

Online Casino Reports Game Guides

Blackjack: Betting on 21

About Us

Online Casino Reports is an essential stopover before entering the world of online gambling. With over 10 years in the business, we really know our stuff so you can feel in safe hands. Our Game Guides series provides a concise run-down of rules, odds, tips and gambling terms. They'll give you a quick snapshot of any given game and bring you up to speed before starting to play for real.

When you're ready to roll, check out our site for reviews of the very best online gambling sites as well as the latest gambling news from around the world. And if this isn't enough, explore our state of the art video content and online sharing community which will bring the world of online gambling to life and keep you coming back for more.

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Betting on 21

A classic casino card game with simple rules and scope for strategic game play.

The overwhelming popularity of Blackjacks is surely down to the sheer simplicity of the game's rules. Choose between simple mathematical strategy or more advanced techniques in a game that walks the tightrope between skill and luck.

Set-up

Blackjack tables seat 1-8 people. Players are positioned opposite the dealer.

Objective

To compete with the dealer to achieve a card count closer to (but not exceeding) 21.

Game Rules

All cards in Blackjack have a score. Two to ten are counted at their number value. Jacks, queens, and kings are counted as ten. Aces can be one or eleven.

Players are dealt an initial hand of two cards. If these consist of an ace and any 10 then the player has a Blackjack (or natural) and automatically wins (providing the dealer doesn't have a natural too).

When the card count totals less than 21 the player can ask for additional cards (a hit). They also have the option to refuse more cards (a stand). Players whose card count exceeds 21 automatically lose (or bust). When all players have finished hitting and busting, it's the dealer's turn to complete a hand. If the dealer busts or has a lower hand, then the player wins. A tie (or push) has no winner and no money changes hands.

Betting

Minimum bets are set at the start of the game. Players then bet on the likelihood of each card dealt bringing them closer to a count of 21. Bets are accepted at various stages of the game. A natural win is paid 3:2 and all other bets are paid 1:1.

Counting Cards

Thanks to movies such as 'Rain Man' and '21', counting cards is now an infamous feature of Blackjacks. As Blackjack is played from a limited number of cards, a player can keep track of the cards that have already been played and put himself/herself in a better position to know when the remaining cards give him an advantage. The player may then make larger bets based on the cards that are left.

Card counting does not guarantee a win but it can bring the house advantage down to a minimum. Although legal, card counting can be grounds to have a player removed from a casino. Obviously this is not a concern online.

Playing Online

The rules and odds are the same whether playing Blackjack at land-based casinos or online. Make sure you check out the software layout / preview before starting to play as every version is different and you don't want to be hitting the wrong buttons when wagering real money.

Tips and Tricks

- Always follow Blackjack basic strategy (see diagram). This is a game of simple Math so leave your superstitions at the door.
- Choose your table wisely. Look for one that's relaxing yet fast-paced. Steer clear of drunk and slow players.
- Manage your money. Make your funds go further by never sitting at a table with a bet size of more than 1/20 of your budget for that session.
- Tip the dealer. This might lead to a card shuffle later in the game which is a result for card counters. Friendly dealers also make for a more enjoyable game.

Blackjack Game Guide

Basic Blackjack Strategy

4 or more decks, dealer stands on all 17th										
Your Hand	Dealers' card									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
8	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
9	H	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	H	H	H	H	H
10	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	H	H
11	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	H
12	H	H	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
13	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
14	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
15	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H	H/R	H
16	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H/R	H/R	H/R
17	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
A, 2	H	H	H	Dh	Dh	H	H	H	H	H
A, 3	H	H	H	Dh	Dh	H	H	H	H	H
A, 4	H	H	Dh	Dh	Dh	H	H	H	H	H
A, 5	H	H	Dh	Dh	Dh	H	H	H	H	H
A, 6	H	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	H	H	H	H	H
A, 7	S	Ds	Ds	Ds	Ds	S	S	H	H	H
A, 8	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
2, 2	H/P	H/P	P	P	P	P	H	H	H	H
3, 3	H/P	H/P	P	P	P	P	H	H	H	H
4, 4	H	H	H	H/P	H/P	H	H	H	H	H
5, 5	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	Dh	H	H
6, 6	H/P	P	P	P	P	H	H	H	H	H
7, 7	P	P	P	P	P	P	H	H	H	H
8, 8	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
9, 9	P	P	P	P	P	S	P	P	S	S
10, 10	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
A, A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Legend

- H - Hit
- S - Stand
- Dh - Double if allowed, else hit
- Ds - Double if allowed, else stand
- P - Split
- H/P - Split if double after split, else hit
- H/R - Surrender if allowed, else hit

To use basic Blackjack strategy look up your hand along the left vertical edge and the dealer's up card along the top. In both cases an A stands for ace. From top to bottom are the hard totals, soft totals, and splittable hands. According to this chart, the dealer will stand on a soft 17.

Glossary

- A. **Break/Bust:** exceeding 21, automatically losing the game and the pot
- B. **Double Down:** betting option which enables the player to request one card to try and beat the dealer. If successful, the player receives double the original wager placed
- C. **Hit:** request to be dealt another card
- D. **Hole Card:** any card dealt face down to a player or the dealer
- E. **Insurance:** when a player wagers up to half their original bet on the dealer receiving a natural 21. Insurance pays 2:1
- F. **Natural:** a two card hand that equals 21. Also called Blackjack
- G. **Push:** when player and dealer have equal hand values
- H. **Soft Hand:** a hand containing an Ace that may be counted as 1 or 11
- I. **Split:** if a starting hand contains two cards of equal value the player can choose to double the wager and receive each card as the first card in a new hand.
- J. **Stand/Stay:** Stay with the current card and receive no additional cards
- K. **Surrender:** when surrendering a hand half your original bet will be forfeited and the other half returned to you without further play
- L. **Up Card:** the dealer's face up card in the initial stage of Blackjack

Check out the rest of our Game Guides series for an essential introduction to whichever game takes your fancy. Learn the basics, hone your strategy and get gambling online!