

A guide to the rules of live Blackjack

Blackjack is a card game with rules that are simple to understand, coupled with an element of player decision-making that makes sure no two games are the same. But do you know the difference between a split and a double down?

If you're looking to learn more about the rules of [live Blackjack](#) and the classic game variant then read on, as we're laying out a guide to all you need to know.



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The initial setup

Every Blackjack game starts with the deal, where each player is dealt two cards face up from the deck. The dealer also receives two cards at this point, but only one of these is shown face-up – the upcard – and the other is kept face-down for most of the game – the hole card.

While players don't see the dealer's face-down card, the dealer will check its value before play begins – in case they have drawn a natural Blackjack. If their two initial cards make 21, then the dealer will reveal this to players.

Player hands

When the initial deal is over, play will proceed around the table, with each player completing their turn before it moves to the next. Unless a player was dealt an initial hand worth 21, they will have a few options on their turn.

The player actions in Blackjack are:

- **Hit** – where they take an extra card for their hand, aiming to raise its value. There's no limit on how many times a player can hit, beyond going bust by exceeding a hand value of 21.
- **Stand** – where a player ends their turn, keeping their hand at its current value.
- **Double down** – where a player doubles their initial wager in exchange for just one extra card.
- **Split** – where a player splits their initial hand into two, which is only an option when the two initial cards are of the same value. They must place an additional wager for the second hand and the two are played separately.
- **Surrender** – where players fold their hand to receive back half of their initial wager. This is only an option in some games, depending on the house rules and format.

Once each player at the table has finished their turn – either by standing or going bust – the game moves on to the dealer's turn.

Dealer rules

Unlike players, the dealer has strict rules that determine how their hand must play out. This ensures that each game of Blackjack is played fairly and the odds remain consistent, no matter what cards the dealer is dealt. These rules are:

- If the dealer's initial hand value is under 17, then they must hit until they reach or pass that number.
- If the dealer's hand value is 17 or higher, then they must stand.

Once the dealer finishes their turn, they will compare their hand value with that of each remaining player, determining which is higher in value. This is where any payouts are made, depending on the outcome of the game.

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There are some additional rules relating to side bets, but those vary from game to game. So, make sure to check for any specific house rules before joining a game of live Blackjack.