Good to Know

INFORMED GAMBLING

November 2022

Cost of play

With other forms of entertainment, you know how much it will cost to enjoy that entertainment upfront. Gambling is different. Cost of Play calculators can help you understand how much it costs to enjoy gambling as a form of entertainment.

At its most basic level, your approximate cost per hour to enjoy most casino games can be calculated with the following formula:

$$\text{Bet Size} \times \text{Bets Per Hour} \times \text{House Advantage} = \text{Average Cost to Play Per Hour}$$

Or check out our electronic Cost of Play calculators. These can be found on the digital kiosks at our Informed Gambling Info Centres or online at informedgambling.ca. These calculators are a quick and easy way for you to build your gambling entertainment budget.

Setting a time and money limit on your play can help ensure that it remains a fun activity for you.

Learn how the games work.

- Play for fun, not to make money.
- Have an idea of how long you want to play.
- View your gambling dollars as entertainment dollars.
- Having a gambling budget allows you to have fun now and still be able to do it again another day.
- Time flies when you're having fun. Taking breaks while you play is a great way to enjoy your time gambling.
- Accept your losses as the cost of entertainment.
- Balance gambling with other activities.

In most games skill plays no role

In most forms of gambling, skill has no role in the outcome. When playing games such as the Lottery, Slot Machines, VLTs, Roulette, Craps, Keno, Mini Baccarat and Raffles, the results of these games are produced purely by chance and randomness.

Games that have some skill element

Most of the games where skill might play a minor role are card or sports-based games. In games such as these, the player is required to make a decision during the course of play. Players that make statistically correct decisions may come out ahead more often than players who go on hunches.

Examples of these type of games include:

- Blackjack
- Casino-based Poker
- Pai Gow Poker
- Horse Racing
- Sports Pools
- Sports Select Games

In games such as these, even though the player can make a more "statistically correct" decision there is still a house advantage, meaning the gaming operator will always keep more money than they pay out in wins over the long term.

The only control you have over these games in terms of limiting your losses is by decreasing the amount you bet, reducing your speed of play and cutting down the length of time you play; so, play these games for their entertainment value and not to make money.

Most forms of gambling are based on three concepts:

House Advantage

The house advantage (or house edge) ensures the casino makes money over the long term.

While it's possible to win in the short-term, casino games and other forms of gambling are designed to keep more money than they pay out in winnings over the long term.

This means there is a cost to gamble. You may win occasionally but expect to spend money over time. The more you play, the more you pay.

A complete list of the House Advantage associated with most casino games can be found at InformedGambling.ca or at GetGamblingFacts.ca

Randomness

All legalized gambling uses some way to generate random outcomes so results are unpredictable and so you can't know what will happen next.

In slot machines or VLTs, random results are produced by a computer chip called a random number generator (RNG).

In other games it might be a spinning roulette wheel, the shuffling of a deck of cards or the roll of the dice that generates the randomness in a game.

Independent Events

Independence of events means what happened before has no effect on what will happen next. For example:

- In roulette, every time the wheel is spun, the number or colour that results is unrelated to what has come up before. The wheel has no memory.

- The same thing happens with Slot Machines and VLTs. The result of pushing the spin/deal button is not connected to previous pushes. Any result is possible at any time.

Exceptions – There are some types of games where previous results can have some effect on what happens next. Blackjack is a good example: once a card has been dealt, it won't be back in play until all the cards are shuffled again. Previous hands can have a limited effect on current or future hands.

Want more info?

Visit an Informed Gambling Info Centre or InformedGambling.ca

The Gambling Helpline is free, confidential and available 24/7 in multiple languages.

1-800-463-1554