

Pai Gow Poker

This is a poker variation based on the Chinese Domino game Pai Gow. It can be played by up to seven players.

A pack of 52 cards plus one joker is used. The joker is a wild card which can be used **only** as an ace, or to complete a straight, a flush or a straight flush.

On each deal the dealer plays against the other players. Before the deal, each of the other players puts up a stake.

Seven cards are dealt to each player. All players other than the dealer look at their cards and divide them to form two hands - a two card hand and a five card hand. The relative values of the five card hands are the same as in poker, with five aces beating a royal flush. For the two card hand, any pair beats any two unmatched cards, but no other combinations are possible.

The player must arrange the cards so that the five card hand is higher than the two card hand (so if the two cards were a pair of aces, the five card hand would have to contain two pairs or better). Players are not allowed to discuss their hands at any stage.

The players place their two hands face down, and when all are ready, the dealer's seven cards are exposed. The other players may not touch their cards from this point on. The dealer forms the seven exposed cards into a five and a two in the same way as the players.

Then all the players' cards are exposed. The result between the dealer and each player is determined by comparing the player's 5 card hand with the dealer's 5 card hand and the player's 2 card hand with the dealer's 2 card hand:

1. If the player wins both hands the dealer pays out the amount staked by the player.
2. If the dealer wins one hand and the player wins the other no money changes hands. This is called a "push".
3. If the dealer wins both hands the dealer wins the player's stake.

If either hand is tied, the dealer wins that particular hand. So in this case, if the dealer wins or ties the other hand it is a win for the dealer; if one hand is tied and the player wins the other no money changes hands.

Note on the deal

When this game is played formally, a rather elaborate method of dealing is used. Seven hands of seven cards are dealt, one card at a time, and the remaining four cards are discarded unseen. The dealer then throws three dice and counts around the players at the table counter-clockwise, starting with himself, up to the dice total to determine who gets the first hand which was dealt. The following hands go to the other players, in counter-clockwise rotation. The Dice are not used when a shuffle machine is used in place of the manual method a random number generator that will tell you with spot gets the first hand out.

Dealer's advantage

The dealer obviously has an advantage (winning tied hands).

There are two pai gow games played in Las Vegas casinos. Pai gow is a gambling game played with domino-like tiles. The English translation of pai gow is "makes nine."

Pai gow poker is a cross between pai gow and poker. If you know the ranking of poker hands you are well on your way to learning pai gow poker. The game is played with a single deck of 53 cards, the additional card is a Joker. The first thing to remember is that the Joker is not a pure wildcard. It can only be used as an Ace or to fill out a straight or a flush. Pai gow poker is played at a table that looks a lot like a blackjack table. There can be up to 6 players and the dealer.

The Deal

Before the deal, the dealer will either roll three dice (usually in a dice cup) or triggers a random number generator to determine where the deal starts. Regardless of how many players are at the table, every spot is dealt a hand. Hands without players don't play, but the cards are dealt anyway.

You will be dealt seven cards, face down. Unlike traditional poker where each player is dealt one card at a time, in pai gow you will receive all seven of your cards at once.

Setting the Hands

Out of those seven cards you have to make two poker hands. You divide the cards into one five-card hand and one two-card hand. The five-card hand is called the High Hand, the two-card hand is the Low Hand. Your High Hand must beat your Low Hand. If you set your hand wrong, it is "fouled" and an automatic loser. For example if your Low

Hand is a pair of Aces and your High Hand is a pair of Queens, you lose your bet. However, the house bank can never foul a hand. If the dealer sets his or hers hand improperly the floor supervisor must be called as soon as it is noticed and he or she will resolve the problem.

SHUFFLE

All poker rooms have their own procedures when it comes to shuffling the decks. The following is a basic, standard shuffle that you will be using [REDACTED]

Cut the deck in half

- Hold the deck with the narrow ends facing each other
- Place your hands flat on top of both halves with the thumbs and forefingers of one hand touching.
- Reach down with the thumbs and catch the bottom of the deck halves
- Lift with the thumbs and forefingers on the side of the deck and the ring and little fingers on the back
- Using the fingers on the sides of the deck as a guide, push the two halves together with the ring and little fingers.
- Square the deck with the index fingers by running them down the sides
- The procedure to this point is called the riffle
- Now bring 1/3 of the deck up from the bottom and place it on the top
- Repeat the shuffle procedures in the first part of this list.
- Then after the shuffle this time take 1/3 off of the top of the deck and place it on the bottom. Now repeat the shuffle procedure twice.

GAME PROTECTION

- Ensure that all players are set and that you have all cards gathered off of the layout prior to shuffling.
- Always call out when making change for a customer (there are different circumstances in poker that do not require calling out every change up this will be discussed later in your training)
- Always be courteous and polite
- Never give advice on how to use strategies or on playing skills
- Know all the house rules (procedures) and betting limits
- Poker should be dealt in a business like manner
- ~~Deck protection is of the utmost importance~~ *poker only room*
or if shuffle machine is broken

Never settle a dispute of any kind without calling a supervisor

If you expose a card early, do not take any action prior getting a supervisors ruling

Watch the layout at all times, especially when players placing, calling or raising a bet. You must be sure that the amount they repeat is actually the amount that is being place to the center of the table.

Be especially careful of watching how the players handle the cards. If you see anything that doesn't appear to be normal or right. Make you supervisor aware of this at the first opportunity.

When a player goes all in and the pot must be split, make sure that all monies and or chips from that point go to the appropriate pot.

Each time you bring the cards in to shuffle, when you square the deck make sure to check the edges for nicks, dents, scratches or discolor.

When being tapped out, make sure to clear your hands, palms up before you leave the table.

← poker room only

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SPREADING THE HANDS

Standard decks are used for Pai Gow Poker. The cards for each individual hand must be spread properly and neatly on the table. This is essential so as to allow for the dealer, players, supervisors and Surveillance to read or recognize each hand for its value and to ensure that the hands are set properly and in accordance with the procedures established by that individual casino.

If all the hands are on the layout there will be 49 cards out of 53 spread on the table at the same time. **NEATNESS REALLY DOES COUNT.**

WHO GETS THE FIRST HAND

After the seven stacks or cards or hands have been dealt out in front of the dealer, the Banker will shake the dice cup and then the three dice will be totaled and this total will determine who gets the first hand out. The banker Whether it be the house or a player at the table will always be 1 - 8 - and 15. So counting forward or backward from either 1 - 8 or 15 which ever is easier will determine who to give the first hand out to. From this point all hands are distributed in a counter clock wise direction.

THE BANK

The Bank can and very often will rotate around the table once again in counter clock wise direction. Each player in turn may if they desire act as the bank, as long as they had played the prior hand. The players previous bet is what will be wagered by the house against the player bank.

Using a player bank merely replaces the dealer for the casino as a player. With the casino wagering only the amount of the last wager placed by the player bank.

There are exceptions and these vary from casino to casino but one that is pretty standard is that the player bank may ask for the casino to sit out, that is, not place a wager, in fact not even play in that specific hand.

Even if the dealer does not play the hand against the player bank. The house dealer still must handle all the cards and collect the 5% commission on every win. Explained below.

THE 5% COMMISSION

The Commission in Pai Gow Poker is taken out of each winning bet. That is the Commission amount is deducted from the amount paid. However, in many cases especially with the smaller commissions, the player that wins will just hand the commission to the dealer therefore not requiring the dealer to take it out of the pay off.

The commission for example on a \$5.00 dollar bet is .25 cents, which means that on a \$25.00 dollar bet it would be \$1.25. On a \$100.00 dollar bet it would be \$5.00.

HOUSE RULES FOR DEALING PAI GOW POKER

As stated earlier the deck will be a standard deck, but in Pai Gow Poker we will leave in one joker. To be used as a Ace, or in a Straight or Flush.

A Pai Gow hand consist of two parts a Low hand and a High hand. Each player and the house receives seven (7) cards. From these seven cards a two card low hand must be made and a five card high hand must be made.

These hands must be set using standard poker winning progression of hands as follows:

Ranking

Five of a kind (Four Aces with the Joker)

Royal Flush (Ace, King, Queen, Jack and ten same suit)

Straight Flush (Any straight progression of five cards in the same suit)

Four of a Kind (Four cards of the same value with one odd card)

Full House (Three of one value card and any pair)

Flush (Five cards of the same suit in random order)

Straight (five cards in sequence but not the same suit.) A straight with Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5 is the second highest hand that can be made. With only 5 of a kind being higher

Three of a Kind (Three cards of the same value, with two unmatched cards)

Two Pair (Two separate pairs of like value cards such as two tens and two sixes with one odd card)

One Pair (one pair of like value cards with three other cards that are not matched.)

High Card (merely means that if none of the above hands can be made then the highest card of the Seven is High Card.

HOUSE WAYS TO SET THE HANDS

How the hands are to be played at all times by the dealer (The house)

NO PAIR Use the highest card in the high hand or five card hand and the second and third highest as the two card low hand.

ONE PAIR Always play as the high hand. Example: 4, 4, 6, 8, J, Q, K, the pair of 4's remains in the high and the King and Queen go to the two card low hand.

TWO PAIR If one of the two pair is Ace's always split putting the lower pair in the two card hand.

If one of the pairs is a face card (K, QQ, JJ) and the other pair is 6's or higher you will split the pairs if the second pair is 2,3,4, or 5's with an Ace Play the two pair in the High Hand and the Ace with the next highest card in the low hand.

If you have two pair one pair between 7 and 10 and the other pair between 2 and 9 Split the two pair, unless you have an Ace Then you will play the two pair together in the High hand and the Ace with the next highest card in the low hand.

Any two pair that are both 6's and under or 2 through 6 always keep both pair in the high hand never split.

THREE PAIR Use the highest pair in the low hand and the other two pair in the high hand

THREE OF A KIND Always keep three of a kind in the high hand, EXCEPTION Three Aces use one Ace with the next highest card in the low hand and keep a pair of Aces in the high hand.

STRAIGHT Five card straight no pairs keep the straight in the high hand
With a 6 card straight, use the highest card in the low hand

With a 6 card straight and a pair, use the pair in the low hand

Break up a straight if you have two pair 10's or under plus an Ace. Play the two pair high and the Ace low

FLUSH Keep as high hand

With a six card flush, use the highest card in the low hand Six

card flush with a pair play the pair in the low hand

Split the flush only with two pair 10's or higher or a pair of Aces and any other pair, or two low pair 10's and lower with an Ace. play the two pair high and the Ace with the next highest card

If a choice of a straight and flush play the straight instead of the flush when the hand has an Ace or King, the Ace or King goes to the low hand.

FULL HOUSE Any full house three of a kind and two of a kind will be split (Exception is with an Ace, King) the full house is high and the Ace, King will be low hand.

FOUR OF A KIND Keep four of a Kind in the High Hand if they are 6's or lower. DO NOT SPLIT

Four Aces will be split if there is another pair of 6's or lower, if the other pair is 7's or higher then you keep the four aces in the high hand.

Always split four Kings, Queens, or Jacks if they are with a pair of 10's or higher otherwise keep the four of a kind.

STRAIGHT FLUSH Normally keep in High Hand. Split only with two pair, 10's or over, or a pair of Aces and any other pair or with two low pair 10's or under plus an Ace, you will then play the two pair in the High Hand and the Ace in the low hand.

ROYAL FLUSH Keep as High Hand.

Exception is with the odd Ace play the Flush as the High Hand, the pair of Aces as the Low Hand.

If the hand has a face card in addition to the Royal Flush then play the straight or the flush using the face card in the low hand.

FIVE ACES Split to use a pair of Aces as the low hand and Three Aces in the High Hand.

Keep as the High Hand only with a pair of Kings.

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