

# How do UK gambling laws differ from the rest of the world?

The UK has long had a notable presence in the gambling world, being one of the first countries to create legislation controlling aspects like horse racing and sports betting alongside casino gaming. Various governments have implemented measures to control and regulate gambling since the 1500s, which goes to show how advanced the country's appreciation of this popular hobby has been over the past millennium.

And you don't even have to go back that far to see how the UK is continuously acting as a beacon for gambling legislation. The landmark Gambling Act of 2005 was a groundbreaking event in the history of casino and sports betting legality, especially for the rapidly accelerating online world. This also resulted in the formation of the UK Gambling Commission, arguably the world's most prestigious and powerful regulator.



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All this has contributed to an incredibly fruitful UK gambling landscape, with punters able to enjoy numerous top-quality casinos and bookmakers. A strict network of regulations keeps players safe from unfair games and other dodgy practices, safeguarding gamblers with carefully formulated rules and regular audits.

This has also contributed to a rich variety of sources for UK gamblers to read about the best platforms available. Doing so is indispensable to finding the best operators. For example, John Slots has an expert review of the popular online casino Duelz here: <https://www.johnslots.com/en/casino/duelz-casino/>.

Whether you're already playing at your favoured online casino or want to know more about the industry before getting stuck in, understanding how UK gambling laws differ from those in the rest of the world is a crucial characteristic. We'll run through the topic throughout the article below.

## **Gambling in the UK: a quick history**

The UK has a long history with gambling, dating back several centuries. Before the 15th century, gambling was actually entirely legal and free of any rules throughout the kingdom, although the gaming and betting options were far more limited than they are now. Back then, gambling was largely constrained to very simple card games, betting on horses and lottery-style games.

The first attempt by a UK government to outlaw gambling came in 1541 with the Unlawful Games Act. This made pretty much all forms of gambling technically illegal, although the law was loosely enforced. In fact, the only real effect was that gambling debts could no longer be pursued through court action – an early indication of how forceful gambling regulation can actually have a negative effect on many people.

There were several other gambling acts over the next few centuries, as gambling in the UK and across Europe became more and more popular. This was increasingly fuelled by the rise of horse racing betting, something that became increasingly relevant when King Charles II built a palace at Newmarket.

One of the most important events in the history of UK gambling was the Gaming Act 1845, which legalized gambling in regulated establishments and laid the groundwork for how gambling would be managed in the modern era. Politicians were keen to safeguard players, establishing guidelines that would help root out fraudulent and unfair gaming practices. While the act laid an indispensable foundation, illegal gambling was still rampant across the UK, particularly in London.

Back then, gambling mainly involved casino games, but this started to change at the turn of the century. The 1900s ushered in a new wave of bookmakers and betting shops, eventually compelling the government to bring forth a new set of laws. This culminated in the Betting and Gaming Act of

1960, legalizing betting shops, bingo halls and casinos. Of course, these newly legalized establishments had to follow strict rules and pay hefty taxes.

The Betting and Gaming Act of 1960 was a landmark moment for the UK and the rest of the world. At the time, gambling was still not seen as a definitive industry in most places. This legislation marked a major shift, recognising the gambling industry as a legitimate sector that could be taxed and controlled rather than suppressed.

## **21st century UK gambling laws**

As we mentioned in the introduction, the next landmark moment for UK gambling legislation was the Gambling Act of 2005. This legislation modernized the government's approach, specifically in relation to the growing impact online gaming had on the industry. It created the [UK Gambling Commission](#), a regulatory body charged with overseeing all forms of gambling in the country.

In order to comply with regulations, all casinos, bookmakers and other gambling companies must apply for a license. The UKGC checks for several vital non-negotiables before supplying a license, including procedures on age verification, responsible gambling measures, fair game audits and anti-money laundering policies.

One of the other major developments stemming from the Gambling Act of 2005 was the legalization of limited forms of advertising. This is particularly apparent in the sports world, where bookmakers can advertise their services during ad breaks and on football players' shirts.

## **Gambling laws in other countries**

So, that's a comprehensive look at the history and current state of play regarding the UK gambling landscape, but how does it compare with elsewhere? Let's take a look:

## **USA**

The US has an interestingly unique approach to gambling laws, with each state able to formulate their own rules. Sports betting is now legal in almost 40 states, but online casino gambling is currently only available in six.

## **France**

France has a strict yet fair approach to gambling, with online sports betting and poker allowed. Online casino games like slots, however, are prohibited.

## **Brazil**

Brazil used to have a no-tolerance approach to all forms of gambling, but this is starting to change. The South American country recently launched a legal online sports betting market, with casinos expected to follow in due course.

## **What does the future hold for UK gambling laws?**

With the [UK Government convening the first International Investment Summit](#) recently, all eyes were on whether the gambling industry will get any positive legal breaks. The future does indeed look bright, but operators will also have to tread carefully regarding contentious issues like advertising.