

Golden Nugget 64 Gambling Strategies

by PyroFalkon

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Golden Nugget 64 (Nintendo 64)
Gambling Rules and Strategies

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Version 2.1b

Last update: 1 November 2003

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||VERSION HISTORY||
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v2.1b (1 November 2003)

It's been nearly a year, but unfortunately my site is down for the count. Luckily, IGN has decided to host my FAQs too, so it's all good. A new copyright notice is the only change.

v2.1a (25 December 2002)

No new information, but I've changed the look of my FAQ, as well as my legal info. I'm now carrying my guide on my own website; you can find the URL at the bottom of the document.

v2.1 (03 December 2001)

Minor addition and edit to the Video Poker strategy. Removed a sentence in my opening blurb that no longer applies.

v2.0 (18 July 2001)

Has it really been 11 months since I first wrote this? Wow... My writing style has evolved, so I decided to go back and edit it. Besides, I've learned more in this past year about gambling, so I decided to pass all the information on to you. Also, I've decided to add an entire section devoted to the rules of the games and ranks of hands in the various forms of poker. I have COMPLETELY revamped the FAQ... that is, I deleted every single character after the opening blurb and re-wrote it all. I'm actually embarrassed about my writing style back then... *shivers*

v1.0a (18 August 2000)

Fixed some minor errors and added absolutely no information.

v1.0 (17 August 2000)

First release, unfinished.

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||1. INTRO||
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This FAQ is simply general strategies on how to get rich. A lot of this information can be found in greater detail around the Internet, since gambling has been in existence for eons.

This FAQ is pretty short, to the point, and without flowery crap. For those of you who already know how to play the games, just hit ALT + F to bring up your search window, and type "Strategies." That'll skip you down to the fun stuff. If you don't know how to play, all the rules for each game are covered in the first section.

Because there are several varieties of poker, at the end of the main rules section is a much more detailed look at poker in general. This includes hand ranks, betting rounds, and definitions of global words like call and raise. If you don't know how to play poker at all, check out the section called "General Poker Rules" first.

I'll go over every game, including the ones that are really obvious (I want this to be a complete guide after all). I sorted the list by the games that Golden Nugget 64 features, starting with Blackjack and going clockwise around the game select screen.

That's enough of that, let's get on with it.

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||2. GAME RULES||
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|Blackjack|
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GOAL: To get the total point value of your cards at 21 or as close as possible without going over.

COMPETITION: The dealer. While you can play with up to three others, each of you is playing against the dealer, not each other.

SCORING: Every numbered card gives you as many points as its number indicated. A 2-card is worth 2 points, a 3-card is worth 3 points, etc. All face cards are worth 10 points regardless of rank. Aces are worth 1 or 11 points, whichever is more beneficial to you.

TERMS

Hit: Elect to draw a card.

Stand: Elect not to draw a card.

Bust: When either the dealer or a player goes over 21 points.

Black jack: When your first two cards are an ace and a 10-value card.

Soft #: Where # is points, it's when your hand has an ace as an 11.

Hard #: When any aces you have are acting as a one.

YOU WIN WHEN...

-Your total points are greater than the dealer's and you don't bust.

-The dealer busts and you do not.

-You have a black jack and the dealer does not.

In situations one and two, you gain 1x your bet.

In situation three, you gain 1.5x your bet.

YOU LOSE WHEN...

-You bust (regardless of whether the dealer does also).

-The dealer's points are greater than yours and he doesn't bust.

-The dealer gets a black jack and you do not.

In all situations, you lose your entire bet.

YOU DRAW WHEN...

-Both you and the dealer tie in points without busting.

-Both you and the dealer have black jacks.

In both situations, no money changes.

GAME FLOW

1) Each player bets an amount before seeing any cards.

2) Each player is dealt two cards face-up. The dealer is dealt one card face-up and one card face-down.

3) If the dealer's up-card is an ace, the opportunity to buy insurance is given at this time. Insurance is explained below.

4) If the dealer has a black jack, all bets are resolved.

5) If the dealer does not have a black jack, the player on the far right (from the players' perspective) becomes the active player.

6) If the active player has a black jack, his bet is resolved. If not, he can Hit as many times as he desires.

7) When the active player Stands, Busts, or has 21 in any form, the player to his left becomes the active player.

8) Once all players have been active, the dealer becomes active.

9) After the dealer Stands or Busts, all bets are resolved.

SPECIAL RULES

Double Down: After a player is dealt his first two cards, he can opt to double his bet. Doing so will let him draw ONE MORE CARD (no more, no less), which will be face-down until the end. As soon as he doubles and gets his card, the next player becomes active.

Split: If a player is dealt two cards of equal rank (not value), he can make the cards into two separate hands. Doing so requires a second bet equal to the initial one. (Ex: If you had a \$100 bet, and you get two 8s and split them, you now have two \$100 bets, each with an 8 card.) Both hands are treated separately

but normally, and both are acted upon in your turn, from your right to left.

EXCEPTION TO SPLITTING: If you split two aces, each hand only gets ONE additional card. However, if that additional card happens to be a 10-value, you get a black jack.

Insurance: If the dealer's up-card is an ace, then all players immediately get to buy insurance, which is half of the original bet. This is optional; you never HAVE to buy insurance.

Once all players have chosen to accept or decline, you are told whether the dealer has a black jack. If he does, everybody loses their original bet. However, the ones who bought insurance will win 2x their insurance; in other words, they'll break even. If the dealer does not have a black jack, then anyone who accepted insurance loses it, but play will continue normally for everyone.

The Dealer: The dealer is forced to Hit and Stand depending on his total. If he has a 4-16 or a soft 17, he'll hit. If he has a hard 17 or 18-21, he'll stand. He'll never split or double down.

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|Slot Machines|
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GOAL: Get a winning combination of symbols (varies from machine to machine).

COMPETITION: None. This is a single-player game, and only Player 1.

SCORING: Between spins, you can hold C-RIGHT to see all the combinations of wins.

YOU WIN WHEN...

-The combination of symbols is listed at the top of the machine.

You'll get an amount according to exactly what the combination was.

YOU LOSE WHEN...

-The combination of symbols is not listed at the top.

You lose your bet in this case.

GAME FLOW

- 1) You can either input coins individually, or you can put in 10 at a time with the R button.
- 2) Once you have at least one coin in the machine, pull the handle.
- 3) The bet will be resolved. Simple, eh?

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|Mini-Baccarat|
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GOAL: Correctly guess which hand will get closer to 9 points without going over.

COMPETITION: None. You can play with up to three others, but they will be against luck, not each other.

SCORING: All face cards and 10-cards count as 0 points. All other number cards give as many points as their rank. Aces give 1 point. Total points are determined by the sum of the cards, or the sum of the cards minus 10 if the total is over 10. (Ex: If a hand is 9 and 7, their initial total is 16. Since that number is over 10, the final score is 6 (16-10=6).)

TERMS

Natural: A hand that has a value of 8 or 9 points.

YOU WIN WHEN...

- You bet on the "player" hand, and it wins.
- You bet on the "banker" hand, and it wins.
- You bet on "tie," and the player and banker hands draw.

In the first case, you win 1x your bet.
In the second case, you win 0.95x your bet.
In the third case, you win 8x your bet.

YOU LOSE WHEN...

- The hand you bet on loses.
- You bet on tie, and the hands didn't draw.

In both cases, you lose your whole bet.

GAME FLOW

- 1) All players bet for the "player hand" to win, the "banker hand" to win, or for both to draw. Players cannot bet for more than one instance.
- 2) The game is resolved.
- 3) All bets are resolved.

NOTES ON GAME FLOW

The reason it's that simple is because none of the human players will actually PLAY Mini-Baccarat. You are betting on which side will win; your own skill and luck have nothing to do with it. The game does describe how things play out, but it's a waste of time and space since it does not matter.

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|Big Six|
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GOAL: Successfully predict what symbol the wheel will stop on.

COMPETITION: None. You can play with up to three others, but they will be against the wheel, not each other.

YOU WIN WHEN...

-The symbol that the wheel stops on matches what you bet on.

You'll win an amount that's relevant to the symbol (explained below).

YOU LOSE WHEN...

-The symbol that the wheel stops on does not match any that you bet on.

You lose your entire bet in this case.

GAME FLOW

- 1) All players bet on any of the seven symbols that they wish. They can bet on any number of them, from one to all seven.
- 2) The wheel is spun, and it hits a symbol.
- 3) All bets are resolved.

SPECIFICS

Five of the seven symbols are dollar bills; one is a joker; the last is the logo of the Golden Nugget.

The dollar bill values are \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, and \$20. The joker and logo are both worth \$40, but they are not interchangeable. That is, if you bet on joker and the logo comes up (or vice versa), you lose.

If the symbol after the spin matches one you bet on, all money on that spot is multiplied by the amount expressed by the symbol. Therefore, you can win 1x, 2x, 5x, 10x, 20x, or 40x your bet.

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|Texas Hold 'Em|
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GOAL: To get a higher hand than any of your other players.

COMPETITION: You must compete against three other players. However, because this is a form of poker and you can't hide your cards from other humans, you have to play against three CPU opponents. Only Player 1 can play; other humans have to step out.

SCORING: Everything is based on the standard hands of poker.

TERMS

Little Blind: A forced bet equal to half of the table minimum.

Big Blind: A forced bet equal to the table minimum.

YOU WIN WHEN...

- Your hand is better than anyone else's.
- Everybody else folds.

In either case, you get all the money in the pot.

YOU LOSE WHEN...

- Your hand is not the best.
- You fold.

In either case, you lose any money you put into the pot.

GAME FLOW

- 1) One player is assigned as the dealer.
- 2) The player to the dealer's left has to bet the little blind.
- 3) The player to THAT person's left has to bet the big blind.
- 4) Each player is dealt two cards face-down.
- 5) The first betting round commences.

- 6) Once all players agree to the amount, three cards are dealt face up at the center of the table.
- 7) Another betting round ensues.
- 8) A fourth card is dealt face-up, and the table minimum and maximum are doubled.
- 9) Another betting round ensues.
- 10) A fifth card is dealt face-up.
- 11) Another betting round ensues.
- 12) All remaining hands and bets are resolved.

SPECIAL RULES

All of the face-up cards are public; that is, each player can use them. If one of them is the Queen of Spades, all players have the Queen of Spades.

Hands are comprised of the best five cards from the total seven.

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|Video Poker|
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GOAL: To get as good of a hand as you can.

COMPETITION: None. This game can only be played by Player 1; other humans have to step out.

SCORING: Everything is based on the standard hands of poker.

YOU WIN WHEN...

-You have a hand that is a pair of Jacks or better.

In this case, you win an amount based on the strength of your hand.

YOU LOSE WHEN...

-Your hand is worse than a pair of Jacks.

In this case, you lose your bet.

GAME FLOW

- 1) You insert one to five coins.
- 2) You are given five cards.
- 3) You can choose to keep or discard any or all of them.
- 4) Any that you choose to drop are replaced.
- 5) Your hand is determined from the five cards.
- 6) Your bet is resolved.

SPECIAL RULES

Remember, it's based on a pair of Jacks or better; a pair of 10s will result in a loss. Keep that in mind when determining which to keep and which to drop.

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|7 Card Stud|
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GOAL: To get a higher hand than any of your opponents.

COMPETITION: You must compete against three other players. However, because this is a form of poker and you can't hide your cards from other humans, you have to play against three CPU opponents. Only Player 1 can play; other humans have to step out.

SCORING: Everything is based on the standard hands of poker.

YOU WIN WHEN...

- Your hand is better than anyone else's.
- Everybody else folds.

In either case, you get all the money in the pot.

YOU LOSE WHEN...

- Your hand is not the best.
- You fold.

In either case, you lose any money you put into the pot.

GAME FLOW

- 1) Each player pays the house fee of 10% of the table minimum.
- 2) One player is assigned as the dealer.
- 3) Each player is dealt 2 cards face-down and one card face-up.
- 4) The player with the lowest up-card starts a betting round. If there's a tie, whoever is closest to the dealer's left starts.
- 5) Another up-card is dealt to each player.
- 6) Whoever has the best hand from the two up-cards starts a betting round. Again, if there's a tie, whoever is closest to the dealer's left starts it.
- 7) A third up-card is dealt to each player.
- 8) Whoever has the best hand from the three up-cards starts the betting round.
- 9) A fourth up-card is dealt to each player.
- 10) Whoever has the best hand from the four up-cards starts the betting round.
- 11) Each player is dealt the seventh and last card face-down.
- 12) The betting round is again determined by who has the best hand of the four up-cards.
- 13) All remaining hands and bets are resolved.

SPECIAL RULES

Like in Texas Hold 'Em, your hand is determined by your best five cards, the other two being neglected.

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|American Roulette|
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GOAL: Predict which number the ball in the wheel will land on.

COMPETITION: None. You can play with up to three others, but everyone is against the wheel, not each other.

YOU WIN WHEN...

- A number you somehow bet on is the one that's picked.

You get an amount determined by how you bet.

YOU LOSE WHEN...

-The number that comes up was not bet on in any way.

Any money you had on the table is lost.

GAME FLOW

- 1) All players bet on any combination they want. They are limited only by their funds and the table maximum.
- 2) The wheel is spun and the ball is tossed in.
- 3) A number is called, and all bets are resolved.

SPECIFICS

Roulette contains the second-most types of bets and THE most actual points of betting. I'll explain them from the bets that cover the least amount of numbers to the most. The number in parentheses after the explanation is the amount you win in relation to your bet.

Single: Any one number, placed by laying a chip directly on a number. (35x)

Split: Two numbers adjacent on the table, placed by laying a chip on the boarder between the two. (17x)

Street: Three numbers in a single row, placed by laying a chip on the top border of the row in question. (11x)

Square: Four adjacent numbers, placed by laying a chip in the intersecting border of the numbers in question. (8x)

5 Line: The numbers 0, 00, 1, 2, and 3. This one is placed by laying a chip on the intersection of the 2, 0, and 00. (6x)

6 Line: Six numbers in two rows, placed by laying a chip on the top border between the rows in question. (5x)

Dozen: Either the first, second, or third set of twelve numbers. This one is placed by laying a chip directly on "1st 12," "2nd 12," or "3rd 12." (2x)

Column: In effect, same as dozen. This is placed by putting the chips on the "2 to 1" symbols at the right end of the table. (2x)

High/Low: Either numbers 1-18 or 19-36. Placed by laying chips in the appropriate range at the bottom corners of the table. (1x)

Even/Odd: Self-explanatory. Placed by laying chips on the appropriate words near the bottom corners. (1x)

Red/Black: Self-explanatory. Placed by laying chips on the appropriate color at the bottom of the table. (1x)

SPECIAL RULES

0 and 00 are neither high nor low, even nor odd, red nor black. They are not part of any column or dozen. If either of those numbers come up, you lose your bet unless you bet on it with a Single, Split, or 5 Line. Also, you cannot Split 0 and 00 with anything but each other.

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|5 Card Draw|
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GOAL: To get a higher hand than any of your opponents.

COMPETITION: You must compete against three other players. However, because this is a form of poker and you can't hide your cards from other humans, you have to play against three CPU opponents. Only Player 1 can play; other humans have to step out.

SCORING: Everything is based on the standard hands of poker.

YOU WIN WHEN...

-Your hand is better than anyone else's.
-Everybody else folds.

In either case, you get all the money in the pot.

YOU LOSE WHEN...

-Your hand is not the best.
-You fold.

In either case, you lose any money you put into the pot.

GAME FLOW

- 1) Each player pays the house fee of 10% of the table minimum.
- 2) One player is assigned as the dealer.
- 3) 5 cards are dealt face-down to each player.
- 4) A betting round commences, starting with the person to the dealer's left.
- 5) Each player in turn, starting again with the person to the dealer's left, can elect to discard up to three cards. Any he chooses to drop are immediately given up and replaced.
- 6) Another betting round commences, starting with the same person again.
- 7) All remaining hands and bets are resolved.

SPECIAL RULES

When a player is discarding his cards, he can discard FOUR, but only if the remaining card is an ace. Otherwise, he has to discard three cards or less.

+-----+
|Craps|
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Because of the nature of Craps, I'm going to work this one a bit differently than the others.

GOAL: To guess exactly how a pair of dice will turn out.

COMPETITION: None. You can play with up to three others, but everyone is against the dice and not each other.

TERMS

Shooter: The player who is physically rolling the dice.
Craps: A roll totaling 2, 3, or 12.

YOU WIN WHEN...

-The dice match something you bet on.

Your winnings will depend on what exactly won.

GAME FLOW OF CRAPS

Okay, bear with me on this one. Craps is a bit difficult to explain, but I'll try my best.

First of all, the game is played with two dice. Most bets revolve around the number 7. The reason is because, mathematically, it's the number that has the best chance of showing up (1/6). Secondly, a player (CPU or human) has to be the shooter. The reason this is important is because the shooter HAS to do something while the others don't.

Okay, at this moment, I need to explain what a "point" and "come-out roll" are. Let's say we've got a clean table: no chips have been placed and no dice have been rolled. The first roll is called the come-out roll.

The come-out roll will do one of two things: 1) establish the point, or 2) not establish a point. If the roll is a 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, or 10, that number is the point. If the roll is anything else, all bets are resolved and another come-out roll must be made by the same shooter.

Once a point is established, the dice are rolled again and again until the point is repeated or a 7 is rolled, whichever comes first. When that happens, all bets are resolved.

With that explained, you need to know that there are only two basic, related bets, collectively called line bets. Both must be made before a point is established. Stick with me on these, they're complex.

The first is the Pass Line. If you bet here, you are saying that either 1) The come-out roll will be a 7 or 11; or 2) The come-out roll will establish a point, which will be rolled *again* before a 7. If the come-out roll is a 2, 3, or 12, you lose.

The second is the Don't Pass Line, which says the opposite. If you bet here, you are guessing that either 1) The come roll is either a 2 or 3; or 2) The come-out roll will establish a point, but a 7 will be rolled before the point is repeated. If the come-out roll is a 7 or 11, you lose. If it's a 12, you push.

The shooter MUST place a line bet. It doesn't matter which line, but he has to bet on one of them. The other players CAN bet on a line, but they don't have to.

Once the point is established, you can modify your line bet, something that's not shown on the table (by real-life law, no casino is ever required to show all possible ways of betting on any table). This is optional, and done by placing the new chips beside the original ones.

After the point is established, people can bet on Come or Don't Come. They have virtually the same functions as Pass and Don't Pass.

If you bet on Come, you're guessing that 1) the next roll is a 7 or 11; or 2) the next number will be repeated before a 7. If it's the next roll is a 2, 3, or 12, you lose. If the next roll is 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, or 10, your chips are moved to that number at the top of the table.

If you bet on Don't Come, you're guessing that 1) the next roll is a 2 or 3; or 2) the next number will not be repeated before a 7. If the next roll is a 7 or 11, you lose. If it's a 12, you push. If it's a 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, or 10, your chips are moved above that number at the top of the table.

The difference between the Line bets and Come bets are simply the timing. Line bets have to be made before a point, and Come bets have to be made after.

If the point is repeated before a 7, then everyone who had bet on the Pass Line wins and everyone on Don't Pass loses. After that, the shooter starts again by making a line bet.

On the other hand, if a 7 is rolled before the point, a bunch more things happen. Obviously, everyone on Don't Pass wins and everyone on Pass loses. However, after that:

- 1) All chips that were moved as a result of a Don't Come bet win.
- 2) All other bets on the table at that moment lose with a few exceptions, explained below.
- 3) The shooter is retired and a new one is appointed.
- 4) From there, play starts with a fresh table and the new shooter making a line bet.

The rest of the betting areas on a Craps table are "anytime" bets. You can make those whether or not a point is established. I'll run through them now, and their odds:

Big 6: Any roll of 6 before a 7. (1x)

Big 8: Any roll of 8 before a 7. (1x)

Field: The next roll is a 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, or 12. 2 wins 2x, 12 wins 3x, and everything else wins 1x.

C&E (Craps and Eleven): The next roll is a 2, 3, 11, or 12. (4x)

Any 7: The next roll is a 7. (4x)

Horn: The next roll is a 2, 3, 11, or 12. However, you have to bet in multiples of 4 because however much you bet is even divided between the four numbers. If the roll is a 2 or 12, you get 29x however much was on that number. If the roll is a 3 or 11, you get 14x however much was on that number.

(Ex: If you bet \$20 on the Horn, you're really betting \$5 on 2, \$5 on 3, \$5 on 11, and \$5 on 12. Then let's say the next roll is a 2: you'll get 29x5, or \$145. Of course, you're also losing the \$15 that was divided among the other 3 numbers.)

Hard 4: The next roll is a pair of 2s. (7x)

Hard 6: The next roll is a pair of 3s. (9x)

Hard 8: The next roll is a pair of 4s. (9x)

Hard 10: The next roll is a pair of 5s. (7x)

2/3/11/12: The next roll is that number. (2 or 12 is 31x, 3 or 11 is 16x)

Any Craps: The next roll is a 2, 3, or 12. (7x)

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|2a. General Rules of Poker|
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Poker is played with a single deck of standard playing cards. The suits of the cards play almost as big a part in determining hand strength as the ranks do.

SCORING: From lowest to highest, the cards are 2-10 (sequentially), Jack, Queen, King, Ace.

BETTING ROUND

A betting round begins once cards have been dealt, and generally the person to start it is the one on the dealer's left. After a person makes a decision, play ALWAYS goes to his left. Here, the active player has three options.

Bet: Place a wager limited only by the range of the table.

Check: Make no wager and pass these three options to the next person.

Fold: Resign from the game.

*Note: In 5 Card Draw, the first bettor of the first round cannot check or fold.

*Note: In Texas Hold 'Em, the first round works differently as explained in its own rule section.

*Note: If everyone checks, then the whole round passes without a wager.

If there's a bet on the table, players then have these three options.

Call: Match the current bet.

Raise: Match the current bet and add the table minimum, making it the new bet players have to match.

Fold: Resign from the game.

*Note: In Golden Nugget 64, no more than three Raises can be issued during any one betting round.

HANDS

There are 9 types of hands in poker. I'll explain each one in detail and give the highest and lowest possible hands in each case. They are arranged from worst to best.

No Pair (or High Card): This is when you don't have a pair of anything and the suits are different. The absolute worst hand in poker is a 7-high, which is a 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 of different suits. The best you could do in this situation is an ace-high, or 9, J, Q, K, and A of different suits.

One Pair: Two cards of equal rank. The worst is a pair of 2s with a 3, 4, and 5; the best is a pair of As with a J, Q, K.

Two Pair: Two ranks of two cards each. The worst is a pair of 2s and 3s with a 4; the best is a pair of Ks and As with a Q.

Three of a Kind: Three cards of equal rank. The worst is three 2s with a 3 and 4; the best is three As with a Q and K.

Straight: Five cards of sequential rank. Please note that in Straights, aces can act high or low. Therefore the worse is A, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of different suits; the best is 10, J, Q, K, and A of different suits.

Flush: Five cards of the same suit. The worst is 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 of the same

suit. The best is 9, J, Q, K, and A of the same suit. I don't know what happens if two people have the exact same flush of different suits.

Full House: A pair of one rank and three of a kind of another. The worst is 2, 2, 2, 3, and 3; the best is K, K, A, A, and A.

Four of a Kind: Four cards of equal rank. The worst is four 2s with a 3; the best is four As with a K.

Straight Flush: Five cards of sequential rank and the same suit. The worst is A, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the same suit. The best possible hand in standard poker is 10, J, Q, K, and A of the same suit (also called a Royal Flush).

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||3. STRATEGIES||
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|Blackjack|
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BASIC ADVICE

Since black jack is played with four decks, there are 208 cards. Of those, 64 are cards with a value of 10 points. That means there's a 30.7% chance that any given card is a 10-point card. That's far more than any other value in the deck.

This is important because the dealer has one glaring advantage against you: he has a down-card. You can't see it until all players are finished with their turns. Therefore, you have to make an educated guess as to what the card is in order to know whether to hit or stand.

The general strategy is that you always assume the dealer's down-card has a value of 10, and to assume that any card that's drawn is a 10. Use this knowledge to influence whether you'll Hit or Stand.

*Example: If the dealer has an 8 up-card, assume his total is 18. He'll stand on that, so you need to get 18 at least to push. Remember this for a moment.

There's a certain degree of risk whenever you hit on anything with more than 11. You can trim this risk down, however, by knowing just what you need.

In the above example, you need 18 or better. Even if you have 16 at this point, I suggest hitting. After all, if you stand, the dealer probably has 18 so you'd lose anyway. Take a deep breath and go for it.

The risk gets a bit too high when you've got a hard 17. I recommend always standing at a hard 17 or higher. After all, there's a CHANCE he won't have a 10-card. On a soft 17 or less, though, the risk is not so great that you can't take chance. Remember, the goal of the game is to increase your winnings in the long run, not win 100% of the time. You WILL lose once in awhile, and you may even be streaky. Stick with it though, it will pay off.

Keep in your mind the fact that the dealer has to hit on 16 or less. If his up-card is a 6, you can assume he has a 16. That means he'll have to draw a 5 or less to avoid busting, and the odds are against him. As such, you might as

well stand on whatever you've got. Why risk yourself when the dealer has a very good chance of busting?

DOUBLING DOWN

I really don't recommend that you double down on anything except for 9, 10, or 11. I'll explain why in a moment, so let's concentrate on those three numbers.

Let's go backwards a moment from how I normally do things and start with the highest number, 11. This one is easy to explain: if your first two cards total 11, double down. It doesn't matter what the dealer's up-card is or anything. Always double down on 11.

Again, since you have more than a 30% chance of getting a 10-card, the odds are for you of getting 21. Even if you don't get a 10-card, you still have an additional 30% chance of getting a 6, 7, 8, or 9. You're looking at more than a 60% chance of getting 17. Those are TREMENDOUS odds in your favor, so take advantage of them if you've got an 11.

To know what to do if your first two cards total 10, think about what I said in the preceding paragraph. You'll have a 60% of getting a 6-10. That places your total somewhere between 16 and 20 with odds going to 20. You should definitely double if the dealer's up-card is 9 or less since that will place his total at 19 or less, in which case you'll win with the 20.

At 9, you've probably got the drill down. Your total will probably be 15 to 19, so double if his up-card is 8 or less since you'll beat him with your 19.

Here's a simple chart for you. If there's a Y, then double down. If there's an N, then don't.

Dealer's Up-card	Your Total		
	9	10	11
>9	Y	Y	Y
9	N	Y	Y
10	N	N	Y
A	N	N	Y

The reason that doubling on anything besides 9, 10, or 11 is because you either run a risk of getting too few points or busting. If you have a total of 8 and double, your best is an ace for 19, though you'll probably see more 18s. 18 is still not bad, but you're NEEDING a 10-card. 30% is still nice, but the odds are more in your favor if you hit and go from there.

Working from the other end, that is having a total above 11, is suicidal. Again, you have a 30% chance of getting a 10 card, which will instantly bust you (and you'll lose twice the money you intended). It's not worth the risk; just hit or stand depending on your total.

Now, if you insist on doubling with less than 9 or more than 11, at least keep common black jack sense in mind:

-Remember, the dealer has to hit on 16. If his up-card is a 6, doubling when under 9 is a bit safe. He'll probably have 16 and bust on the draw.

-Don't double if the dealer's up-card is more than your total by itself. You have almost no chance of winning then.

SPLITTING

If you have the money to spare and you think ahead, you can generally get a

very good profit off a pair. I'll go through each pair, one at a time, with my best advice.

2s: I personally never split 2s. They have this really bad habit of attracting 10s (remember that 30% chance), and 12 is not a very good number to work with. However, I can see a point in risking it if the dealer's up-card is a 6 since he'll need to hit on 16. Even if you stand on 12, you'll win if the dealer busts.

3s: I usually split 3s. If I just hit, I could wind up with a 10-card which would give me 16. That's far worse than the 13s you risk from simply splitting. The only time I hit on a pair of 3s is when the dealer's up-card is a 6.

4s: If the dealer's up-card is 6 or less, I go ahead and split 4s. Again, I run a nasty chance of getting a 14, but the dealer will probably bust. If his up-card is 7 or more, I hit and hope for an 18 or better.

5s: First look whether you should double down. If you don't think it's appropriate, I'd say you should hit if the up-card is 7 or more. If the dealer's expected total is 17 or higher, you should hit and hope for that 30% chance of a 10-card to get a total of 20.

6s: I only split 6s if the dealer's up-card is a 6 or less. Might as well have two hands going if he stands a chance of busting. If he's got more than a 6, I'd rather not take the risk of hitting with 16.

7s: Stand if his up-card is a 6 or less; split if not. This is opposite of most of the decisions so far, but here's why: at 14, you'll win if he busts. However, if he's got more than a 6 with his up-card, you'll need to split and hope for two 17s since you wouldn't have been able to do much with that 14.

8s: ALWAYS split 8s. You can't do anything with a 16, and you run a good chance of getting two 18s.

9s: The only reason you should split here is if the dealer's up-card is a 6 or less. Splitting may result in 19s, yes, but having one 18 is still very good.

10s: Never split 10s. You have the second-most powerful hand in black jack. Don't give it up simply to try to get more money. Stand on double 10s.

As: Always split aces. Even though you'll only get one more card for each, you run that 30% chance of getting a 10-card. Getting a 10-card and an ace, even off a split, is considered a black jack.

INSURANCE

I don't trust Insurance. Your winnings won't be as good and your losses will be worse if you play it wrong.

*Math: Let's say you have \$1500 and bet \$1000 on a hand. You end up winning it. You gain \$1000, for a total of \$2500.

Now let's say you make the same wager, but the deal has an ace. This is where things get tricky.

If you bet the insurance, lose it, but win the hand...

$\$1500$ (starting) - $\$1000$ (original bet) - $\$500$ (insurance) + $\$1000$ (winnings) + $\$1000$ (you get your bet back after the win) = $\$2000$

Just like that, you're out \$500 you could have had. Even worse, should you LOSE

the hand...

\$1500 (starting) - \$1000 (original bet) - \$500 (insurance) = \$0

Game over.

In other words, if you lose insurance and win the hand, you only get 75% of what you COULD have gained. If you lose insurance AND the hand, you're out 150% of your first bet. It's not worth it.

+-----+
|Slots|
+-----+

For some reason, the machine Catch of the Day has a VERY good payout rate; you simply have to feed it a bunch of coins (I'm talking like 500) to start seeing significant profits. The other machines aren't worth your time. I don't like games that rely solely on Lady Luck anyway.

+-----+
|Mini-Baccarat|
+-----+

The "banker hand" has better odds of winning (which is why you don't get as much for betting right on them). Again, this is a luck-only game with no chance on your part to increase your chances. This one is to be avoided.

+-----+
|Big Six|
+-----+

Yet *another* luck only. Even if you bet on the \$1 symbol, the most on the wheel, you still only have about a 25% chance of winning, and even then it won't be much. If you try to bet on Joker or Golden Nugget, you'll be facing a 97.5% chance of losing (each is only one space out of 40). Those aren't really good odds. Avoid this one.

+-----+
|Texas Hold 'Em|
+-----+

Each of the poker tables at which you play against others offers a very fair chance of winning. After all, since the casino doesn't stand to lose anything at all, they have no reason to stack the deck in their favor. As long as you understand the game and the odds of getting good hands, you'll be fine.

The biggest tip I can give you for this one is that you know at any given moment over half the cards the opponent can use. The trick is to watch how they bet.

I've noticed that the computer will only bet either minimum or maximum, never anything between. Also, they're scared of you, especially on the lower stakes. If they start betting maximum, you'll probably need a three of kind or better to make a showing. No matter what, though, don't fold until the sixth card. Even then, don't fold unless someone is betting maximum or raising and you can't get three of a kind.

+-----+
|Video Poker|
+-----+

Since you're only competing against Lady Luck and not other players, you don't need to worry about being conservative. Bet five coins and hope for the best.

Only in video poker should you ALWAYS attempt the best hand with what you've got. In other poker games, you need to play it safe and watch the betting before making a decision. In this one, though, you simply try for the best hand possible.

*Example: Let's say you have an A-Spades, A-Diamonds, 4-Diamonds, K-Diamonds, and 10-Diamonds. In other poker games, I'd say you keep the aces and drop the rest since a pair of aces will win many of the games you'd play. However, since you don't have to beat anyone here, drop the A-Spades and hope for a Diamond. You'll have about a 1-in-4 chance (25%) of getting it.

Edit

I received an e-mail from John Isles IV that did two things.

First, he corrected my math in this section. The chance of getting another Diamond is $9/47$ (9 diamonds left in a deck of only 47 cards since you've drawn 5). The percentage of getting it is 19.1%.

He also points out that with the pair of Aces already, you are ensuring that you'll at least break even. While that is true, I'd take the risk trying for a flush because the payout is 6 times as great. It's of course up to you, though.

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+-----+
|7 Card Stud|
+-----+
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One helpful thing to do is to count cards. For example, let's say you have a pair of kings. Two other players' have a king as an up-card. Since poker is played with a single deck, you know right away that all kings are accounted for. No one aside from you can have a pair of them; on the other hand, you won't be able to get three of them. Use this to calculate and guess your strength during betting.

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+-----+
|American Roulette|
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One fiction that some players say is that they have systems for beating roulette. Unfortunately, this is one of those games that is determined by luck, pure and simple. Whatever one spin may be, it will not affect the outcome of

the next one.

The reason that roulette is so much better than other luck-only games, however, is because of the sheer number of betting options you have. While the dozens and 50/50 bets don't pay as high, they offer the best chance of a win. The odds of winning a single number is 1-out-of-38 (2.6%), but the odds of scoring on red is 18-out-of-38 (47.3%).

One thing I must point out here is not to bet on more than one column or dozen at once. You're winnings and losings will be affected greatly.

*Math: Let's say you have \$2000 and lay down \$1000 on the first dozen and win.

$\$2000$ (starting) - $\$1000$ (bet) + $\$2000$ (win) + $\$1000$ (original bet) = $\$4000$.

You just doubled your money. If you bet on the first dozen and lose...

$\$2000$ (starting) - $\$1000$ (bet) = $\$1000$.

You're only out a grand.

Okay, let's then say that you bet on the first AND second dozen, and one of them wins.

$\$2000$ (starting) - $\$1000$ (1st doz.) - $\$1000$ (2nd doz.) + $\$2000$ (win) + $\$1000$ (bet) = $\$3000$.

You only got an additional thousand since you lost a bet at the same time. Even worse, should you lose...

$\$2000$ (starting) - $\$1000$ (1st doz.) - $\$1000$ (2nd doz.) = $\$0$

...you've lost twice as much.

It's not worth the risk of losing a large amount. Stick with one dozen or column.

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+-----+
|5 Card Draw|
+-----+
```

Each of the poker tables at which you play against others offers a very fair chance of winning. After all, since the casino doesn't stand to lose anything at all, they have no reason to stack the deck in their favor. As long as you understand the game and the odds of getting good hands, you'll be fine.

This one is special because you can't see any of your opponents' cards. Your only judgments as to what they have is the way they bet and how many cards they draw.

You are never actually *required* to drop any cards. Keep this in mind when the draw round commences. If an opponents stands on his hand, he must have a hand that uses all five cards. The weakest hand he could possibly have in that case is a straight, which means you'll need a stronger straight or better to beat him. If you don't have it, well, there's no shame in folding.

If your opponent conversely draws four, that means his remaining card is an ace. It's hard to get a workable hand out of four cards, even if you have an ace also. He's probably weak, so attack him.

If your opponent takes only a single card, he may already have two pair, and he's going for a full house. That may sound bad, but think about this: if he takes one, he may also be going for a STRAIGHT, and he may not get it.

Ex: If he has a 4, 5, 6, 7, and K, he'd drop the king for a 3 or 8. If he DOESN'T get that 3 or 8, he's left with a pair of 7s at best and a 7-high at worse.

Watch how he bets at this point. If he bets the table max, he's probably got his straight or full house, both of which are difficult to beat. If he bets the table minimum, he probably didn't get what he wanted, so he's weak. If he's strong and you think he's stronger than you, fold. If he's weak, raise or call.

The computer does bluff, though. They may bet low with a strong hand or bet high with a weak hand. However, in my experience they don't bluff very often, especially at the lower stakes, so you can pretty much use this strategy for it.

If your opponent draws only two cards, he's probably got three of a kind. Watch out for this one. If he bets the max, he's got something good, and you may want to fold. If he bets the least, go ahead and stay in unless you've got guys raising all over the place.

If your opponent draws three cards, he may have a pair. However, it's more probable that he doesn't have ANYTHING, and he's simply getting rid of as many as he can. It's obvious that he doesn't have an ace at this point, and it's hard to get a good hand out of three cards. He's probably weak, so stay in and finish him off.

+-----+
|Craps|
+-----+

ODDS

Craps is all about mathematics and probability. This game may be chance, but if you know what your chances are at any given moment, you can tip the scales in your favor. This is my favorite game since so much more is riding on probabilities than pure luck.

There are 36 possible outcomes if you roll two dice. Here are the odds for each roll, and the possible ways to make them:

##	Possible Outcomes	# of outcomes/36	% chance
2	1 1	1	2.7
3	1 2 2 1	2	5.5
4	1 3 2 2 3 1	3	8.3
5	1 4 2 3 3 2	4	11.1
6	4 1	4	11.1
6	1 5 2 4 3 3	5	13.8
7	4 2 5 1	5	13.8
7	1 6 2 5 3 4	6	16.6
8	4 3 5 2 6 1	6	16.6
8	2 6 3 5 4 4	5	13.8
9	5 3 6 2	5	13.8
9	3 6 4 5 5 4	4	11.1
10	6 3	4	11.1
10	4 6 5 5 6 4	3	8.3
11	5 6 6 5	2	5.5

I'll be referring to the chart several times. BTW, notice that you stand the best chance of rolling a 7 than anything else. That's why the whole game revolves around that number.

Okay, there are two basic paths to take: Right Betting and Wrong Betting.

RIGHT BETTING (the point will be repeated before a 7)

The final goal of this is to get three numbers working for you: the point and two come bets.

All right bettors should open by placing bets on the Pass Line until a point is established. That's where things get interesting.

Once a point is established, make Come bets until you've got two working for you.

*Example: Bet \$100 on the Pass Line: roll is a 6. Bet \$100 on Come: roll is a 10, so your chips are moved there. Bet \$100 on Come again: roll is a 4, so your chips move there. You now have three numbers you're cheering for: 4, 6, and 10.

Once you've got those three numbers, stop betting. If one of them wins, replace it.

*Example, continuing from above: The next roll is an 8. That does nothing, so don't worry about it. The next roll is a 4. Your Come bet wins, so take the money and put another \$100 on Come.

Eventually, you WILL lose. However, since you have three numbers going for you at all times, you should see a decent profit before losing.

The reason that you should not bet on more than three numbers is because a simple roll of 7 can kill anything you already bet on. If you have \$600 between the Pass Line and the other five Come bets, then get a 7, you'll lose all that cash. It's best to play a bit conservatively.

Now I'll show you your odds of winning something. Let's take our above example: You have bets on 4, 6, and 10. Add up the number of possible outcomes from the chart above, and you find out that you can get one of those numbers 11 ways out of 36. That's a 30.5% chance you'll win something at all. The only way you can lose is to roll a 7, which is only 6 out of those 36 outcomes (16.6%). The other 19 outcomes won't do anything, so there's a 52.7% chance that nothing will happen. However, if you add that up, you'll find that you'll be safe with 30 of the outcomes (anything besides a 7), so you at least won't lose money 83.3% of the time.

WRONG BETTING (a 7 be rolled before the point is repeated)

This way is the total opposite, obviously. The goal is to have 3 numbers AGAINST you, while a simple 7 will give you huge wins.

Open by placing a bet on Don't Pass.

Once a point is established, make Don't Come bets until you have two of them.

*Example: \$100 on Don't Pass: roll is an 8. \$100 on Don't Come: roll is a 4, so the chips are moved there. \$100 on Don't Come again: roll is a 5, so the chips are moved there. You now have 4, 5, and 8 against you, but a 7 will let you win

at each point.

If one of those numbers come up, you'll lose the bet, but you can replace it with another Don't Come.

Do not bet on more than three numbers because then too many will be against you.

Here's the math, using the above example:

You have bets against 4, 5, and 8. Adding up the outcomes, you can roll those numbers 12 ways out of 36, so you have a 33.3% chance of losing. You can win with a 7, which has 6 outcomes (16.6%). The other 18 outcomes won't affect anything, so you have a 50% chance of no money changing hands. Adding that up to the 7, you have 24 outcomes that can't hurt you, which is a 66.6% chance that you won't lose.

If you compare right betting and wrong betting, you'll find that right betting gives you a better chance of winning in the long run. However, since you'll win three ways with a wrong bet (Don't Pass and two Don't Comes), you'll win more money with wrong betting. I usually bet right, but both ways are fairly safe.

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||4. COPYRIGHT INFO||
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Good luck in Golden Nugget 64, and may you break the bank!

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