

How do poker rooms make money?

Poker establishments, whether operating online or in physical locations, are primarily focused on generating profit. Similar to casinos, they aim to make money, albeit through a different approach. They create an illusion that the house is not directly involved in the game by pitting players against one another. As a player, it may feel like you are losing money to the pot's winner rather than to the establishment. However, this is where the concept of rake comes into play.

This article was written by the [WorldPokerDeals](#) team who review the best poker sites.



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What is rake?

Rake can come in various forms, including tournament buy-ins, time collection, or a portion of the money collected from each

cash game pot. To illustrate, let's consider the example of tournament buy-ins and the rake implemented at the World Series of Poker in 2021. In the main event, participants were required to pay a \$10,000 entry fee. The event organizer, The Rio Las Vegas, deducted a 4.725% fee from each buy-in, along with an additional 2.025% fee for staff and dealers. As a result, only \$9,325 remained and was added to the prize pool.

In certain rooms, players may be required to pay an hourly fee in order to play at their tables. Las Vegas even offers high stakes games that implement time charges instead of collecting rake from cash games. However, the most prevalent form of rake is taking a percentage from the pot of each hand played.

Table/Pot Rake

Many online poker rooms and physical tables collect a portion of the pot as their fee. This fee, known as the pot rake, typically falls between 2.5% and 10% of each hand, but is often set in advance, allowing players to know the exact amount before joining a game. Although it may not appear substantial, for popular casinos, the profitability lies in the sheer volume of hands played and pots collected. Some physical tables enforce a fixed dollar amount of rake, regardless of the pot size. For instance, certain Californian rooms take a flat rate of \$5 from every pot that progresses beyond the flop. Other poker sites and locations may vary their pot rake as the hand unfolds, collecting a certain amount for each hand that reaches the flop and additional rake as the hand progresses further.

No Rake Games

Certain rooms and websites provide games without any fees – play without cost and retain the full winnings. While this might appear advantageous, it is only true if you exclusively engage in those specific games. However, frequently, platforms entice players with such offers and then encourage them to try

other tables, allowing the platforms to begin collecting a portion of the winnings.

Side Bets

One way that poker rooms can make money, although less common and not as lucrative, is by offering side bets. This feature allows players to place bets separate from their main game. The intention of a side bet is to wager against the casino rather than against other players. However, the odds are always in favor of the casino, making it difficult to win side bets. If a side bet is lost, all of the money wagered goes directly to the casino instead of being added to the shared pot like regular bets.

The bottom line

In essence, poker rooms will consistently deduct a portion of the money present on the table. No matter how skilled you are as a player, you will always surrender some of your earnings to the establishment. Rakeback was created in 2005 as a means to recover a portion of those deductions.