

How the Games Work

Blackjack

Keep it fun.

Learn how the games work before you play.

Playing Blackjack

Blackjack, also known as 21, is a popular casino game in which players compare their hand of cards with the dealer's hand. To win, you have to create a hand with a higher total than the dealer's – but without exceeding 21.

At the beginning of each game, you place your bet in the betting box in front of where you're sitting at the table. After all the bets are placed, each player is dealt two cards face-up. The dealer receives one card face-up and the dealer's hand is completed once all players have finished drawing cards.

Determining your hand's value is simple: face cards (Kings, Queens and Jacks) have a value of 10. Numbered cards are worth their face value, and Aces count as either 1 or 11.

If your first two cards total 21, you win because you have a Blackjack which pays 3 to 2 on your bet. If the dealer also has a Blackjack, you would *push* (tie). On your turn, you must choose whether to *hit* (take a card), or *stand* (end your turn) in order to create a hand totaling as close to 21 as possible – without *busting* (exceeding 21). If the dealer exceeds 21, all players who have 21 or less win. Otherwise the dealer's point total is compared to each player's. All winning bets are paid even money (one to one).

Words to know

Blackjack: when the first two cards dealt to a hand total 21 (either an Ace and a 10 or an Ace and a face card).

Soft hand: a hand that includes an Ace and has two possible totals (depending on whether the Ace has a value of 1 or 11) neither of which exceeds 21.

Hard hand: a hand with no Aces or a hand in which the Ace has the value of 1.

Hit or Draw: you want another card. Draw one or more cards to improve your hand.

Stand: you're satisfied with your hand and don't want any more cards.

Double Down: double your original bet and receive one additional card.

Splitting Pairs: if you have two cards of equal value in one hand, you can split them into two separate hands. When splitting a hand, you must place an additional bet equal to your original wager.

Surrender: if you don't like your two original cards, you can surrender. The dealer takes half of your original bet and your hand is discarded. You can surrender on any original two-card hand, except when the dealer has Blackjack.

Insurance: if the dealer's face-up card is an Ace, you can insure your bet against the possibility of the dealer's final hand being a Blackjack. You can wager a sum equal to one half of your original bet. If the dealer draws a Blackjack, the insurance bet pays 2 to 1. If the dealer's hand is not a Blackjack, you lose your insurance bet.

Bust or Broke: your cards add up to 22 or more.

Payouts

All winning bets are paid even money except for Blackjack, which pays 3 to 2. When a push occurs, you keep your original bet.

A Blackjack (two cards that equal 21) beats all other combinations of cards that equal 21. A two card 21 on split hands is not a Blackjack.

Remember – minor variations exist in house rules. You can always ask the Dealer for clarification.

Gambling with GameSense

Blackjack is a game of chance. So play for fun: if you lose consider it the cost of entertainment.

For more information on how to play table games, ask a Table Game Dealer, or visit the GameSense Info Centre at this location or GameSenseAB.ca.