

Blackjack

Introduction To Blackjack

Blackjack is a popular card game with one simple objective – to beat the dealer by getting a hand as close to 21 as possible. To put it in more detail, it is a card comparing game between one or more players and a dealer, where players do not compete against each other, but rather with a dealer. People love Blackjack because of the excitement and odds the game offers. The casino has a thinner advantage in Blackjack (the House Edge is around 1%) compared to other casino games. But don't get too excited because no matter how small the advantage is – it's still an advantage. It means you will still lose in the long run.

Blackjack's predecessor is considered a widespread ancient card game Twenty-One, which originated in Spain in the early 17th century. During the time in the 19th century, the game evolved and gained popularity in the United States. Soon many gambling houses started offering Twenty-One to their customers. From time to time, they would slightly modify the rules. One of the bonus rules emerged as a ten-to-one payout if the player's hand consisted of the ace of spades and a blackjack (either the jack of clubs or the jack of spades). Later the rule was abolished, but the name Blackjack stayed.

In 1995, Blackjack was introduced to the first online gambling site. Nowadays, you can find Blackjack in almost every online casino. The game is incredibly popular and has numerous variations with different rules.

In this guide, you'll learn about all of the classic Blackjack card game rules that you need to know before you start playing. You will discover card values, gameplay, odds, definitions, and many more details about the legendary card game. And finally, you will read Blackjack FAQs that will help you understand the game better.

Blackjack Basics

First, it's important to familiarize yourself with the basic terms and definitions used in the game.

Blackjack — to be dealt with exactly 21 points on the first deal.

Bust — to receive the total value of your hand of 22 or more and instantly lose your bet.

Double Down — to double the amount of your bet. In this way, you will get an additional card and instant stand.

Even money — it's a way of fully insuring a blackjack against blackjack. It is a situation when you have been dealt a blackjack, and the dealer is showing an ace. Then you can take even money, meaning that the payout will be 1:1.

Hit — to request an extra card. You can ask for more cards until you decide that's enough, or you "bust" your hand.

Insurance — it's a side bet that is available when the dealer has been dealt with an Ace. The bet is worth half the value of your original bet. Insurance can be used if you think that there is a chance the dealer is going to be dealt with a blackjack.

Push — when both the player and the dealer have the same hand value. The player's bet will be returned.

Split — if you've been dealt with two cards of the same value, you can split the cards into two separate hands with separate bets. In this situation, both hands are then played independently and will win, lose, or push. An exception appears in splitting two aces. Usually, only one card can be drawn to each of the new hands with aces.

Stand — no further action required.

Surrender — to give up half the bet if you are highly likely to lose the hand.

In Blackjack, you need to get a hand as close to 21 as possible and beat the dealer's hand without going over 21. Alternatively, if the dealer's hand exceeds 21, you can win by having a score lower than 22. If you receive a hand of 22 or more, you will instantly lose. It's called "busting." And if you get exactly 21 points on the deal, that is called a "blackjack." Payouts are higher on receiving a blackjack and consist of 3:2 or 2:1.

The game is played using from one to eight standard 52 card decks — so the number of hand variations in this game is huge. In most cases, six to eight decks are the standard. Cards are shuffled together and dealt either from a dealer's shoe or from a shuffling machine.

In Blackjack, each card has the value represented on it, with the exception of picture cards and Aces. Jacks, Queens, and Kings are valued as 10. Aces are valued as 1 or 11.

Before each round starts, players need to place bets into betting positions, also known as "boxes."

Now you know the basic rules of Blackjack and the main terms you will come across. When playing online, you will find many types and variations of Blackjack. Although Blackjack basics still apply to various versions of the game, some rules might slightly differ.

In the next lesson, we will illustrate how to play Blackjack step by step, explaining available options in a more detailed way.

How To Play Blackjack?

The game round starts with players making initial bets on the betting positions. Once the bets are settled, the dealer deals hands to each player clockwise by setting two cards face up. He also deals a hand for himself where one card faces up, and the other one faces down. The cards are dealt with everyone participating in the round, and the main action begins.

You can then choose to either hit or stand depending on how close their cards' value is to 21. A little reminder: the player who receives the total value of his hand 22 or more automatically loses the hand and the bet. If you chose to hit and after getting an extra card, you still feel that you are not as close to 21 as you could be – you can hit again. To win a hand, you must finish with a higher total than the dealer without exceeding 21. Or you can win by having a hand of 21 or less while the dealer busts. Sounds simple, right?

However, you can always make Blackjack more exciting with optional side bets we mentioned in the last lesson. You can increase playing decisions by splitting, doubling down, insuring, evening money, or surrendering your hand.

We've covered only a small portion of the most popular side bets in Blackjack in this guide. There are many other unique side bets you may find by playing different Blackjack versions.

When you have finished drawing cards and made a decision about optional side bets, the dealer will complete the hand. It's worth mentioning that when the dealer reveals the hidden card, he must hit until the cards total up to 17. At 17 or higher, the dealer must stay.

Once again, the winning hand is where the sum of the card values is closer to 21 without exceeding 21. If both dealer and player receive the hands with the same sum, it's called "push," no one wins. Except when both the player and the dealer are dealt with blackjack, the winner is the dealer.

In Blackjack, payouts on winning hands are very straightforward. If you win a hand against the dealer, you will get a one-to-one payout (1:1). For example, if you bet 10 chips and win your hand, you will receive 10 chips in profit on top of your original bet. However, there is an

exception if you are dealt a blackjack. As mentioned before, instant blackjack payouts are higher and consist of 3:2 or 2:1, which means that you will receive 20 or 30 chips in profit on top of your original bet. Of course, provided that the dealer doesn't get dealt with blackjack as well.

Blackjack FAQs

In this lesson, we are going to present the Blackjack FAQ along with the answers, which might help you understand the game better.

1. What is the House Edge in Blackjack?

The classic Blackjack has the House Edge of less than 1%. Of course, it can go up or down, based on the number of card decks included in the game and the player's skill level. And then again, it doesn't matter how small the House Edge is – it's still an advantage the casino has over you.

2. Is Blackjack a game of luck or skill?

It's considered both. Luck is in the cards you are dealt with, and skill is in knowing how to play with those cards. With a good skill set, you can increase your profit or minimize your loss.

3. How many outcomes are there in one Blackjack game round?

Basically, there are six main outcomes, as follows:

- **A player wins.** When the player collects a final sum higher than the dealer and doesn't "bust."
- **A player wins.** When the dealer exceeds 21, and the player doesn't.
- **A player wins.** When the player is dealt with an ace and a ten-value card (it's called a blackjack), and the dealer does not. Upon receiving a blackjack, bonus payouts apply.
- **A player loses.** When the player exceeds the final sum of 21.
- **A player loses.** When both the player and the dealer are dealt with a blackjack.
- **No one wins.** When both the dealer and the player receive a hand with the same sum. An exception is when the player and the dealer are dealt with a blackjack – then the player loses.

4. What is the card counting in Blackjack?

It is the type of game strategy to determine whether the next hand is likely to give the player or the dealer an advantage.

5. Does card counting work on online gambling sites?

Usually, online casino sites shuffle the cards after each Blackjack hand, making card counting impossible.

6. What are the main differences between live Blackjack and computer-generated Blackjack?

When playing real-time streaming Blackjack games, the live dealer operates card dealings. The standard land-based casino rules apply: the dealer will wait until players make their bets, and then deal the cards.

Meanwhile, when playing a software-based Blackjack game, the Random Number Generator (RNG) is at play. It means that every new hand is based on millions of automatically generated card variations. Instead of playing against a live dealer, you play against the computer. It's worth mentioning that no time limits apply when playing against the computer. Also, a huge variety of Blackjack game variations are available online.

7. How many different variants of Blackjack are there?

The most popular are considered:

- **Single Deck.** A game of Blackjack with only one card deck.
- **Double Exposure.** The dealer receives the first two cards of face-up, giving the player a better chance of making the right decision.
- **Switch.** A player is dealt with two hands of cards instead of one. Then he is able to switch cards between the two decks. The dealer has 22 as a "push." And Blackjack only pays 1 to 1.
- **Spanish 21.** Six decks are used, except all 10s are taken out, making 48-card decks. Many other rules apply as well.
- **Double Attack.** A player has an option to double his bet after the dealer is dealt with a face-up card.

8. What are the payouts in Blackjack?

If a player wins a hand against the dealer, he will get a one-to-one payout (1:1). However, getting a 21 (or a blackjack) pays out 3 to 2 (3:2). Different payout rules may apply when playing various Blackjack versions.

9. Can certain strategies be applied when playing Blackjack?

Yes. A player can use advanced optimal strategies by playing splits, double downs, insurance, and other options when a particular Blackjack situation requires that.

10. Is it possible to cheat in Blackjack?

Often casinos use from six to eight card decks, making it impossible to cheat in Blackjack for both the dealer and a player. However, some players practice card counting.

Conclusion

In this guide, you've been introduced to one of the most popular casino games in the world – Blackjack. For more convenience, we chose to write about the classic Blackjack version, though there are many more variants of the game. In fact, it doesn't matter what version of the game you play – the common Blackjack rules apply in every game.

Blackjack is considered a classic and incredibly popular casino game, meaning that you will find it on every online casino site. Blackjack's main goal is to get a hand as close to 21 as possible and beat the dealer's hand without going over 21.

While the rules are simple enough, you can always spice things up by applying various optional side bets – like split, double down, or insurance.

Blackjack is considered a game that offers the most favorable odds to a player of all casino games. But always remember, no matter how small the House Edge is, it's still an edge, meaning that you will lose in the long run.