Build the maze. Brave the deck.
Find the treasure.**

Use a deck of playing cards to construct a maze of hidden dangers, then send a party of Heroes inside. Explore unknown rooms, remember the safest paths, and find all four Treasures before your final Hero falls.

Players: 1–2

Playing Time: 5–10 minutes

Components: One standard 54-card deck, including two Jokers

OBJECTIVE

Find all four Treasures before all 12 Heroes are defeated.

If the Heroes reveal all four Treasures, the Heroes win.

If the final Hero is defeated, the maze wins.

CARD TYPES

Heroes: Jacks, Queens, and Kings

Traps: Cards numbered 2–10

Treasures: Aces

Guardians: Jokers

Traps, Treasures, and Guardians are collectively called **Room Cards**.

SETUP

1. PREPARE THE DECK

Separate the cards into two decks:

- The 12 Hero Cards
- The 42 Room Cards

Shuffle both decks separately.

2. BUILD THE MAZE

Acting as the BBEG, place all 42 Room Cards face down into shapes that make up rooms and corridors to form the maze.

The maze may contain branches, loops, dead ends, and narrow passages. Follow these rules:

- Cards may not overlap.
- Cards are connected when their edges touch.
- Cards that touch only at a corner are not connected.
- Every card must be reachable through an unbroken path of connected cards.

In a solo game, you build the maze before controlling the Heroes.

In a 2-player game, one player acts as the BBEG and builds the maze. The other player controls the Heroes.

See **Building the Maze** for ideas.

3. PREPARE THE HEROES

Place the Hero deck face up so its top card is visible.

The top Hero is the first **Party Leader**. The Party Leader's suit determines which Traps are dangerous.

EXPLORE THE CARDACOMBS

The player controlling the Heroes chooses any Room Card as the Party's starting location. This card may be anywhere in the maze.

For this first Room Card, skip the Move and Hide steps below. Reveal the chosen Room Card and resolve it.

Afterward, complete these steps each turn:

1. MOVE

Move the Party to one connected Room Card.

Cards are connected when their edges touch. The Party cannot move diagonally across corners, cross gaps, or move through other cards.

2. HIDE THE PREVIOUS ROOM

Turn the Room Card the Party just left face down again, unless it is a Treasure.

You may remember what was on a hidden card, but you may not peek at it.

3. REVEAL THE NEW ROOM

Turn the new Room Card face up and resolve its effect.

TRAP: NUMBERED CARD

Compare the Trap's suit to the Party Leader's suit.

- If the suits match, the Party Leader is defeated.
- If the suits do not match, the Party passes safely.

GUARDIAN: JOKER

The Party Leader is defeated, regardless of suit.

TREASURE: ACE

Leave the Treasure face up for the rest of the game. Revealed Treasures are safe and may be crossed freely.

If this is the fourth Treasure, the Heroes win immediately.

DEFEATED HEROES

When the Party Leader is defeated:

1. Remove that Hero from the game.
2. Reveal the next Hero in the Hero deck.
3. The newly revealed Hero becomes the Party Leader.
4. Continue exploring from the Party's current Room Card.

If no Heroes remain, the game ends immediately. The maze wins, or the BBEG player wins in a two-player game.

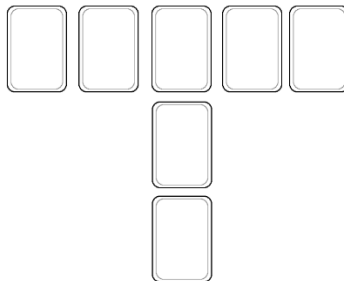
BUILDING THE MAZE

The shape of the maze determines how many choices the Heroes face and how often they must risk returning through previously explored rooms.

A simple rectangular grid is usually easy to navigate. A dangerous maze forces the Heroes to choose between unexplored rooms and hazardous routes they only partly remember.

CREATE BRANCHES

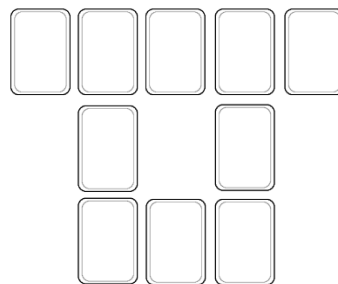
Branches give the Heroes multiple paths to consider.



Heroes must decide whether to continue exploring, turn back, or risk a different route.

ADD LOOPS

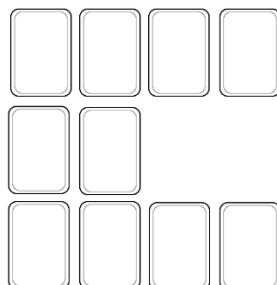
Loops allow the Heroes to approach the same area from different directions.



A route that was dangerous to one Party Leader may become safe after another Hero takes command.

BUILD DEAD ENDS

Dead ends force the Heroes to backtrack after exploring them. A Treasure at the end is a fortunate discovery. A Trap or Guardian may leave the Party with a dangerous retreat.

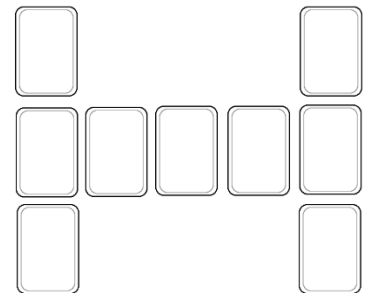


Use dead ends sparingly. Too many can make the maze feel repetitive.

CREATE BOTTLENECKS

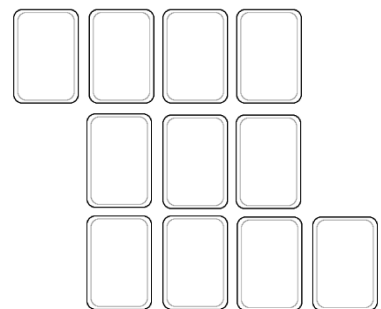
Join two larger sections of the maze with a narrow, one-card-wide passage.

The Heroes may need to cross that card several times, making its suit particularly important to remember.



BUILD CHAMBERS

Create small groups of tightly connected cards with only one or two ways in or out.



Chambers offer several rooms to explore but can become dangerous if their exits contain known hazards.

MAKE ROUTES UNEVEN

Some routes should be short and direct. Others should be longer but offer more ways around dangerous cards.

Interesting choices emerge when the safest route is not necessarily the shortest one.

USE THE ENTIRE PLAYING AREA

A maze does not need to fit inside a neat rectangle. Allow passages and chambers to extend in different directions, provided every card remains reachable.

LEAVE ROOM TO FLIP CARDS

Place connected cards close enough that their paths are clear, but leave enough space to turn cards over without disturbing the maze.

NEVER LOOK AT ROOM CARDS

Room Cards remain face down while the maze is built. The BBEG controls the maze's shape, but does not control the locations of its Traps, Treasures, or Guardians.

VARIANTS

After playing and getting familiar with the game, try these variants.

MIND LIKE A MAP

Before revealing a Room Card, you may name its exact rank and suit.

If your guess is correct, reveal the card but ignore any harmful effect. If your guess is incorrect, resolve the card normally.

You may attempt this every time you enter a face-down Room Card.

PORTALS

Matching cards of the same rank and color form a Portal pair.

Choose a rank and 2 suit before exploring the maze. For example, choose the 7 of Hearts and 7 of Diamonds to form a red Portal.

Both cards in a Portal pair must have been previously revealed before the Portal can be used.

Whenever the Party enters either revealed Portal, it may ignore that card's Trap and immediately move to its matching Portal. Place the Party on the matching card without resolving it again.

The Party is not required to use a Portal.

CURSED TREASURE

When the Party reveals a Treasure whose suit matches the Party Leader's suit, the Party Leader is defeated.

The Treasure is still collected and remains face up.

SHIFTING LEADERSHIP

After moving but before revealing the new Room Card, place the current Party Leader on the bottom of the Hero deck. The newly revealed Hero becomes the Party Leader.

A SINISTER BEGINNING

In a 2-player game, the BBEG chooses the Heroes' starting Room Card after building the maze. The Heroes begin there and resolve the card normally on their first turn.

DARK INFLUENCE

In a 2-player game, give the BBEG three **Dark Influence** tokens.

Before the Hero player reveals a Room Card, the BBEG may spend one token to activate one of these effects:

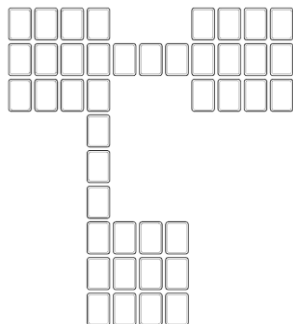
- **Seal the Passage:** The Hero player must choose a different legal move.
- **Shifting Halls:** Exchange the positions of any two adjacent face-down Room Cards.
- **Dark Premonition:** Secretly look at the Room Card the Heroes are about to reveal.
- **Choose the Leader:** When a Hero is defeated, reveal the top two Hero Cards. The BBEG chooses which becomes the new Party Leader. Place the other card on the bottom of the Hero deck.

Each effect may be used only once per game.

SAMPLE MAZES

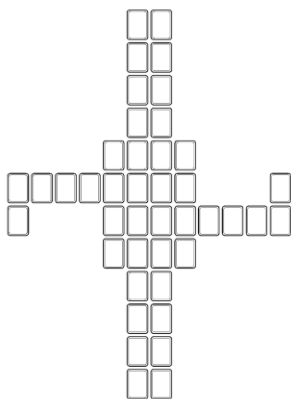
The Fortress (easy):

Multiple chambers connected by corridors.



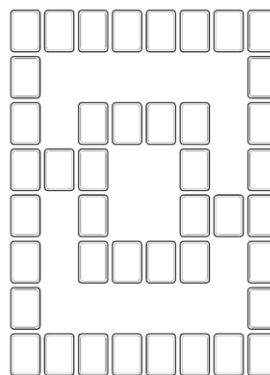
The Crossroads (medium):

Advanced maze with a central hub and several branches.



The Spiderweb (medium):

An advanced maze with interconnected loops and difficult navigation.



The Serpent (hard):

A winding maze with loops, shortcuts, and dead ends.

