

TEXAS HOLD'EM

What Is Texas Hold'em?

Texas Hold'em is a community card poker game.

- Each player is dealt two private cards (called *hole cards*).
- Five community cards are placed face up in the middle of the table (the *board*).
- You make your best five-card poker hand using any combination of your two hole cards and the five community cards.

Most games use a no-limit betting structure – meaning you can bet any amount up to your entire stack whenever it's your turn to act.

Basic Rules & Game Format

- Players per table: 2–10
- Hole cards: Each player gets 2 cards face down
- Community cards: 5 shared cards face up on the board
- Goal: Make the best five-card hand and win the pot
- Betting structure: Usually No-Limit (but Limit and Pot-Limit versions also exist)

At the end of the hand, if two or more players are still in, there's a showdown: everyone turns their cards face up and the best five-card hand wins.

Button, Blinds and Player Positions

Understanding where you sit at the table is a huge part of Texas Hold'em strategy.

The Dealer Button

The dealer button (often just called “the button”) is a small round disk that sits in front of one player. After each hand, it moves one seat clockwise.

The button determines:

- Who posts the small blind and big blind
- The order of betting on every street.

Even when there is a professional or automated dealer, the button still shows who is considered the “dealer” for betting purposes.

This rotation ensures everyone spends time in:

- Early position (acts first – hardest to play)
- Middle position

- Late position (acts last – biggest advantage)

The Blinds

Texas Hold'em uses forced bets called blinds to create action from the start.

There are two blinds:

- Small Blind (SB) – Posted by the player immediately to the left of the button
- Big Blind (BB) – Posted by the player to the left of the small blind, typically

double the small blind amount Example:

- Blinds are \$0.50 / \$1.00
 - Small blind posts \$0.50
 - Big blind posts \$1.00

These chips are in the pot before any cards are dealt, which gives everyone something to play for.

Player Positions

Your position is where you sit relative to the button, and it strongly affects what hands you should play.

We usually divide positions into:

- Early Position (EP)
 - Players who act first after the flop
 - Disadvantage: you have the least information about what others will do
- Middle Position (MP)
 - You act after early players but before late positions
 - More information than EP, but still need to be cautious
- Late Position (LP)
 - Typically the cutoff and the button
 - You act after most players, giving you the most information
 - Widest range of playable hands
- And then we have the blinds, which are a bit special:
- Small Blind (SB):
 - Acts second-to-last pre-flop
 - Acts first on every post-flop betting round
 - Tricky to play because you've already invested chips but have poor position
- Big Blind (BB):
 - Acts last pre-flop if no one raises
 - Acts second post-flop (after the small blind)
 - You often defend more hands because you already have chips in the pot

How a Hand of Texas Hold'em is Played (Step-by-Step)

Let's walk through a full hand from start to finish.

1. Blinds Are Posted

Before any cards are dealt:

- The small blind and big blind put their forced bets into the pot.

2. Hole Cards Are Dealt

Each player receives two hole cards face down.

You look at your cards and decide whether they're worth playing once it's your turn to act.

3. Pre-Flop Betting Round

The first betting round is called pre-flop (before the flop is dealt).

- Action starts with the player to the left of the big blind.
- On your turn you can:
 - Fold – throw your hand away
 - Call – match the amount of the big blind (or current bet)
 - Raise – increase the bet (in no-limit, to any amount up to your stack)

After a bet or raise, remaining players can call, re-raise, or fold. When all bets are matched and the action is complete, we go to the next street.

4. The Flop

The dealer deals three community cards face up in the middle of the table. This is called the flop.

You now combine your two hole cards with the three flop cards to start building your best five-card hand.

Second Betting Round (Post-Flop)

Now a new betting round begins, starting with the first active player to the left of the button.

Options:

- Check – if no one has bet yet, you can check (pass the action)
- Bet – you can bet any amount up to your stack
- If someone bets, others can:
 - Call – match the bet
 - Raise – increase the bet
- Fold – give up the hand When betting is complete, we move on.

5. The Turn

A fourth community card is dealt face up. This is called the turn.

You now have:

- 2 hole cards
- 4 board cards

You're still trying to make the best five-card hand possible.

7. Third Betting Round

Another betting round starts, again with the first active player to the left of the button. The available actions are the same: check, bet, call, raise, or fold.

8. The River

A fifth and final community card is dealt face up. This is the river.

Now all information is on the table: you've seen all 5 community cards and your 2 hole cards.

9. Final Betting Round

One last betting round takes place, starting with the first active player to the left of the button.

Again, you can:

- Check (if no bet yet)
- Bet (any amount up to all-in)
- Call, raise, or fold if facing a bet

Once all action is complete, any remaining players go to showdown.

10. Showdown

At the showdown, all remaining players turn up their cards to see who wins.

- The player who made the last aggressive action (bet or raise) shows their hand first.
- If no one bet on the river, the player closest to the left of the button shows first.
- The best five-card hand wins the pot.
- If two or more players have hands of equal value, the pot is split equally between them.

Example showdown:

- Board: K♣ A♠ J♦ Q♦ 4♠
- Player 1: Q♥ T♣ → Best hand: A-K-Q-J-T (a straight "broadway")

- Player 2: 5♠ T♠ → Best hand: also A-K-Q-J-T (same straight)
- Player 3: 7♣ 7♠ → Best hand: 7-7-7-K-A (three of a kind sevens) In this case:
 - Player 1 and Player 2 tie – they both make the same five-card straight using one hole card and four board cards.
 - Player 3 loses even though they have a set (three of a kind), because a straight is a higher-ranked hand.

Important: You can use both, one, or none of your hole cards to make your best five-card hand.

Betting Rounds & Actions Explained

Each hand is made up of four betting rounds:

1. Pre-Flop – after hole cards are dealt
2. Flop – after 3 community cards are dealt
3. Turn – after the 4th community card is dealt
4. River – after the 5th community card is dealt On every round, players choose from several actions: Available Actions
 - Fold
 - You surrender your cards and give up any claim to the pot.
 - Check
 - You pass the action to the next player without betting.
 - Only possible if no bet has been made in this round.
 - Bet
 - You place the first wager in the current betting round.
 - Call
 - You match the current bet amount to stay in the hand.
 - Raise
 - You increase the bet beyond what is currently on the table.
 - Other players must then call, re-raise, or fold.
 - All-In
 - You bet your entire stack of chips.
 - Anyone who calls must also put all their chips in (or as many as they have).

5. No-Limit Betting

In No-Limit Texas Hold'em, you can bet any amount from the minimum bet up to all your chips whenever it's your turn.







This is what makes No-Limit especially exciting:





- You can win huge pots with strong hands.
- You can apply pressure with big bets and bluffs.

- A single decision can put your entire stack at risk.

Hand Rankings in Texas Hold'em

Texas Hold'em uses the standard high-hand poker rankings, from best to worst:

Combination	Hand	Description
Royal Flush		Ace, king, queen, jack and ten of the same suit. The highest possible hand.
Straight Flush		Five consecutive cards of the same suit. K-Q-J-10-9 is the highest; 5-4-3-2-A is the lowest.
Four of a Kind		Four cards of the same rank, plus any fifth card. Four aces is the strongest.
Full House		Three cards of one rank and a pair of another. Example: three aces and two kings.
Flush		Five cards of the same suit, not in sequence. A-K-Q-J-9 is the strongest flush.
Straight		Five consecutive cards of different suits. A-K-Q-J-10 is the strongest; 5-4-3-2-A is the lowest.

Three of a Kind		Three cards of the same rank, plus two other unrelated cards. Example: three aces.
Two Pair		Two different pairs, plus one other card. Example: two aces and two kings.
Pair		Two cards of the same rank, plus three other unrelated cards. Example: two aces.
High Card		Any five cards that do not form another hand. Example: ace high.

At showdown, everyone forms the best possible five-card hand from:

- Their two hole cards
- The five community cards You can use:
 - Both hole cards
 - One hole card
 - Or even none (just the board, called “playing the board”), if that’s best.

When Does a Showdown Happen?

A showdown occurs when:

- The final betting round on the river is complete
- There are still two or more players left in the hand Then:
 1. Players reveal their hole cards in order.
 2. The best five-card hand wins the pot.
 3. Ties result in the pot being split.

Next Steps: Getting Comfortable at the Tables

You now know:

- How Texas Hold'em is structured
- What the button and blinds are

- How each betting round works
- The basic hand rankings
- How showdowns and ties are determined From here, the next step is simple: practice. Start by:
 - Playing low-stakes or play-money games
 - Focusing on starting hand selection
 - Paying attention to position (play tighter in early position, wider in late position)
 - Watching how pots grow across the betting rounds

When you're ready to put your knowledge into action, NoBigDealPoker is here to help you take the game from "confusing" to "no big deal."

