

How to Host Your Own Event

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Read on for a detailed guide on how to make your Fireside Gathering a success!

1. How Do I Find a Venue?

If you are still trying to find the perfect place to host your Fireside Gathering, consider places that are open to the public, have plenty of room for tables and chairs, and have a dependable Internet connection. As long as these three basic criteria are met, you will be able to play. Rooms or buildings with multiple electrical outlets are preferred so that players can all plug in their various gaming devices.

Possible places to host your Fireside Gathering:

- College meeting room
- Community recreation center
- Coffee shops
- Game stores
- Hotel ballroom
- Book stores

I have my venue! Now what?

Perfect! Since you already have a place picked out to host your event, you just need to make sure that you have the important things covered.

One of the things that you will want to double check before hosting your event is the power capacity of your venue. If someone plugs in their laptop and causes a circuit to be overloaded, your circuit breaker will trip and your awesome event can come to a sudden halt. Power strips and extension cords will be nice to have on hand for players to charge their gaming devices.

Other Considerations

The other vital bit of technology you will need to be sure of is your router and Internet connection. Having a wireless network to play on can save a lot of headache with network cables, routers, and switches. If you are stuck without a wireless option, be sure to have a router with multiple ports available. You can also purchase a switch to allow up to 48 more gamers to get connected!

Make sure that your guests know whether they need to have a device with wireless capability or if they need to bring an Ethernet cord along with them to be able to participate. It may be a good idea to see how many people are able to connect to your wireless network before hosting your event. Many commercial routers have a default number of maximum connections, but can be configured to allow more. If you're uncertain about your wireless network capacity, or you're unable to configure it yourself,

try to allow for a maximum of 10 players connecting at one time. For more detailed information, take a look at the 'How Do I Prevent Tech Trouble?' section of this document.

It will be important for you to be certain that your venue has enough seating available, as well as table space. It is possible that many players will be able to play on their tablet or laptop without need for a table, but it is likely that they will appreciate being able to set their gaming devices down from time to time. One six-foot table per two gamers is recommended for maximum comfort, but do the best with what you can!

It's also wise to have the following:

- A sign-up sheet where people can leave their names and Battle.net battle tags.
- Wifi credentials posted where they can be read easily.
- A camera! Documenting your Fireside Gathering for your social media pages and recaps will make it more engaging for your attendees and future guests.
- **IMPORTANT:** Don't forget to post a notice that filming will be taking place if you plan to take any pictures or video. An easily printed version is included in [this document](#).

2. How Do I Check for Wifi Issues?

Before you gather a room full of eager Hearthstone players together for your Fireside Gathering, it's a good idea to take some time to make sure that everything will run well once everyone starts trying to play. It's useful to make sure that everyone is connected to the same wifi, that the local wifi has sufficient bandwidth, and that the protocols that allow Hearthstone games to 'talk' to each other aren't blocked. This will allow players to appear in the **Players Near Me** section of their friends list and earn the Fireside Friends card back.

For the **Players Near Me** function to work, there are two requirements:

1. The local router must support UDP broadcasting between players
2. Players must be on the same subnet

How Players Near Me Works

Hearthstone uses UDP broadcasting (User Datagram Protocol) to allow each device running the game to 'talk' to each other. This allows nearby players to appear in the **Players Near Me** section of the friends list. The vast majority of routers use this protocol, and UDP broadcasting is commonly used for peer to peer communications and gaming. Some administrators, notably at schools or secure locations, disable the protocol. If UDP broadcasting is disabled, then the Players Near Me won't function.

Testing Whether Players Near Me Is Working

To see if Players Near Me will work at your Gathering, all you have to do is Bring another player and two devices that will run Hearthstone, and then attempt to play a match using the Players Near Me feature using your venue's network or wifi. If you can see your partner in **Players Near Me**, then you are both on the same subnet, and all should be well.

Players Near Me Still Doesn't Work. What Do I Do?

If UDP broadcasting is not available at your chosen venue, that doesn't mean that you have to give up! You could ask your local administrator to temporarily enable UDP broadcasting while your event is taking place. You can also set up your own wifi hotspot using a cell phone or a dedicated device, but watch out for data charges! 3G cards are available in some areas that can help keep costs down. Setting

up your own hotspot could allow a limited number of players to connect that way. Players connected to the same hotspot will likely share the same subnet, enabling **Players Near Me** to function properly and allow players to earn the Fireside Friends card back.

Ultimately, even if you can't get **Players Near Me** to work, don't let that stand in the way of a great Fireside Gathering. As long as your players can connect to the internet, they will still be able to add each other as Friends and challenge each other to friendly matches that way!

Don't forget to drop by the [Fireside Gatherings thread](#) on the official forums, as it contains a handy FAQ regarding the Players Near Me feature and unlocking the Fireside Friends card back.

3. How Can I Promote My Gathering?

Now that you're prepared to make your Fireside Gathering a success, it's time to make sure that interested players know when and where to join you for some Hearthstone fun!

Your first step should be making sure that we know your event is happening! Email us at FiresideGatherings@blizzard.com with all the details! Don't forget to visit LiquidHearth (<http://www.liquidhearth.com/gatherings/submit>) and promote your gathering there. Some organizers find very helpful to create Facebook, Twitter, or other social media accounts for their events to ensure that attendees can stay up to date on upcoming Fireside Gathering dates and times. That's a great way to build up a group of returning regulars.

Meanwhile, in the real world it can be wise to make flyers you can post in and near your venue to announce when your gathering is taking place. If you've got the resources, large signs and banners posted while your gathering is in progress can attract passers-by too. Such signs can be especially valuable for events that happen in public places like bars or cafes.

4. How Do I Make My Fireside Gathering Fun?

A few posters and decorations can help set the appropriate ambiance. You might have a video of a crackling fire going on one of the TVs at your venue. Playing Hearthstone themed music can also help set the mood for a cozy night of card playing fun. You could even have themed costume nights and encourage participants to come in medieval or fantasy dress!



Food and Drink

Food and drink can also help make your gathering complete—after all, *Hearthstone* *does* take place in a tavern! If you're holding your event at a bar or café, you might consider asking the proprietor to add themed food or drinks to the menu. On the other hand, if your Fireside Gathering is being held somewhere that food and drinks aren't as available, you might consider providing refreshments, or encourage attendees to bring their own packaged and sealed food and drink to have a fireside potluck.

The Main Event

Now that all of your vitals have been assessed, you will want to think about the games that you will be playing.

Meeting people and making friends is the heart and soul of the Fireside Gathering experience. We suggest having free play so that guests arriving at any time will still be able to take part in the action. Asking knowledgeable players to mentor new players is a great way to introduce attendees to one another, and a New Player night could help those who don't have much experience with *Hearthstone* feel more welcome. Holding themed, new player, or limited play tournaments can also make the night more fun, and make things easier on players that don't have a huge collection of cards yet. Good ways of keeping those players involved is hosting base set only tournaments, veteran versus recruit competitions where the recruit can ask for help a set number of times per match, or separate your tournaments by experience level or ladder rank. You could also have league style play, and track player wins and losses over the course of several different Fireside Gatherings with rankings that attendees can shoot for.



Contests

Contests are a great way to get attendees of all sorts involved in your event. While it's often wise to keep your contests inclusive so that they're always approachable to newcomers, you can host contests that appeal to a wide variety of players. Hearthstone trivia, battlecry impersonations, charades, and other games that don't require a ton of experience are great for players of all levels. Contests that might appeal to more advanced players include Arena races where each competitor tries to win the most Arena matches the fastest, or challenges that require beating a certain number of other attendees using a restricted deck list. For a more unusual game, pair players off into teams and have them cooperate to build decks and then create a minion with the highest attack and health within a certain period of time.

5. How Do I Run A Tournament?

Including tournament play in your Fireside Gatherings is a great way to add competitive spirit and bring players together. There are a number of ways to go about running a tournament, and many different formats to choose from, but the basics are relatively simple.

First you'll need to determine what format you'll be using. Here are some of the more common tournament formats:

Single Elimination – This is the simplest and fastest tournament format to run. In essence, competitors face off in a first round of matches. The winners of those matches move on to face the winners of other matches, and the losers of those matches are eliminated from the tournament. After each match, the winner goes on to face the winner of another match, and so on, until only two competitors remain to face off against one another in a final bout. The downside to Single Elimination is that it eliminates tournament competitors quickly, which may leave those players feeling less involved in the proceedings, and luck can play a role if a participant gets an unfavorable match up at the start of the tournament.

Double Elimination – A double elimination tournament is very similar to a single elimination tournament. The difference is that there is a winner's bracket and a lower bracket, sometimes called a loser's bracket or consolation bracket. When a player loses a match from the winner's bracket, instead of being eliminated, they have another chance to stay in the tournament by facing off against another player who also lost their first match in the lower bracket. Eventually, the last player standing in the winner's bracket and the lower bracket face off against each other. The down side of a double elimination tournament is that they can be complex and time consuming to run, and require a larger number of participants to be successful.

Round Robin – Round robin tournaments are non-elimination, so even if a player loses a match, they can continue to play. Each participant plays against every other participant for the same

number of matches and the results of those matches are tracked by the organizer. After all the matches are played, the winner is the player with the best win vs. loss record. This format is great if you have a smaller number of players, since it allows everyone to participate. The downside of round robin is that there is more to keep track of, it can be time consuming, and it can be less exciting because there is no 'final' match.

There are many other tournament formats in addition to these, but these are the most common. Feel free to look into how different tournament formats are run, and pick the style that suits your local Hearthstone community and Fireside Gathering best.

After you've chosen the format that you want to use for your Fireside Gathering tournament, the next step is to create brackets. There are a number of apps and utilities available that can help making a bracket and tracking tournament results relatively painless. After you've selected your brackets, you can 'seed' them with the players that are participating. This can be as simple as having participants draw numbers from a hat or assigning them numbers on a first come, first served basis.

If you are running an elimination style tournament and can't fill every bracket because you have an odd number of players, don't worry! If a player finds themselves in a bracket without an opponent, they can get a 'bye', which means that they automatically 'win' their match, and move on to face the winner of another bracket. If you have many players who want to participate in a tournament at your Gathering, rather than making a single very large tournament, you might find it faster and easier to instead run several tournaments with smaller brackets side by side, and then have the winners of each sub tournament face off against each other in a grand final match!

6. Let Us Know How It Went

Don't forget to document your Fireside Gathering and share pictures (or even videos!) with us via e-mail (FiresideGatherings@blizzard.com)! Remember, if you take pictures or video, you need to post a notice that filming will be taking place. Also, if you create a recap of your event, we'd love to read it so please send us a link!

When you send your photos and videos to us, be sure to include:

- The date your Fireside Gathering occurred
- The name and address of the venue where your event took place (or at least the city, state/province, and country where it took place)
- The name of your event (if you've got a special name for your Fireside Gathering)
- A brief description of what went on, including tournaments, games, and events
- A link to your recap if you posted one
- A link to your event page, such as a Facebook page or your Twitter account if you promote your event that way
- Don't forget to share any fun stories and great moments

Your Fireside Gathering could be featured in one of our recap blogs, so we want to be sure to get all the details right!

Remember to make sure that you have a filming notice posted in plain view if you take pictures or video at your event.

Our official hashtag is #FiresideGatherings, so keep those tweets coming.

We hope that you take our advice on hosting your event and that you will have the best Fireside Gathering ever! These ideas are really just scratching the surface of what's possible, so feel free to use your imagination

Enjoy playing Hearthstone: Heroes of Warcraft and make some new friends!