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How To Play Blackjack

By Adel Awwad

Whether you call it Pontoon, 21, or an investment. Blackjack is easy to learn and even easier to play. The aim of Blackjack is to accumulate a winning hand of 21, or as close to 21, without going over (bust.) That's all there is to it. No flushes, straights or trying to outsmart the other players, who, like you, are all just trying to beat the Blackjack dealer.

Despite its simplicity (Blackjack is truly accessible to all); some players inevitably try to complicate Blackjack. For all the talk of systems and odds, all you need to know is how to win and how to avoid losing! Here's how it works: Two cards are dealt to every player and play moves from the dealers left - each participant elects whether to hit (take another card,) stand (play with the cards they were dealt,) or surrender, in which case they fold at the cost of half their original bet. Once all the participants have finished hitting, the dealer plays his hand and pays out to players who beat his score.

The good news is: Blackjack dealers are bound by the house rules; you're not. For example, dealers stand on all 17's. In other words, he'll keep hitting until he reaches or exceeds 17. If he draws a king and a six, he's bound by convention to play on, while you've got the get-out clause of an early surrender.

The better news is: you can 'Double Down' and double your winnings! Double your bet on a potentially winning deal, provided you can hit once and stand. You can even 'Split Your Pairs' and double your chances! If you're dealt two cards of identical value, split them and play two hands for the price of one!

The best news is: in Blackjack, you can win big and win quickly. Blackjack is the name and the aim of the game. A Blackjack is a total of 21 in your initial deal; a picture card / ace combination. A blackjack can only be beaten by a dealer's blackjack. Any other score of 21 just won't cut it.

Blackjack is a truly elegant game: uncomplicated enough to engage players, but sufficiently captivating to keep them coming back – once you start playing Blackjack, you might just find you can't stop. Blackjack is enjoyable, exhilarating, and instantly compelling. No wonder it's played and enjoyed the whole world over.

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The Origin Of Blackjack

By Adel Awwad

The game of Blackjack was introduced to the United States in the 19th century but the origin of the game is still much in dispute. Blackjack can be traced back to several European card games including the French `Vingt-Un' (21), `Trente et Quarente', and `Chemin de Fer' (Railroad), as well as the Spanish `One and Thirty', Italian `Baccara' and `Seven and a half' which all have similarities to modern Blackjack.

When gambling was legalized in Nevada in 1934, Blackjack screamed into popularity and was most commonly played with one or two decks of cards. Roger Baldwin published a paper in 1956 which explained how to reduce the house advantage based on probability and statistics which was quite confusing for those who were not mathematicians.

In 1962, Dr. Edward O. Thorp used an IBM 704 computer to refine the mathematical strategy in Baldwin's paper and also developed the first card counting techniques. Dr. Thorp wrote a book called "Beat the Dealer" which outlined card counting techniques and the strategies for reducing the house advantage.

This spawned a huge increase in Blackjack players at the US casinos who were trying to implement Dr. Thorp's strategies, much to the consternation of the casinos. The system was difficult to understand and hard to implement and thusly increased the profits for the casinos as more and more people took to playing Blackjack.

Blackjack is the most popular table card game in the United States today which was transformed from the one table game that used to be stuck in the corner of most casinos. The term Blackjack comes from the `natural hand winner' of the earlier versions of the game when a player was dealt the Jack and Ace of Spades in his initial two card hand. The player was declared an automatic winner and was paid a bonus. In today's version of Blackjack, any ace combined with any ten point value card—10, jack, queen and king, counts as a natural Blackjack, except after a split.

Blackjack is a widely popular game around the world and has only seen an increase in players as the years progress. What once was a game that was not popular and seemingly too difficult to play with `strategies' and `counting cards' it is now the most popular card game to play at a casino in most of the world.

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