

The Rise of Texas Hold 'Em

You can thank Texas Hold 'Em for the huge poker craze that has spread across the country. This unusual kind of poker is in large part responsible for the rise in popularity of poker in general over the last few years. Perhaps it's because the game is so different than your standard five card draws and seven card studs. Maybe it's because the game is new and exciting. Or perhaps it's simply because people love to gamble!

No matter what the reason, this poker game has a hold on American culture. It's shown in weekly television shows, special star-studded celebrity showdowns that seem to happen monthly, and now even in one-hour dramas. Casinos from Atlantic City to Las Vegas offer special rooms just for Texas Hold 'Em, where hundreds of players compete on dozens of tables until they run out of chips and energy, or leave with a smile and big winnings.

The premise of Texas Hold 'Em is the same as any poker game. Your objective is to get the best hand at your table, and if you don't have this hand, then you need to bluff to make other people think you do. In Texas, unlike standard draw pokers, each player receives two cards of their own. Five other cards are dealt to the middle of the table. Any player can "use" those cards, as well as their two private cards, to devise the best hand.

Usually, the game is played with eight or nine players, though fewer is possible. Nevertheless, you want to play with as many as possible. This increase in players means more money in the pot, and less competition as the inferior players drop out before the real hands begin.

The game starts with the dealer giving each player their two cards face down. Bets are made. People withdraw from the game. Then three community cards are turned face up in the middle of the table, called the flop. More bets are made, followed by another community card being turned and more bets. Finally, the most exciting moment in Texas Hold 'Em happens. The final community card is turned over.