

Slots

Without a shadow of a doubt, slots are the most popular casino game enjoyed by millions of people around the globe. It doesn't matter if you are in a land-based casino or trying your luck on the internet - slot machines are always the main center of attraction.

Slot or a slot machine is a casino gambling machine that creates a game of chance using a set of reels populated with different types of symbols. Meanwhile, slots online is a virtual version of a classic slot machine game.

As one of the most popular casino games, slots have several different names, like, for example, Fruits, Fruit Machines, poker machine/pokies, One-armed bandits, etc.

Since we've mentioned names backing the old days, let's take a quick look at the brief history of slots.

- In 1891 New Yorkers Pitt and Sittman introduced the first gambling machine. It was based on poker and contained five drums holding a total of 50 card faces. The machine wasn't designed to pay out winnings, yet it can be seen as the first evidence of a modern slot machine.
- A few years later, somewhere between 1887 and 1895, Charles Fey designed the first automatic slot machine with three spinning reels. It used picture symbols known from slots that people play today: horseshoes, diamonds, spades, hearts, and a Liberty Bell. He called it "Liberty Bell".
- In 1976, the first video slot machine was developed in California by the Las Vegas-based company Fortune Coin Co.

Now you know that slot machine games originated back in the late 1800s, and it didn't last long till they reached the hearts of many casino enthusiasts. You might wonder: why one-armed bandits? It's because the first slots had a large mechanical lever attached to the side of the machine and the ability to "empty" the gambler's pocket as thieves would.

Common Terms & Definitions Used in Slots

Playing slot machine games, you will encounter different kinds of terms and definitions. It's important to know them at the early stages of gambling as it will improve your chances of understanding slot games faster and get more excitement.

- **Reels.** It is the main component of the slot machine. By spinning in a vertical line, reels display the symbols that can result in a potential payout. While the first slot machines had only three spinning reels, now you can play slots that have up to nine

reels. Not only that but nowadays, game manufacturers create slots with rolling reels or cascading reels.

- **Symbol.** It is a picture that appears on each reel and can result in potential payouts if connected to a winning combination of symbols. Classic symbols from early slots are considered: bells, lucky sevens, lemons, cherries, etc.
- **Rows and pay-lines.** Rows are the horizontal lines across the screen where reels appear to form winning combinations. Pay-lines are a pattern of winning combinations. It can be vertical, horizontal, or even in a curved shape. Slots can have from one to more than 100 pay-lines, and they are fully adjustable in most cases.
- **Payouts and Paytable.** Payout is the number of winnings a slot machine game gives to the player if he lands a winning combination. By checking the paytable, you can find what needs to appear on the screen for you to receive a certain payout.
- **The coin value, bet, max, and bet lines.** The coin value or bet represents the amount you are betting on each spin. You can adjust the number of bet lines and see how your bet increases or decreases. Max bet is the largest amount you can bet on a spin.
- **Bonus game.** Most slots have a built-in bonus round where players are redirected to play a mini-game that can give them free spins or other chances to win big.
- **Multipliers.** It's a form of bonus game that includes multiplier features. They can be triggered by certain symbols and multiply a win by 2, 3, 4, or more times.
- **Scatter symbol.** It's a special symbol that can appear on the playing reels or grid. Usually, it triggers bonus games or other prizes.
- **Wild symbol.** Also, a special symbol usually serves as a substitution to regular symbols to complete a winning combination. There are many types of wild symbols — for example, Sticky Wilds, Expanding Wilds, Moving Wilds, and more.
- **Colossal symbols.** A massive symbol that covers several symbol spaces at once and brings big wins.
- **Winning combination.** In slot games, you need to create a winning combination of a certain amount of symbols on a pay-line in order to win.
- **Jackpot.** It means a top prize a slot game can offer, usually millions. Jackpots can be progressive, local, network, or fixed. Usually, games that offer jackpots are called Jackpot slots.
- **Volatility.** It is a term that determines how risky a slot machine game is. It also refers to the size and frequency of the payouts. You can read more about volatility in guide 8.
- **RTP.** It is also known as Return To Player. The term describes the percentage of all wagers casino games will pay back to players over a long period. You can read more about RTP in guide 7.

Different Types of Online Slot Games

As there are thousands of slot machine games online, different variations appear. Slot game providers want to please even the most fastidious players by releasing different kinds of games. You can choose slots from three reels to nine reels, from spinning reels to cascading reels, from nine pay-lines to a hundred pay-lines. Players who love classics can play classic slots, while gamblers who look for sophisticated animation, lots of special symbols, and bonus features can choose video slots.

You can also find slots with different volatility: high, medium, and low. **Volatility (or variance)** determines the size and frequency of the payouts of different slot machine games.

Low volatility slots. They produce lots of small and mid-sized wins by sustaining a healthy balance and enjoyment.

Medium volatility slots. Medium volatile slots offer wins more frequently than you would get on high volatile slots. And at the same time, winnings can be bigger than on low volatile slots. It's a mixture of both high and low volatility slots.

High volatility slots. Payouts, in most cases, are more significant on high volatility slots than on low or medium. Slots of high volatility tend to offer payouts all at once in a single spin or bonus game. Usually, if you see a massive jackpot, you can be sure that the game is with high volatility.

You can read more about volatility in guide 8. Now let's take a closer look at classic and video slots.

Classic slots preserve the same old-fashioned design - three or five reels and symbols with pictures of fruits, bells, bars, sevens, or others on them. The gameplay is considered simple like in the old days - pushing a start button and waiting for a win. If you are lucky - a bonus round will appear. Classic slots are for those who are fans of good old slot machines with simple design and controls. You should not expect any glistening animation or several types of wild symbols - just time-tested spinning reels with century-old symbols.

On the other hand, **video slots** deliver much more sophisticated gameplay than it is in classic slots. When playing video slots, lots of extra stuff is happening: moving symbols, special video effects on bonus rounds, and the appearance of various unique symbols, for example, colossal, wild or scatter symbols, etc. Video slots usually have five or more reels, many pay-lines, loads of animation, and well-crafted design. Not only that, but a variety of bonus game rounds creates tons of fun as well. While the gameplay is the same as in classic slots - to push the start button and enjoy rotating or falling symbols, players playing video slots can look for many additional features and enjoyable graphics.

Jackpot slots are another common type of slot you will see in many casino rooms. As the name implies, those slots are designed to offer high payouts, often millions. But don't get too excited, as the chances to hit the jackpot are often smaller than to win a national lottery. The gameplay of both jackpot slots and regular slots are completely the same. Except jackpot slots offer a bigger jackpot prize.

Jackpot slots appear in two different types – they can be **progressive and non-progressive**. The most popular version is progressive, where the jackpot fund is growing every time a player places a bet until one lucky player hits the jackpot.

Nowadays, online slot manufacturers create various theme-based games. You can find slots based on comics or video games, nature, fruits, adventure, music, sports, and many more.

Speaking of slot machine game providers, you will find games from such industry-leading companies as Play'n GO, Microgaming, NetEnt, Big Time Gaming, Quickspin, Blueprint, Yggdrasil, IGT, and more.

If you are looking for a slot game built just for you, you can check our library of various online slot reviews. Our picks for the latest online slot games are from the best game providers only.

How Do Online Slots Work?

One of the reasons slots gained popularity among casino players is their simplicity. In one round of slots game, the reels will spin and then stop. The positions of the symbols on the reels will let you know if you won or not. Sounds simple, right? But the real magic is invisible, happening inside the slot machine and mastered by complicated computer algorithms.

As we already mentioned at the start of the guide, slots are considered a game of chances, meaning that they assure complete randomness and unpredictability. The main question would be: what generates randomness?

That would be the **Random Number Generator or RNG**. It is a programmed set of algorithms that produces completely random results for every spin on a slot machine game. The RNG is the brains of the slot machine. It generates numbers several billion hundreds of times per second, 24/7, ensuring that the casino has no control over the outcome of each spin.

When you pull the lever or press the button, the machine, using the latest RNG's generated random numbers, determines the position of the reels, and displays the outcome - random combinations of symbols.

It is crucial to understand that no matter what you do while playing slots, you can't affect any of the processes - each spin is completely random. RNG supplies slot machines by generating random numbers over and over. The process of randomization is constant and determines whether you win or lose.

Let's leave random numbers aside and talk about odds. The odds are programmed as well, in a way that the casino has an edge in the long run. Basically, there are two names for the odds: **RTP (Return To Player)** rate and **House Edge**.

Return To Player rate describes the percentage of all wagers casino games will pay back to players over a long period. RTP is set using algorithms to ensure that the casino game should pay out (theoretically) a particular percentage to players during its lifespan. RTP can vary from 92% to 99%.

House Edge, on the other hand, is an advantage that the casino has over the player.

The math is simple: where RTP is 96%, House Edge is 4%, which means that to sustain the business, that 4 % is vital for every casino.

You learned that everything on slot games is set using complex algorithms. When RNG generates random numbers, the RTP rate and House Edge shift the odds. With randomness, you might be able to win in the short run. But as you approach the long run, the casino will always beat you.

How To Play Slots Online?

After the last lesson, you know that each spin on a slot machine game is completely random and that complex computer algorithms determine the outcome. That raises a question: so how to play slots online? The short answer would be: bet, spin, and watch what each round brings. That should be it. And yet, like in every game, you can learn something that could make online slot games more exciting, challenging, and, of course, responsible.

First, we want to inform you that there are no certain rules or rituals to increase your chances of winning. Slot games are unpredictable, which means that each spin and outcome is random. However, you can always choose the preferable slots game. From there, you can arrange settings that can alter your excitement and keep your healthy balance longer.

So, what should be the steps on how to play slots online? As there are no strict rules, we recommend the following:

1. **Choose a preferable type of slots machine game.** You've already learned that there are classic slots, video slots, or slots with different volatility. You can also choose slots from three reels to nine reel slots, from spinning reels to cascading reels. If you

want to know more about a certain slot game, you can find dozens of slot reviews on PlayAware.

2. **Try the game for free.** Most of the casinos allow their players to try slot games for free and even without registration. An exception is the casinos that are licensed under the UK Gambling Commission. Licensees must verify the age of any player before the player can access the casino's free-to-play games.
3. **Explore the structure of the game.** When you open a certain slot game, look around for symbols, rows, pay-lines, paytables, bet sizes, etc. You can also check the information tab on each slot, where you will find all the necessary information about the game.
4. **Choose the amount of money you can afford to lose.** It's the most crucial part. All players should play casino games with money they can afford to lose to avoid negative consequences.
5. **Set the number of pay-lines and the size of the bet.** The majority of slots have adjustable pay-lines. Set the preferable number of pay-lines you want to use and the amount of money you wish to wager per pay-line. The values for each coin are in, e.g., €0.01, €0.1, €1, and more. And the more pay-lines you play, the more chances for winning you have. Remember, you will be betting on every active pay-line. For example, if you set the bet size to €1 and 20 pay-lines, your spin will cost €20. Choose pay-lines and bet sizes responsibly.
6. **Spin the slot.** If you are all set, hit the button to start and watch what each spin brings. If the symbol matches the required winning combination, winnings will be paid out accordingly. You are always welcome to repeat the procedure by pressing the start button all over. If you are tired of clicking the start button, you can enable **Autoplay** mode.
7. **Enjoy slot machine games by playing bonus rounds.** Each mini-game of a bonus round can bring free spins and loads of excitement. Remember, if you want to enjoy them more often, choose low volatile slots.
8. **Stop playing when you've lost what you've come to spend.** Yes, that's right, don't even try chasing losses as we all know who wins in the long run - it's the casino. Playing slots should be all about fun and not about chasing losses.

Conclusion

In this guide, you learned about the most popular, all-time favorite casino game - slots. You looked into the main historical events that lead to developing the slot machine game we love and know today.

You also discovered many types of slots, from three-reel to five-reel slots, from nine pay lines to a hundred pay-lines slots, etc. You explored the main aspects of classic and video slot games and got to know different volatility slots and jackpot slots.

Nowadays, slot providers tend to create slot games in various theme-based manner. In this way, you get to choose games from different categories designed for every taste.

In the fourth lesson, you learned how online slots work. Now you know that each spin you make on slots, you get a completely random outcome generated by the RNG. You also got to know that for casinos to do business, they need to have an advantage. That's where RTP and House Edge definitions appear.

In the last lesson, you read about our recommendation on how to play online slots. The most important step is to choose the amount of money you can afford to lose.