



DEAL



ME IN

◀ WE ADVISE AGAINST heading for the poker room in a casino if it's your first time playing, but all you need is an inexpensive deck of cards and set of chips to have an at-home poker night with friends or family.

▼ THE SEMINOLE Hard Rock Casino is 20 minutes from Hard Rock Stadium where the Hurricanes play football. The casino offers blackjack, poker, baccarat and other popular games.



Movies like “Casino Royale,” “21” and “Oceans 11” make casinos look like **glamorous palaces** where everyone is a well-dress high roller that just may get **laid, paid or robbed** at any moment. But in reality, the first time you stroll into **Hard Rock** and attempt to bet on a craps game or pull your phone out at the **Blackjack** table, you’ll feel like anything but. That’s because these adult versions of Dave and Busters are governed by **unwritten rules and etiquette** and full of games with rules that may feel foreign. We don’t want you to lose more money than you came with, so consider this a cheat sheet for **navigating the casino**, placing your bets and understanding the **most common games** on the floor.

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ROULETTE

Even the name sounds sexy. The roulette table is often one of the most crowded in any casino and the game just may be one of the easiest to figure out. In case you didn’t know, this is the game with the large red and black spinning wheel. Here’s how it works: the wheel is numbered 1-36, with each number colored either red or black and “0” and “00” spaces marked in green. Players can make a variety of bets by spreading their chips on the table, up until the dealer closes betting and drops the ball, where it spins the opposite direction of the wheel until it finally drops into a numbered slot. If this corresponds with your bet, you win.

Odds and Betting

In roulette, players can make a variety of bets with different odds and payoffs. The simplest way to bet, which pays out 1:1 (you’ll double your bet if you win these) is to put your chips on either red or black, even or odd, or “low” (1-18) or “high” (19-36) numbers. However, players can also place bets on a single number, set of 12 numbers or engage in a variety of other bets like “lines” and “columns” that are marked on the table.

For “even bets”—the first three we mentioned—the odds of winning are 47.4% in most American casinos. This is because of those pesky zeros on the wheel—you can bet on them as an individual number and in some specific betting strategies, but for even bets they don’t count as high, low, red, black, odd or even.

CRAPS

The craps table may be one of the biggest and loudest in most casinos. From a glance, it also looks like one of the most confusing. There’s a LOT of bets you could make here, and we won’t get into all of them. In fact, to keep it simple, you could walk into any

casino, place your bet on the “pass line,” and be just fine. With this game, according to the website wizardofodds.com, even money bets come with a house edge of just around 1.35 to 1.4%—some of the lowest you will find at a casino. In craps, the players are part of the action—one player shoots dice, usually after a quick blow (to the dice) for good luck, while the rest bet on the outcome.

Game Play and Betting

There are many kinds of bets in craps, but the two simplest are “Pass Line” and “Don’t Pass Line.” With these bets, respectively, you are either gambling with or against the player rolling the dice. When the shooter shoots their “opening roll,” according to the Venetian Resort’s website, they (and you, if you bet the pass line) win if the roll is a 7 or 11, and lose if the roll is a 2, 3 or 12.

If you bet the “don’t pass line,” it’s just the opposite. If the shooter rolls any other number, their objective is to roll that number again before rolling the seven. Along the way, players have several other betting options including “come bets,” “don’t come bets,” “odds,” “place bets,” “field bets,” “hop bets,” “proposition bets” and “hardaways.” You can look up these terms if you wish; we’re grabbing a beer and betting with the shooter.

BLACKJACK

Aside from poker, this is likely the casino game that calls for the most skill—and has the highest odds. According to Bet and Beat, the chances of winning or tying in Blackjack are 42.22% and 8.48%, respectively. If players employ “basic strategy,” a mathematically calculated list of moves that tells players exactly what decision to make based on what cards they, and the dealer, have showing.

Of course, players don’t have to stick to this strategy and the longer someone plays, the more likely they are to develop their own.

Objective

OK, let's back up for a second. Contrary to what it may sound like, the goal of blackjack isn't to hit "blackjack," it's to beat the dealer. Keep in mind that "blackjack" is 21, and if your cards, or theirs, total higher than this number, it's a "bust."

So, in order to win you need either the dealer to bust or to get closer to 21 than the dealer without busting.

Game Play and Betting

This game can be played with one deck, but many tables will combine multiple. Before the game begins, the dealer will ask players to place their bets, then deal each player two cards face-up and themselves one card face-down and one face-up.

Now the fun begins. Based on the cards they have showing, as well as the dealer's card, players can "hit" (ask for another card), "stand" (not take any more cards) or "double down" (double their bet and accept only one more card). If the player has two of the same card they can also "split"—physically split the cards, place another bet behind one of them and play the two as hands.

Once each player has played their hand, the dealer will reveal their bottom card and play their hand. However, unlike players who can make their own choices, the dealer must follow a formula which is determined by the casino. Usually, according to Bicycle Cards, the dealer must hit if their hand totals below 17 and stand if it totals 17 or higher. In blackjack, numbered cards are counted as their face value, "face cards" (kings, queens and jacks) count as 10 and aces count as either 11 or 1, whichever is more beneficial for the player's hand.

SPANISH 21

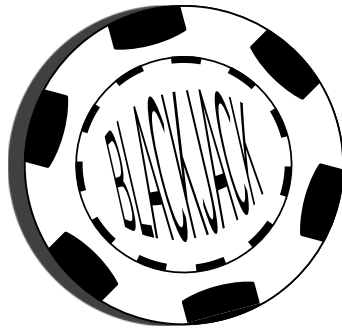
If you kept up through the last two paragraphs, this one will be easy—that's because Spanish 21 is a variation of blackjack, albeit one that is found in many casinos. According to Draft Kings, this game is basically blackjack minus the "10" cards and plus lots of opportunities to win extra bonus. To be clear, the face cards that equal 10 points stay in the deck—only the 10s are removed.

While in its parent game players "push" or tie if they hit 21 in the same hand as the dealer, in Spanish 21 a player's 21 hand always wins. And this isn't the only variation. For example, after the first two cards are dealt, a player can "surrender" in Spanish 21 by forfeiting half their bet, according to Draft Kings.

Players can also win a bonus if they get a "hand totaling 21 that contains 5 or more cards, or with the 21 combo of 6-7-8." And these aren't the only fun bonuses and variations. If you've ever seen a "lucky 7" tattoo, the last one we'll discuss may not shock you. In Spanish 21, players can win a huge payout, predetermined by the size of their bet, for holding three "7s" of the same suit while the dealer also holds a 7—this is called a "Super Bonus." Even with three 7s of mixed suits, players will win some extra cash.

SLOTS

We think you can figure these ones out on your own; may the odds be ever in your favor. Because, when it comes to slots, while they vary based on the game, the odds aren't pretty. 🎰



COME OUT ON TOP

Ante Up

Understanding casino etiquette just may be as important as figuring out the games themselves. Now that you know what a pass line and "super bonus" are, here's some tips to help you take on your next trip. (via Thrillist)

Tip!

Many casinos offer free drinks, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't always tip your server. While we're at it, tip your dealer too. And, for the love of Miami, don't put your drink on the felt or spill it on the table—there's cup holders for a reason.

Put Your Phone Away

Nobody wants to wait longer to play their hand in Blackjack because someone's sending a text. Some dealers won't even let players have their phones on the table. And most casinos don't allow photography, so forget about that cute Insta pic you wanted in front of the slot machines—or take it quick.

Know Your Table

Table games in a casino typically have a "minimum bet," which is exactly what it sounds like—the lowest amount of money you can bet on a game or hand. This is usually posted at a sign behind the table, so make sure you check it out before claiming a spot.

Mind Your Money

You should know this one already—don't take more than you're willing to lose, and don't take out more to keep playing once you're all out. Don't wait on that Blackjack, ball to end on red or cherries to line up on slots thinking you can win it all back, because you probably can't.

1-800-522-4700

One call, text, or chat to the National Problem Gambling Helpline Network will get you help anywhere in the U.S. Help is available 24/7 and is 100% confidential.

