



Card Games For Dummies,[®] 2nd Edition

Cheat
Sheet

You keep playing until . . .

- Blackjack** The players run out of money (don't worry about the casino) or decide they've had enough.
- Bridge** One side wins a rubber of two games, then the side with the higher score wins. If playing Chicago Bridge, you change partners after four deals. If playing Duplicate Bridge, you play a session of between 20 and 26 deals — whatever the Tournament Director decrees.
- Canasta** A player or team scores 1500 points.
- Cribbage** A player scores 121 points.
- Eights** A player scores 250 points (or whatever number is agreed on by the players).
- Euchre** One side scores 10 points.
- Fan Tan** One player cleans out all the rest, or when everybody has had enough.
- Gin Rummy** A player scores 250 points in one game or a series of games.
- Hand and Foot** You finish four deals. Whoever has the most points wins.
- Hearts** A player amasses 100 penalty points, at which point the player with the fewest penalty points wins.
- Oh Hell!** You complete cycle of hands (starting with 7 cards to each player, and then reducing to 1, and going up again to 7 cards). The player with the highest score wins.
- Pinochle** A player or partnership scores 1,000 points.
- Poker** The players lose their money or lose interest.
- President** Everybody gets bored of humiliating one another.
- Rummy** A player scores 100 points — or whatever total is agreed by the contestants.
- Setback** A player scores 11 (or 21) points.
- Spades** One side scores 500 points.
- Whist** One side wins a rubber of two games by getting to 7 points first on two occasions. At a Whist drive, a session typically ends after 24 deals.

Picking the best games

Anyone who tells you that he knows what the best games are is either a fool or exceptionally arrogant. So here goes!

Based on a specific number of players

For one player: Accordion and Poker Patience if you're short on space; La Belle Lucie if you can spread out

For two players: Gin Rummy, Spite and Malice, and Cribbage

Based on type of play

Best games for serious, competitive types: Whist and Bridge

Best games if you're playing in a cramped space: Hearts and Eights

Based on experience

For beginners: Oh Hell! and Ninety-Nine

For children: Go Fish, Concentration, and Cheat

For groups with mixed experience levels: Knock-Out Whist, Fan Tan, and Rummy

For three players: Pinochle and Ninety-nine

For four players: Bridge, Euchre, and Spades

For five to eight players: Hearts, Poker, and Oh, Hell!

For eight or more: Eights and President

Best games for large groups: Poker and Blackjack

Best games that combine bidding and play: Pinochle and Spades

Best partnership games: Bridge, Whist, and Euchre

For experienced card-players who want new thrills: Pinochle and Cribbage

Ranking Poker hands

The following details the various Poker hands from the highest-ranking to lowest, along with the odds of catching such a hand:

- ✔ **Royal straight flush:** The top five cards (A-K-Q-J-10) in one of the four suits. Odds: 650,000 to 1.
- ✔ **Straight flush:** Any sequence of five cards from the same suit (such as the 2-3-4-5-6 of clubs). If two players have straight flushes on the same hand, the higher sequence outranks the lower one. Odds: 75,000 to 1.
- ✔ **Four of a kind:** Four of any one card; the fifth card in the hand can be anything. If two players have four of a kind at the same time, the rank of the four cards determines the better hand. Odds: 4,150 to 1.
- ✔ **Full house:** Three of a kind matched with a pair — for example, three 10s and two 9s. If two players both have a full house, the higher three of a kind determines the better hand. Odds: 700 to 1.
- ✔ **Flush:** Five cards of the same suit, no sequence required. When two players have flushes, the highest card in each flush determines the better hand; if the top cards are the same, you look at the second card, and so on. Odds: 500 to 1.
- ✔ **Straight:** Five cards of consecutive rank (in numerical sequence) in any suit. If two players have straights, the top card determines the winner. Odds: 250 to 1.
- ✔ **Three of a kind:** Also known as *triplets*, *trips*, or a *set*, this hand consists of three cards of the same numeric value, together with two unmatched cards. The higher-ranking three of a kind wins. Odds: 47 to 1.
- ✔ **Two pair:** Four cards in two pairs with an unmatched fifth card. Ties are broken by the value of the top pair, followed by the value of the second pair, and finally by the spare card. Odds: 20 to 1.
- ✔ **One pair:** One pair with three unmatched cards is the second-lowest hand. The rank of the pair, followed by the unmatched cards, splits the tie. Odds: 2 to 5.
- ✔ **High card:** The weakest hand, *high card* means you have five unmatched cards. The top card in the hand determines the better collection. Odds: 1 to 1.

Card game dos . . .

- ✔ Determine the rules of the game before play begins. Most games have several variations, and you need to iron out the rules before you start.
- ✔ Avoid conversation that gives away information, or if the sole purpose of your remarks is to upset, irritate, or mislead your partner or opponents. (At Poker, though, you can get away with almost anything!)
- ✔ Try to remember all the cards that you held at the start of play and recall details of the cards played by the other players.
- ✔ Study your opponents' actions at the table. If the game involves bluffing, try to read body language during bluffs. If you can, try to watch a group of players before joining them.
- ✔ Don't try to bluff only one or two players at a time. If you're bluffing against three or more players, the odds are that one of them can beat whatever bluff you're pretending to hold.

. . . and don'ts

- ✔ Indicate whether you're pleased or unhappy about the cards you're dealt. In an individual game, you give your opponents unnecessary information about your hand. In a partnership game, you give your partner illegal information about your holdings.
- ✔ Play or lead out of turn. Pay attention to the game so you don't get caught in this embarrassing position.
- ✔ Criticize your partner. It never accomplishes anything positive. Don't dwell on what has passed; the cards have no memory.

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