



Texas Hold Em & Omaha Hi & Lo

Texas Holdem

Texas Holdem is a “community card” game, this means that some cards are dealt face-up in the middle of the table and shared by all the players. Each player has two face down cards that are theirs alone, they then combine them with the five community cards to make the best possible 5-card hand.

Play begins by dealing two cards face down to each player; these are known as “hole cards” or “pocket cards”. This is followed by a round of betting. Most Holdem games get the betting started with one or two “blind bets” to the left of the dealer. These are forced bets which must be made before you can see your cards. Play proceeds clockwise from the blinds, with each player free to fold, call the blind bet, or raise. Usually the blinds are “live,” meaning that they may raise themselves when the action gets back around to them.

Three cards are dealt face up in the middle of the table; this is called the “flop”. A round of betting ensues, with action starting on the first blind, immediately to the dealer's left. Another card is dealt face up (the “turn”), followed by another round of betting, again beginning to the dealer's left. Then the final card (the “river”) is dealt followed by the final round of betting. In a structured-limit game, the bets on the turn and river are usually double the size of those before and on the flop.

The game is usually played for high only, each player making the best five-card combination to compete for the pot. Players usually use both their hole cards to make their best hand, but this is not required. A player may even choose to “play the board” and use no hole cards at all. Identical five-card hands split the pot; the sixth and seventh cards are not used to break ties.

Omaha

The rules of Omaha are very similar to those of Texas Holdem. There are only two differences:

1. Each player receives four hole cards, instead of two.
2. Each player must use *exactly* three community cards and two hole cards to make their hand. The second difference is confusing for most beginners. These examples hopefully show how it works.

Board	Hole Cards	Best High Hand
AKQ82 ♠♣♦♦♦	A2J10 ♣♣♦♥	makes ace-hi straight.
AKQJ10 ♠♣♣♥♦	A2J8 ♣♣♦♥	makes ace-hi straight.
AKQJ10 ♠♣♣♥♦	32J8 ♣♦♦♠	makes pair of jacks. No straight possible using 2 hole cards.
AK892 ♠♠♥♦♠	44Q4 ♥♦♠♠	makes AKQ42 “nut” flush.
AK892 ♠♠♠♠♠	44QQ ♥♦♠♦	makes pair of queens. No flush possible using 2 hole cards.
A10884 ♠♠♠♥♦	1010A9 ♦♣♦♣	makes TTT88 full house.

Board	Hole Cards
A 10 8 8 4 ♠ ♠ ♠ ♥ ♦	10 8 A 9 ♦ ♣ ♦ ♣

Best Low Hand

makes 888AA full house.

A A 8 8 4 ♠ ♣ ♠ ♥ ♦	A 2 3 5 ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥
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makes trip aces AAA85. No full house possible using 2.

A A 8 8 4 ♠ ♣ ♠ ♥ ♦	A 2 3 4 ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥
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makes full house AAA44.

Omaha is usually played high/low, meaning that the highest and lowest hands split the pot. The low hand must “qualify” by being at least an 8-low (the largest card must be 8 or lower). You can use a different two cards to compete for the high and low portions of the pot, and the game is played “*cards speak*” rather than “*declare*!”. Aces can be both low or high, and straights and flushes don’t count against you for low. Since everyone must use two hole cards to make a hand, the board must have three cards 8 or lower for a low to be possible. Players often tie for low, and the low half of the pot is divided equally among them. More examples:

Board	Hole Cards
A K Q 8 2 ♠ ♣ ♣ ♦ ♦	8 J J 10 ♣ ♣ ♦ ♥

Best Low Hand

makes the low hand JT82A which does not qualify as 8-or-better.

3 5 8 10 10 ♦ ♥ ♦ ♣ ♠	2 A J 10 ♣ ♣ ♦ ♥
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makes the “nut low” 8532A.

3 5 8 10 10 ♦ ♥ ♦ ♣ ♠	3 10 A 4 ♣ ♥ ♣ ♦
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makes 8543A.

3 5 8 A 10 ♦ ♥ ♦ ♦ ♠	3 5 A 8 ♣ ♦ ♣ ♥
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makes T853A, not qualifying.

A 2 3 4 5 ♣ ♣ ♦ ♥ ♠	2 10 A 10 ♦ ♥ ♦ ♦
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makes “nut low” 5432A.

A 2 3 4 5 ♣ ♣ ♦ ♥ ♠	4 5 10 10 ♦ ♦ ♥ ♥
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makes “nut low” 5432A.

A 2 5 7 8 ♣ ♣ ♥ ♥ ♦	2 A 10 10 ♦ ♦ ♥ ♦
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makes 8752A, but the nut low is 5432A with a 3 and 4.

As in all split-pot games, the real goal of playing a hand is to win both halves of the pot, or “scoop”. Therefore, hands that have a chance to win both ways are far superior to those that can only win one way.

Here are the basic rules: of both Texas Holdem and Omaha Hi/Lo

Buttons and Blinds

Dealer Button - The Button moves from player to player at the beginning of each hand and identifies the current dealer position. The player at this location is considered to be the dealer. After each hand is completed the dealer button is moved to the next player to the left.

Blinds - In Texas Hold’em, there’s no ante, so the two players to the left of the dealer must post blind bets. A Blind is a forced bet before you receive your initial cards and is posted by the players to the immediate left of the dealer button. This is used to seed the pot with cash. Everyone at the table takes their turn playing the blinds. No one is immune.

Small Blind - In our Hold’em game, the small blind is equal to one half the minimum bet rounded down to the nearest dollar. (Ex. \$5/\$10 game, small blind = \$2.00)

Big Blind - In Hold'em game, the big blind is usually a bet equal to the minimum bet. (i.e. \$5/\$10 game, big blind = \$5.00)

When you first take a seat at an active table you're required to post the equivalent of the big blind. You can do this by waiting until you are in a position to post it. Another way would be to post it out of position. If you decide to post out of the big blind position, you must also post the blind when you are in position if you wish to remain in the game.

If you were to miss the regular rotation of posting the blinds, you will be required to post the big blind in order to re-enter the game. If you were to sit out and miss three big blinds, you would then be picked up from the table, forfeiting your seat.

Betting

Betting is started after 2 cards, pocket cards, are dealt face down to each player. The next 3 cards, flop cards, are then dealt. A round of bets. The 4th card board card, turn card, is dealt and another round of betting ensues. The 5th and final card, the river card, is dealt, after which the betting resumes. When all bets are in, the showdown takes place between the remaining players. The winner is declared from the showdown.

n.b. Each Poker room runs slightly different betting structures please check before playing.

Showdown

The first person to show their hand is the last person to show strength with a bet or raise. The winning hand is the highest 5 card hand using any combination of the 7 cards that are available. Should multiple hands tie, the pot is split with any odd amount going to the player closest to the 'D' button's left.

1 on 1 Hold'em

This format is a fun and challenging way to test your skills against a single (or married) player. These tables will only allow two players to sit and will guarantee some very exciting and intense hands.

The basic rules are slightly altered to accommodate play on the 1 on 1 table. The button posts the small blind and will also initiate the betting pre-flop. The Betting rounds are also extended to a maximum of six bets.

Omaha High-Low is the most popular variant of Omaha. In this version the best hand and the worst hand each get half of the pot, that is, as long as your low hand contains at least an 8 or better. The cool thing is you can use different cards for the two hands. This makes it possible to win both the high and low hand. If there is no qualifying Low hand the entire pot goes to the winning high hand.

High hands are ranked exactly the same as Omaha High. A Low hand, simply put, doesn't qualify if it beats an 8. If you have never played a Hi-Lo game you may want to read this a couple times in order to fully understand what a qualifying Low hand is and how they are ranked.

Qualifying Hands

Like Omaha High, you receive 4 cards face down. You use these cards in combination with the 5 table cards. At showdown, you must use exactly two of your down cards and three table cards to make up a high hand and a low hand. It's possible for you to win both the high and the low pot with two different pocket cards. Of the five cards used in a low hand, an 8 is the highest ranking card you can use. The lowest high card determines the best low hand. If two or more players have the same high card, then the next lowest high card is used. Take a look at this example:

At showdown - Player 'X' holds  Player 'Y' holds 8, 7, 5, and 4, Ace.

Some may look at this and think that 'Y' has the winning low hand because the lowest card, an Ace, is held. This is incorrect. Player 'X' holds the winning hand. If you refer to the paragraph above, the "lowest high card... then the next lowest high card" determines ranking. So in ranking these two hands 8,7,5 is held in common with the next lowest card being a 3. Therefore, player 'X' holds the best low hand.

The best low hand - Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5. This is also considered as a straight for high, and both pots may be won with this hand.

The action for Omaha Hi-Lo is very much like Hold'em and Omaha High.

"Two from the hand, three from the board" is the Omaha players' catchphrase.

In Omaha you receive four cards, not two like in Hold'em, and you must use exactly two of the four cards to make your hand. This means of course that three of the board cards must be used. Hence the above chant.

The action in Omaha plays out very much like Texas Hold'em. Four cards are dealt face down to each player. Then five community cards are dealt to the table. The game proceeds identically to Texas Hold'em. The final hands must include exactly 2 of the player's four cards and exactly 3 of the table's five cards. The cards speak for themselves. High hand takes the pot.

There are a total of four betting rounds in Omaha. The first and second rounds are set at the low limit of the tables' stakes structure and the final two rounds are set at the high limit of the structure. Example: If the stakes structure is \$5/\$10 then the bets and raises would be set at \$5 for the first two rounds and \$10 for the final two rounds.

It's four bets maximum per player. Betting rounds would consist of a bet and three raises. The final raise is capped and a player has only the option to call or fold once capped.

Buttons and Blinds (same as Hold'em)

Dealer Button - The Button moves from player to player at the beginning of each hand and identifies the current dealer position. The player at this location is considered to be the dealer. After each hand is completed the dealer button is moved to the next player to the left.

Blinds - As in Texas Hold'em, there is no ante, so the two players to the left of the dealer must post blind bets. A Blind is a forced bet before you receive your initial cards and is made by the players to the immediate left of the dealer button. This is used to seed the pot with cash. Everyone at the table takes their turn playing the blinds. No one is immune.

Small Blind - The small blind is equal to one half the minimum bet rounded down to the nearest dollar. (Ex. \$5/\$10 game, small blind = \$2.00)

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When you first take a seat at an active table you're required to post the equivalent of the big blind. You can do this by waiting until you are in a position to post it. Another way would be to post it out of position. If you decide to post out of the big blind position, you must also post the blind when you are in position if you wish to remain in the game.

If you were to miss the regular rotation of posting the blinds, you would be required to post the big blind in order to re-enter the game. If you were to sit out and miss three big blinds, you would then be picked up from the table, forfeiting your seat.

Betting

Betting is started after 4 cards (pocket cards) are dealt face down to each player. The next 3 cards, flop cards, are then dealt. Bet again. The 4th card, turn card, for the table is dealt. Another round of betting ensues. The 5th and final card, the river card, is dealt, after which the betting resumes. When all bets are in, the showdown takes place between the remaining players. The winner is declared from the showdown.

Betting Structure - The cardroom's software enforces the betting limits. The stakes being offered at the particular table determines the limit or maximum bet on any player's turn. For example, at a \$1-\$2 table, the limit on any bet is \$1 on the first two betting rounds and \$2 on the final two betting rounds..

n.b. Each Poker room runs slightly different betting structures please check before playing.

The Showdown

The first person to show their hand is the last person to show strength with a bet or raise. The winning hand is the highest 5-card hand using exactly 2 of the four pocket cards and 3 of the 5 board cards. Should multiple hands tie, the pot is split with any odd amount going to the player closest to the 'D' button's left.

Remember: You can use any two pocket cards and any three table cards for your high hand, and can also use any two of your pocket cards with any three table cards for your low hand. It's possible for you to win both the high pot and the low pot.