



# HOW TO PLAY BLACKJACK

## PREMISE OF THE GAME

- Your goal is to have a hand value closer to 21 than that of the dealer, without going over. **Blackjack** is when your first two cards are an ace and a face card.
- The dealer's play is strictly dictated, allowing him no personal decisions, because yes, he has a dead-end job just like yours.
- As a result, there is no problem with the dealer or any of the other players at the table seeing your hand. But this doesn't mean that the upstart grandma sitting next to you has the right to smirk when she looks at your cards. Give her the finger.

## CARD VALUES

- An ace can count as either 1 or 11.
- The cards 2 through 8 are valued as indicated, but the card 9 has a special value of \*9\*.
- The 10, Jack, Queen, and King are all valued at 10.
- The Chinese Farmer means automatic forfeit.



## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

First, you have to choose a table to play. In most casinos, the signs are color-coded to match the minimum bets posted on them: Green for \$25, Black for \$100 and Rainbow Fireworks Surrounded By Flaming Pandas for \$500 minimum tables.

Beginners are usually better off playing at a low-bet table, as all cards are dealt face-up, and the dealer often makes helpful suggestions, such as, "Hitting now would be a dumbass decision sir" and, "Sir, most people don't stay on a hand of 7"—the kind of valuable advice that you would not receive at a high-bet table where the dealer has no soul.

## BUYING CHIPS

- Once seated, wait for a break in the action.
- Place your cash on the table felt, but **DO NOT** hand your cash to the dealer. For security reasons, he can't take anything from your hands (so if you want to exchange phone numbers, you'll have to do that in the bathroom after hours).
- The dealer will exchange your cash for chips, then drop the money into a slot in the tabletop.

- A midget will catch it, exit through a tiny door on the side of the playing table, drop the money into a slot in a smaller table, where an even smaller midget will catch it, exit through an even tinier door on the side of the smaller table, and carry it to the vault. Do not be alarmed. Midgets of various sizes hugging wads of cash are common sights at a casino.

### CHIP VALUES

- Green chips represent \$25. Black chips represent \$100.
- Chip colors for \$500 vary widely, with rainbow fireworks surrounded by flaming pandas a common choice.
- Glance at the chips to make sure you know their values.
- If you have any questions, just ask the dealer. It's his job to help you learn the game, enjoy playing, and lose your will to live and ability to support your family.

### MAKING A BET

Place your chips on the table inside the designated circle. Remember, once the cards have been dealt, you aren't allowed to touch the bet. If you reach into the circle, the dealer can and will slap your hand in an effeminate manner.

### KEY STRATEGIES

- To increase your chances of winning, always assume the dealer's face down card has a value of 10 (highest probability); therefore, if the dealer's face up card is 9, assume he has 19. Let's say you only have 14. In that case, you should **HIT** until he doesn't get up.
- Throw a few extra chips in, and **ORDER** Combo #4 with no onions, super-sized. If it becomes apparent that you are going to lose, when the dealer returns with your meal, look confused and say, "I didn't order this." Commence bickering. The casino manager will soon intervene. Since the customer is always right, you should get your money and your bet back.
- When your initial cards are both 3s, **SPLIT**. A split separates your cards into 2 separate hands and bets. Now, hit. You'll get two more 3s. Split again. Hit. Repeat 7 times. You now have 7 hands with 7 cards each, all 3s (7x3 =21). With septuple the winnings, you are allowed to celebrate with a magnitude 7 times that of your usual exuberance.
- Politely request the **BARBER'S SEAT**. The chair may be uncomfortable, and the cloth tied around your neck may be embarrassing, but take it in stride. It is a small price to pay for access to the mirrors.
- **SUSPEND** the writ of Habeas Corpus.
- It is well known that if the dealer's face-up card is an ace, purchasing dealer **INSURANCE** (1/2 your bet) insures that no additional money is lost if dealer has blackjack. But few know that purchasing dealer **ASSURANCE**, often in the standard casino form of, "Don't worry, you'll win soon 'cuz you da man!" can bring confidence back to your game.
- If you and the dealer have the same hand value, no money is won or lost. This is called a **PUSH** because the dealer has to push off and ski away from the casino in disgrace, never to return again...
- Learn to keep cool even on the worst nights. Don't get angry if you have a losing streak. To **CALM** yourself down, take a deep breath. Push yourself away from the playing table slightly. Say quietly, "This is bullshit!" and flip the table over.

—DINH



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