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Bingo History – The Origins Of Bingo Games

By Mark Falco

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The origins of bingo, as with most games, is shrouded in the mists of history. However, we can trace the idea back to the 1500's where the Italians invented a lottery game to be played 'en masse' rather like Bingo is today. "Lo Giuoco del Lotto d'Italia" was the very first state run lottery which proved to be so popular it is still played today.

Perhaps closer to the game we know today however is the French game of "Le Lotto" which was derived from the Italian counterpart. This game was very popular with French noblemen during the 18th century. This game involved a caller drawing out wooden discs number from one to ninety from a bag and calling them out the the players. Each player had a game board divided into nine rows and three columns of numbers and the winner would be the person to mark off all the numbers in one row.

Later cersions of the Le Lotto appeared in Germany but this time, it was used not for gambling purposes but rather to teach children their times tables. Today, more of the same can be found on the children's games market including such things as spelling bingo with, of course, all of the gambling elements removed.

However, the first example of bingo in its modern form appeared during the late 1920's when a New York toy salesman stumbled upon an addictive fairground game and had a brainwave. Edwin S. Lowe came across the game of "Beano" at a carnival in Georgia. The players at this game had wooden cards full of numbers and a set of dried beans. Every time the caller drew out a number they would cover it up with a bean, the winner being the one to mark off all the numbers in a straight line either diagonally, horizontally or vertically. So popular was this game than Lowe never actually got a chance to play but the idea of marketing this to the mass market was formed right there and then.

Hurrying back to New York he quickly made his own replica of the carnival game and invited friends over to play at a specially organised party. It was just a popular there in his apartment to the point where one member got so excited that she stumbled over the call of "Beano!" to signify she had won and shouted out "BINGO!" instead. The name stuck and when Lowe produced the first commercial version of the game retailing for just \$1 that's the name it was marketed with.

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Bingo of course never stayed as a parlour game but soon made it's way into being a large multiplayer social gambling event we see today. How it got that way is, unlikely as it sounds, due in large part to the efforts of a Pennsylvanian priest! The priest needed to find a fundraising event for his church and saw the game of bingo as being the ideal way to do it. He set up large–scale bingo game events with hundreds of players instead of the handful the original game had been designed for and the idea really took off.

Unfortunately, each game now had tens of winners instead of a few so he commissioned a mathematician to create cards with 6000 unique number combinations, a task which took several months by hand as there were no computers to help back then. Once finished however the game of bingo really took off in it's modern form to the point where in 1934, just a few years after bingo first hit

the mass market, there was over 10,000 games being played per week across America. Now of course, bingo is a multi–million dollar industry across the world and can be played online 24 hours a day if it takes your fancy.

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How To Play Bingo

By Adel Awwad

Bingo is like a lottery – it is a game of luck. Further, learning how to play Bingo is both easy and fun. There are lots of variations in the way that Bingo is played and learning how to play Bingo and all of its variants can prove to be an exciting pastime; one with many different prizes at stake. However, the basic principles remain the same and you will discover that while learning how to play Bingo, all of the principles apply to the all important Bingo card.

The Bingo card is printed with its own unique grid of numbers, usually ranging from 1 up to 90, and is arranged in columns and rows. There is a caller who calls the randomly selected numbers for the players to mark off their card. It will be decided before the game begins what pattern of numbers are needed to win. For example, the player may need to get every number on their card, known as a full house; or a row or column, or perhaps two rows, etc.

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Bingo originated from a game called Beano; so called because players covered up the numbers on their cards with beans. Nowadays players commonly use what is known as a dauber or dabber to mark their numbers. These are often fluorescent in color so that when playing in a darkened hall they can still be seen.

Bingo can be found in different types of venues ranging from casinos to arcades and village halls. In America, Bingo is often played in halls run by church or charity organizations. If you would love to stay at home and play Bingo it can even be played on the Internet!

There are many people who like to add to the excitement and play more than one Bingo card at a time. Be warned, this is not as easy as it sounds! Playing Bingo does involve some skill as well as a lot of luck. The callers shout each number in quick succession, often within seconds of each other. You have to be very fast with your eyes and your fingers to keep up, and there is little time to ponder. It is not for the faint-hearted!

If you prefer to play a safer version, online Bingo may well be worth considering. The player is given some random cards generated by the computer, and there is often a facility for using an 'auto-dauber'. This is where the computer marks your cards for you, so it doesn't matter if you miss a number or two. The computer will even call 'Bingo!' for you if you are lucky enough to win!

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