

Chapter 1

Casino Gambling 101: The Inside Scoop

In This Chapter

- ▶ Entering the world of casino gambling
 - ▶ Tallying up the casino's many offerings
 - ▶ Pinpointing casinos on the gambling map
 - ▶ Testing your gambling aptitude
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I was a big golf fan during the game's golden age, when Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer ruled the links. Yet, despite the presence of those two titans, I idolized Gary Player, a South African whose diminutive size made for a less-than-intimidating physical presence in the tee box. But Player's welter-weight appearance belied a heavy-weight swing. I was always amazed that someone so small could hit the ball so far.

Believe it or not, casino gambling is a lot like golf. And, no, not because both games are about going for the green. Golf is all about technique, skill, and knowledge. And masters of the game are inspiring to watch. With swings as graceful and elegant as a ballet dancer's leap, they make each challenging stroke look effortless. The pros seem to play as smoothly as those on the PGA tour. But, as in golf, the successful player has gathered important knowledge and studied effective strategies to finesse the outcome in his or her favor.

In other words, casino pros aren't winners just because they're lucky, any more than Tiger Woods is a golf god because the angels of the green have smiled upon him. Trust me, the greats of the poker tournament circuit may look like they could take the table in their sleep — but they're skilled, savvy, and have studied the game diligently.

I'm guessing, though, that you're not planning to become the Tiger Woods of blackjack . . . or keno . . . or the slots. Your gambling aspirations are probably similar to my golf ambitions: to play better, win more often, and increase enjoyment of the experience. And you have every reason to believe that you

can attain your goal. But success requires knowledge, strategy, and some skill. You've come to the right place. This chapter (and book) can provide the preparation you need to help you find your *swing* in the casino.

Entering the Casino: What You're Up Against

The first secret to gambling success is to understand the inner workings of the casino world before you're seduced by the flash and dazzle. Casinos are sophisticated and highly successful enterprises — and they don't get that way by giving away money. Your best bet, then, is to be aware of basic casino operations so you can manipulate the experience to your advantage.

Marketing their way to your wallet

They see you coming from miles away. They know exactly who you are, how much money you make, what you like and dislike, and whether you're married, single, or divorced. Who are these omniscient watchers who track your secrets? The IRS? CIA? Al-Qaeda?

None of the above. I'm talking about the marketing gurus at modern casinos. They're constantly studying reams of data on millions of gamblers to develop profiles of guests who most willingly spend their discretionary income on a couple hours of distraction.

Nothing is left to chance in a modern casino. Every possible element, from the design of the wallpaper to the thickness of the carpet, is there to draw you in and keep you gambling as long as possible. All the colors, sights, sounds, and sensations serve one purpose: to make you happy — even when you lose.

Accepting the odds: The house rules

The casino's first commandment is "The house shall always win." A couple of games permit sharp players to break even or eke out a small edge occasionally. But casinos are in business to make money, so for most players, winning is a losing proposition.

Why? Three good reasons:

- ✔ The house charges a *vigorish* (commission) in some games, such as sports betting. (Check out Chapter 15.)
- ✔ In many games, the casino doesn't pay out *true odds*.
In roulette, for example, there are 37-to-1 odds of guessing the right number. But if you win, the payout is only 35 to 1. This difference may seem small, but that discrepancy actually gives the house one of the biggest edges in the casino. (Refer to Chapter 3 for an explanation of *true odds* and Chapter 9 for more info on roulette.)
- ✔ The casino has a *house edge* — a mathematical advantage over the player in any game. Throughout the casino, players must overcome odds that aren't favorable to winning. (Read more about the edge in Chapter 3.)

Your goal is to find games where the casino has the lowest edge. Craps is a great example. This fun, exciting game offers great odds — if you stay away from the *bad* bets. I explore craps in Chapter 8.

To get the lowdown on house edge in other games, check out the individual chapters in Parts II and III.

Protecting your money with a plan



For most people, developing a strategy for doling out their gambling bankroll can keep them out of serious trouble. Set a budget and stick to it. Consider contingencies (such as losing your bankroll in the first few minutes of your visit) and know how to respond when your wallet gets whacked.

Your strategy, however, is only as good as your willpower. Nothing jacks up casino profits faster than undisciplined gamblers. If you're an impulsive type, then gambling may leave your bank account looking like it just went 15 rounds with a heavyweight boxing champion. (Refer to Chapter 4, where I discuss important money-management issues.)

Now, it's certainly true that most people can save their money by avoiding casinos altogether. So, the best advice I can give to folks who don't want to lose money is simple: Don't gamble! But the conservative and prudent path in life isn't the only choice (and that would make for a very short book). Gambling can be a great way to spice up a vacation and break out of a boring routine. Gambling is all about taking a risk — exposing yourself to a chance of loss.



However, don't overdo it. Government studies show that as many as 1 in every 25 adults has a problem with compulsive gambling. Think about that the next time you sit down at a blackjack table. Several people in the pit probably shouldn't be there. Could you be one of them? Gambling addiction is a serious matter (refer to Appendix B for some helpful info).

Identifying the colors of the rainbow

Knowledge is power and is your only ally against the formidable forces that threaten to separate you from your hard-earned cash. One piece of knowledge you definitely need, particularly if you're going to wade into the shark-infested waters of table games, is the varying colors and matching denominations of standard casino chips.



The casinos make this bit easy for you because the chips also have a denomination printed on them so that you know the red chip, for instance, is worth \$5 and the green chip is worth \$25. The following is a comprehensive list of common casino-chip colors, as well as their corresponding values:

- ✓ White: \$1
- ✓ Red: \$5
- ✓ Green: \$25
- ✓ Black: \$100
- ✓ Purple: \$500
- ✓ Burgundy: \$1,000
- ✓ Brown: \$5,000

Playing the Games: What's Your Poison?

Casino games are as diverse as the people who play them — and that's part of the fun. You may think of craps as a rough-and-tumble game, played by hustlers and wiseguys, but step into a casino and you're just as likely to spot an angelic-looking nurse rolling dice next to a cursing cowboy from Texas. And, because no game has a precise player profile, don't restrict yourself to the few games that you think suit you. Give each one a try and see where it takes you.



Although the majority of casino visitors prefer slot machines, chances are, if you're reading this book, you're willing to try new ways to gamble. After you read this book and know which games have the best odds, I suggest you take a quick walk around the casino floor to see where you want to start and give several of them a try.

Touring the table games

In a casino, the tables come in all shapes and sizes, from the oval shape of poker tables to the half-round crescent of blackjack to the long rectangle of craps. And the table is just about all they have in common.

Unspoken rules seem to govern the table games. Most casino guests have discovered from experience to avoid the taboos: holding your cards with two hands, touching chips in the betting circle after the cards are dealt, and throwing the dice so wildly that they fly over the rail and end up in somebody's drink. You can discover general casino etiquette in Chapter 5 and more game-specific rules in most chapters. However, before you worry about acting proper, this section includes a brief overview of the main table games that you may encounter in a casino.

Poker: Boosted by Internet and TV tournaments

To say that poker is taking over the world may be only a slight exaggeration. Considering its current popularity explosion, Texas Hold'em could replace war as a way to settle regional conflicts. In truth, many factors have contributed to the card game's wide appeal, including the broad reaches of the Internet and television poker tournaments.

But technology is only one factor. The big draw? Poker is one of the few games where good players consistently win. In poker, you compete against other players rather than the house. And with honed skills and intimate knowledge of the game, you can have a significant edge over those other, less-prepared gamblers.



Hiding your emotions is a requisite skill for successful poker. They don't call it *poker face* for nothin'! So, if you can't control your nervous ticks when you bluff or if your eyes get as big as saucers when you make a full house, either play your poker online or put a bag over your head. (For other tips, read Chapter 6.)

Blackjack: The best odds

Blackjack (also called *21*) has been the most popular table game in casinos for more than 40 years. The card game always draws a loyal crowd because it's easy to understand, provides good camaraderie, and offers great odds. If you memorize basic strategy (that is, the optimal way to play every hand), your chances of winning at blackjack are better than at virtually any other game in the casino.

Blackjack also is intriguing because each hand is like a movie clip — with you as the star. Each game has an opening scene (the deal), the simmering suspense (the dealer's hidden card), the moment of truth when the hero (you!) makes a dramatic choice, and finally the conclusion, where the hero wins or loses. The trick, of course, is to have more happy endings than tragedies. (Chapter 7 provides a thorough look at best blackjack strategies.)

Craps: Backslaps, high-fives, and cheerleaders

This dice game draws a raucous crowd and has many of the best bets in the casino. Some guests find the noise and the complex layout of craps to be a little intimidating. But before you slink back to your comfort zone, consider this fact: The house advantage is low in craps, making this game a great bet. Just be sure you stick with the best craps bets.

Furthermore, craps is like a sporting event, with its dramatic swings of luck, high-fives, backslaps, and noisy cheering section. Every roll has a home team (players who bet with the dice) and an opposing team (wrong-way bettors) that gets dirty looks and ridicules from the hometown fans. Now, if they just had those big foam *We're No. 1* fingers, the experience would be complete (but a little hard to roll the dice). For more on craps, check out Chapter 8.

Roulette: The place for eccentric hunches

The spinning wheel of roulette symbolizes the world of casino gambling. This popular, entry-level game is ideal for novice gamblers because it requires absolutely no skill, concentration, or complex strategies. You simply bet on the number or possible numbers that the ball will land on. A table full of players can be quite sociable, although not as rowdy as a craps game. Roulette gives you a chance to play your eccentric hunches on a single number, a combination of numbers, or on an even-money wager that can just extend your playing session. Refer to Chapter 9 for more on roulette.

Baccarat: More tuxedo than T-shirt

Although blackjack and poker appeal to the masses, baccarat is a card game that draws a far more upscale and refined crowd. You're more likely to see tuxedos than T-shirts playing this game. But everyone is welcome, so even if you don't have a penguin costume in your closet, check out baccarat for a game that's simple to play (just bet on the bank) and has fair odds. For the complete lowdown on baccarat, read Chapter 10.

Let It Ride, Pai Gow, and other table games

Beyond the traditional favorites, several other table games have developed a strong following. Today, most casinos intersperse Caribbean Stud poker, Let It Ride, Pai Gow, and Three Card poker tables throughout their pits.



These games are fun diversions when you need a change of pace, but a word of caution: Don't play too long. These games have odds that may make you wish you'd gotten mugged instead of gone gambling. Unless you have a passion for these games (along with a bottomless bank account), don't make a habit of playing them. I tell you why in Chapter 11.

Turning to machine games

For some folks, the intimidation factor of table games is too much to bear. Excuse me while I dab the tears from my eyes, but I'm touched when I realize that nearly all casino operators — through the goodness of their hearts — thoughtfully accommodate shy gamblers by supplying acres of go-solo gaming machines.

Even the most timid gambler can enjoy a satisfying time at these machines — no bluffing by other players, no angry gamblers if you hit or stand at the wrong time, and no embarrassment about table rules. The lone gambler squares off against a machine (or in the case of the loony gambler, against several machines at once).



Just remember that the best and worst that the casino has to offer are often sitting side by side. This section looks more closely at slot machines and video poker, two entirely different beasts. They have very different rules and very different odds. This section also briefly discusses keno and bingo.

Slot machines: From one-armed bandit to high-tech robotic

At one time, slot machines were simple devices. You put a coin in, you pulled a lever, and the reels spun. When they stopped, you heard the soothing sounds of clinking coins . . . or painful silence. Sure, you spent only a nickel or a quarter, but that silence was so painful that you couldn't help but put in another coin.

If you've been in a casino recently, you know how everything about gaming machines has changed. The humble one-armed bandit is now a sophisticated robotic master thief, with enough computing power to fly the space shuttle. This soulless adversary even plays you a little song while it gleefully sucks up all your coins. Sure, the games still have some reminders from the past (like fruit or bells on the paylines), but the level of sophistication grows every day. And today's slots are the most popular game in the casino, hands down — despite the fact that they offer some of the worst odds in the house.

Slot machines occupy all that space on the casino floor for a good reason — people love to pump money into them, and they're available in practically any denomination — from pennies to dollars. If you're a person who just can't say *no* to their alluring call, make sure you read Chapter 12, so you can pick a worthy game with a better-than-average payout table.

Video poker: Not your Aunt Beatrice's kitchen-table game

Like slots, video poker offers a solo gambling experience, yet the two games are very different. Slots are primarily about luck, but video poker requires a

certain amount of skill and technique. And just because you've played some kitchen-table Five Card Draw with your Aunt Beatrice, don't assume you can break the bank at video poker. Several variations confront the casino guest, and you want to master the strategies before you decide whether to hold 'em or fold 'em.



The strategies for video poker can be a little complicated (see Chapter 13), but the reward for that extra work is worth it. Video poker offers perhaps the best odds of any game in the house — at least for those who play correctly.

Keno and bingo: Two old standards

Keno and bingo have many similarities, and both have a long history and a loyal following. Keno is a casino staple and a great way to stay in action while sipping on your soup in the coffee shop. Bingo is less common in casinos, although some clubs still offer this venerable game.

There is not much strategy to playing either game other than hoping to get lucky, but I do cover the basics in Chapter 14 and give a quick overview for anyone unfamiliar with how to play either game.

Betting on ball games and fast horses

Some people travel across the country to a casino in order to do exactly what they do at home: sit in an easy chair and watch sports on TV. The only difference? In a casino, they're viewing sporting events and horse races on the massive projection screens in today's best *race and sports books*. These plush, high-tech rooms draw fans to cheer their favorite teams or horses. So what's the major difference between these rooms and your living room? The casino is ready and willing to take your bet on just about any sporting event.

Sports betting: Thrill of victory, agony of defeat

Currently, only Nevada has casino sports betting. (You can make some sports bets online as well. Read Chapter 17 for more info.) When you're in a Nevada casino, you may notice that the employees in the sports book are strangely unemotional when the crowd cheers for one team or another. Why? Because the house takes a *vigorish* (a small commission) from every wager, virtually ensuring a profit on every bet.

Casino guests can find all kinds of betting opportunities in the wide world of sports, including football, basketball, baseball, hockey, tennis, boxing, golf, and special events. But being a great sports fan doesn't make you a natural winner at the sports book. Why? Point spreads and money lines add complex challenges to the process. But understanding how to handicap and analyze sports statistics can simplify that process — and help you improve the odds of winning. (See Chapter 15 for more on sports betting in a casino.)

Horse racing: A run for your money

If you love a day at the track, the race book is going to feel like home sweet home. After all, through the modern miracle of simulcasting, you can enjoy a day at *several* tracks at once, without leaving your cozy chair. Casinos dedicate luxurious space and resources to keep fans happy: leather seats, private work desks, and stacks of publications full of data on the ponies. And just when you think the experience can't get any better, the cocktail server hands you a double espresso to get your brain into high gear before the race day starts. Comfortable? Good, now you just need to pick some winners.

In both horse racing and sports betting, your understanding of handicapping and external factors can improve your chances of winning. And both kinds of betting favor gamblers who take a *contrarian* view. When you go against the grain — and you're right — you win bigger than when you bet with the crowd. (Read Chapter 16 for more about horse racing.)

Gambling Near and Far: Where to Find Casinos

Formerly quarantined to select areas, today's casinos are nearly everywhere, making gambling possible in almost every state. Only two states (Hawaii and Utah) have no legalized gambling. The main reason for this explosion is that the stigma of gambling has mostly been removed from our society. Although the previous generation generally viewed gambling with moral indignation, today's attitudes are more relaxed, and many people consider casinos fun entertainment rather than one of the seven deadly sins.

This section looks more closely at the different types of gambling locations. Although Las Vegas and Atlantic City are still popular destinations for casino gambling, hundreds of other options are also waiting for you. (Flip to Chapter 19 for ten cool places to gamble.)

Nevada: Viva the gambling state!

For decades, Nevada was famous for being the only U.S. state where casino gambling was legal. That limitation changed when the state of New Jersey legalized gambling in the late 1970s (although only in one town, Atlantic City). And, despite the growth of on-the-water and Indian casinos throughout the United States (primarily in the 1990s), the Silver State remains the king of casino gambling.

Las Vegas reigns supreme

Las Vegas is the jewel in the crown and far and away the biggest gambling destination in the world. Also known as *Sin City* or *Lost Wages*, Vegas is a unique agglomeration of palm trees, fountains, neon lights, and 100,000-plus hotel rooms among a wild mishmash of must-see architecture.

From its forbidden-fruit beginnings to its mobster adolescence, to its starring role in a few hit TV shows, Vegas exudes a frenetic energy that makes the city a unique place in American pop culture. And Vegas takes full advantage of its iconic position. New hotel/casino complexes continue to rise from the desert floor at an astounding pace. As of 2006, nine of the ten biggest hotels in the world were located within a few miles of each other on the Las Vegas Strip.

The city is still primarily known for its gambling — after all, where else can you expect to find slots in grocery stores and in airports? But that image is changing. At some point in the late 1990s — for the first time in its history — gambling money amounted to less than half of the total revenue brought in by the Vegas casino industry. And that change means people from around the world are seeing the city as a resort (or convention) destination first and a place to gamble second.

If you're eager to find out more about Las Vegas, check out *Las Vegas For Dummies* by Mary Herczog (Wiley).

Tahoe and Reno: Quieter cousins

Before Las Vegas rose to prominence, Reno was the epicenter of gambling in the United States, and casinos around Lake Tahoe frequently hosted celebrities, such as Frank Sinatra and his buddies. Now, their southern Nevada competitor easily eclipses both Tahoe and Reno, but these two intriguing cities remain good alternatives for visitors that don't care for the Vegas speed-of-light pace.

As “the biggest little city in the world,” Reno's Wild West frontier spirit and gambling accessibility appeal to many travelers. Tahoe also boasts gambling opportunities on the Nevada side of the border while promising superb skiing in winter, a wealth of lake activities in summer, and spectacular mountain scenery year-round.

Atlantic City: Vegas of the east

In the late 1970s, New Jersey took the bold step of legalizing gambling as a way to revitalize Atlantic City. The transformation hasn't always gone smoothly, but today Atlantic City's casino industry is healthy. As one of the biggest gambling spots in the United States, it sees billions of dollars in wagers every year.

Although the Atlantic City Boardwalk can't rival the Vegas Strip, it does offer a unique blend of glitz and glamour in a carnival atmosphere and a seaside

setting. More importantly, the location means convenience for people on the East Coast — they no longer have to fly cross-country just to play blackjack.

Diving into on-the-water gambling

Some people may not understand why gambling can be legal on the water but illegal on land. Nevertheless, if your state has a river running through it or you live on the coast, you're likely to find a casino within driving distance. (Of course, take your motion-sickness pills and be prepared to walk the plank.)

Riverboat casinos: A piece of the past

New laws and regulations have revived an icon from America's colorful past — riverboat casinos. Although these contemporary vessels bear little resemblance to the fabled paddleboats that plied the Mississippi, gambling fun is still rollin' on the river.

Most casino voyages are “cruises to nowhere” that last one to three hours. Some floating casinos don't even leave the dock, but they're in compliance with state gambling laws because they're on water. These casinos are typically smaller than the big boys in Vegas and aren't always open 24 hours, but they usually offer most of the same games.

Cruise ships: Sailing for international waters

What could be finer than cruising off the coast of Carolina? Okay, maybe cruise ships don't hit those waters often, but they do sail nearly everywhere in the world, including hot spots (like the Caribbean and the Panama Canal) and scenic destinations (like Alaska and Mexico).

Nearly every cruise line takes advantage of international waters (where gambling is legal) by offering casinos on board their ships (open only certain hours and only when the ship is in international waters). These casinos have most of the same games and similar odds as regular land-based casinos (with a few differences), so if you don't mind your dice rolling funny when a big wave hits, cruising may be just the ticket for you.

Indian gaming: Cashing in on less glitz

Although reservation gaming came on the scene late, it has dramatically changed the landscape of casino gambling across the country over the last two decades. The biggest and best-known Indian gaming area is in Connecticut (outside Hartford), providing an appealing alternative to Atlantic City for New York gamblers.

Today Indian gaming generates billions of dollars in revenues every year and provides significant competition for more traditional gambling destinations. In fact, the combined gaming revenue of all tribal casinos is greater than all the revenue of Atlantic City, Las Vegas, and Reno together.

Native American casinos typically offer the same machines and table games that other gambling capitals have. However, many Indian casinos don't allow alcohol consumption, and few of them can compete with the glitz of Vegas. Nevertheless, the success of tribal gaming speaks volumes about the quality of the casinos. So if you can live without exploding volcanoes or fancy fountains, you're bound to enjoy the friendly, less spectacular tribal casinos (see Chapter 19).

Beyond the borders: Gambling abroad

If you feel stuck in a gambling rut, traveling abroad for gaming may just be the adrenalin shot you need. Most foreign casinos offer the same or similar games as casinos in the United States, but the experience is often more refined and memorable, especially in high-class locations such as Monte Carlo.



But customs differ around the world, so you may be surprised at the rules across the pond. Many European casinos charge an entry fee, and many of them require more-formal attire. (Pack a coat and tie or evening dress if you plan on playing on the Continent.) Travelers should also be aware that the American traditions of megacasinos and multithousand room resorts are rare overseas.

The Caribbean is also a popular getaway for gamblers, and several islands offer casinos to complement their sun and sand attractions. The biggest casino in the tropical region is the Atlantis Casino in the Bahamas, which is truly a world-class resort.

Betting on the Internet

Gambling and cyberspace seem to be made for each other. Through the conduit of the Internet, casinos and gaming companies can invite themselves directly into the homes of gamblers. Now people can play anonymously and comfortably, without ever leaving the house.

Considered the last frontier for gaming, cyberspace has now been settled — if not fully tamed. Online gaming (check out Chapter 17) represents a multibillion-dollar industry worldwide that continues to grow exponentially every year. In spite of its convenience and fun, however, online gambling has some serious drawbacks.



- ✓ **The whole casino experience is missing.** You don't have any table camaraderie, shows, restaurants, or cocktail servers for variety and entertainment. The purists may not care, but many people gamble for the *experience* as much as for the game itself.
- ✓ **Internet gambling has serious temptations for the undisciplined player.** You can wager and play — and lose — at a breakneck pace when gambling online. And you don't have the typical safety checks, like a companion who urges you to stop throwing good money after bad.
- ✓ **If you lose your bankroll in cyberspace, no one can hear you scream.** That is, except for your unsuspecting (and innocent) significant other who's watching television in the next room.

Measuring Your Gambling IQ

As I stress throughout the book, individuals who find the greatest pleasure in gambling do so with

- ✓ Realistic intentions
- ✓ An understanding of the odds
- ✓ An informed strategy
- ✓ Some skill, depending on the game

To paraphrase the character Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, it's no great shame to lose at gambling — but it's no great honor, either. I emphasize that gambling can be a fun experience whether you win or lose . . . but it's a lot more fun when you win.

In that spirit, I hope to arm you with the understanding and knowledge you need to maximize your enjoyment *and* success at casino gambling. Before you take a step into a casino, I suggest you answer the following ten questions to measure your grasp of gambling and the world of casinos. If you answer them all correctly, congratulations! And if not? Not to worry; after you read *Casino Gambling For Dummies*, you'll ace this test — and the many gambling experiences you encounter in the future.

The questions

1. **To come out ahead overall at sports betting, you need to win approximately**
 - A. 50 percent of the time.
 - B. 53 percent of the time.
 - C. 20 percent of the time.

- 2. You're playing Annie Duke at the final table of the World Series of Poker. She makes a big bet and then starts blinking her eyes rapidly. Is she**
 - A. Flirting with you?
 - B. Having contact problems?
 - C. Bluffing?

- 3. At which game would you lose more per hour (on average)?**
 - A. Playing a 25¢ Double Diamond slot machine
 - B. Playing \$1 video poker
 - C. Playing single-deck blackjack for \$100 a hand

- 4. You're at the roulette table and a black number has come up five times in a row. What are the odds that the next number will be red?**
 - A. 47.3 percent
 - B. 75 percent
 - C. 50 percent

- 5. How many states have legalized gambling?**
 - A. 48
 - B. 52
 - C. 2

- 6. Players who bet on the pass line in craps are hoping the first roll is a**
 - A. 12
 - B. Yahtzee
 - C. 7

- 7. What is the minimum number of innings required for an over/under baseball bet to be official?**
 - A. 2
 - B. $8\frac{1}{2}$
 - C. $4\frac{1}{2}$

8. **Video poker is adapted from what poker game?**
 - A. Texas Hold'em
 - B. Strip poker
 - C. Five-Card Draw

9. **Which of these games can you play while in the bathroom?**
 - A. Keno
 - B. Bingo
 - C. Slots

10. **Where is the biggest casino in the world currently located?**
 - A. Monte Carlo
 - B. Connecticut
 - C. Las Vegas

The answers

1. **B.** In sports betting, a gambler needs to win approximately 52.4 percent of his bets to break even because the house charges a commission (or *vigorish*) on every bet.
2. **C.** This could be a trick question because Annie Duke has bluffed and flirted on the same hand. However, rapid eye blinking is often an indicator of bluffing.
3. **C.** Surprisingly, playing high-stakes blackjack can be easier on your wallet than low-limit slot machines. Assuming you know basic strategy (see Chapter 6), your loss in a good single-deck game should be less than \$14 an hour. Likewise, video poker (Jacks or Better 9/6) is a good bet and also will only set you back about \$14 an hour. Neither one of those is very bad, considering that three quarters going into the slot machine every spin adds up to over \$15 an hour.
4. **A.** No matter how many times one color or number comes up, the odds for the *next* spin aren't related to past spins. And the answer isn't 50 percent because there are also two green numbers (0 and 00) on the roulette wheel (in addition to the 18 red and 18 black numbers).
5. **A.** Currently 48 states offer some form of legal gambling, but just 20 years ago, there were casinos in only two states, so **C** was a reasonable answer. However, if you picked **B**, you may want to retake that high school geography class.

6. **C.** Seven is an automatic winner for pass line bettors on the come-out roll (first roll). **B** is incorrect because prowess at Yahtzee rarely translates into winning at the craps table — the pit boss is never happy when you try to throw all five dice.
7. **B.** Even though a major league baseball game is sometimes an official result after $4\frac{1}{2}$ innings, an over/under bet is invalid unless the game goes at least $8\frac{1}{2}$ innings.
8. **C.** Video poker has many versions, but all are based on Five-Card Draw. So you never need to worry about losing your shirt (or your socks) at this game.
9. **A.** Keno is one of the few games in which you don't have to be present to win. It's even possible to play from your room or the buffet line.
10. **B.** The Foxwoods Casino just outside Hartford, Connecticut, is the biggest casino on the planet.