

Tony's Tavern

Texas Holdem Basics

The Basics of Texas Hold'em

1. Texas Hold'em can be played with as few as two players, but is usually played with eight to ten players at a single table.
2. Texas Hold'em is played with one full deck of 52 playing cards.
3. Using the best five-card combination of their two hole cards and the five community cards, players try to form the best five card poker hand.
4. The two players, sitting to the left of the dealer, place a forced initial bet. This forced bet is called "**posting the blinds**".
5. The person left of the dealer posts a bet called the "**Small Blind**", which is usually equal to half the minimum bet.
6. The person to the left of the "Small Blind" posts the "**Big Blind**", which is equal to the full minimum bet.
7. **First (Initial) Deal** - Each player is dealt two cards face down, which are known as "Hole Cards" or "Pocket Cards".
8. **First round of betting** ("Pre-Flop" betting) – Starting with the player to the left of the big blind, each player can call the big blind, raise, or fold. The big blind has the "option" to raise, call, check or fold.
9. "**The Flop**" – The dealer burns a card, (discards the top card of the deck to prevent cheating) and then deals three community cards face up. The first three cards are referred to as "The Flop"
10. **Second round of betting** – Starting with the player to the left of the dealer, each player can check or bet. Once a bet has been made, each player can raise, call, or fold
11. "**The Turn**" – After the betting concludes the dealer burns another card, (discards the top card of the deck to prevent cheating) and then adds a fourth card face-up to the community cards. This fourth card is known as "The Turn"
12. **Third round of betting** – The player to the left of the dealer begins another round of betting. This round follows the same format as the second round.
13. "**The River**" – After the betting concludes the dealer burns another card, (discards the top card of the

deck to prevent cheating) and then adds a fifth and final card to the community cards. This fifth card is known as "The River". Players can now use any of the five community cards on the table with the two cards in their pocket (or hole cards) to form their best five card poker hand.

14. **Final round of betting** – There is now a final round of betting starting with the player to the left of the dealer. It follows the same format as the second and third betting rounds.

15. **"The Showdown"** – After the final round of betting, using the best five-card combination of their hole cards and the community cards, the remaining players show their hands, with the bettor or last raiser showing first. The highest five-card hand wins the pot. If two or more players have the same hand, the next highest card in the player's hand is used to break a tie. This is called the "Kicker". If there is no "Kicker" card and the tied players have used both hole cards, or have the exact same hand, then the pot is split between the tied players.

16. The deal is then passed clockwise to the next player and another round of play begins.

Additional Definitions:

Blind

A forced bet (or partial bet) put in by one or more players before any cards are dealt. Typically, blinds are put in by players immediately to the left of the dealer.

Check

(1) To not bet, with the option to call or raise later in the betting round. Equivalent to betting zero dollars.

Hand Rankings in Texas Holdem

- **Royal Flush:** An Ace, King, Queen, Jack and Ten in the same suit.
In the event of a tie: Two or more Royal Flushes split the pot.
- **Straight Flush:** Five cards in sequence, of the same suit.
In the event of a tie: Highest rank at the top of the sequence wins.
- **Four of a Kind:** Four cards of the same rank, and one side card.
In the event of a tie: Highest four of a kind wins.
- **Full House:** Three cards of the same rank, and two cards of a different, matching rank.
In the event of a tie: Highest three matching cards wins the pot.
- **Flush:** Five cards of the same suit.
In the event of a tie: The player holding the highest ranked card wins. If necessary, the second-highest, third-highest, fourth-highest, and fifth-highest cards can be used to break the tie.
- **Straight:** Five cards in sequence.
In the event of a tie: Highest ranking card at the top of the sequence wins. Note: The Ace may be used at the top or bottom of the sequence, and is the only card which can act in this manner.
- **Three of a kind:** Three cards of the same rank, and two unrelated side cards.
In the event of a tie: Highest ranking three of a kind wins.
- **Two pair:** Two cards of a matching rank, another two cards of a different matching rank, and one side card.
In the event of a tie: Highest pair wins. If players have the same highest pair, highest second pair wins. If both players have identical pairs, highest side card wins.
- **One pair:** Two cards of a matching rank, and three unrelated side cards. In the event of a tie: Highest pair wins. If players have the same pair, the highest side card wins, and if necessary, the second-highest and third-highest side card can be used to break the tie.
- **High card:** Any hand that does not qualify under a category listed above.
In the event of a tie: Highest card wins, and if necessary, the second-highest, third-highest, fourth-highest and smallest card can be used to break the tie.