



Pai gow poker is a variation of the Chinese domino game **pai gow**. Pai gow poker is commonly referred to as simply "pai gow", which is wrong, as "pai gow" alone is a [completely separate game](#). Pai gow poker is played with a 53-card deck, including a joker. The game is one on one, the player(s) against the banker, each competing to make the best possible hands. Due to a rather slow pace and a lot of ties, pai gow poker is less intense than most casino games and a modest buy in can usually last a long time.

Play begins by making a wager. Next everyone receives seven cards. A roll of the dice or a randomly generated number determines which player gets the first set of cards. Each player then each arranges his seven cards into a five-card hand and a two-card hand. The five-card hand is ranked as in poker. Most, but not all, casinos treat A2345 (the "wheel") as the second highest straight. The two-card hand is scored by pairs beating two singletons, then by the individual ranks. The highest two-card hand is a pair of aces, and the lowest is 3-2.

After each player has arranged his hand, the banker arranges his according to a set of fixed rules known as the "house way." Then the player's five-card hand is compared to the dealer's five-card hand, the higher hand wins. Likewise, the player's two-card hand is compared to the dealer's two-card hand. In the event of an exact match between hands, called a copy, the tie goes to the banker. **If the player beats the dealer with both hands the player wins even money, less a 5% commission. If the player wins one and loses one the bet is a push. If the player loses both the player loses the entire wager.**

When setting the hands, the two-card hand may not be higher than the five-card hand. If it is, then both hands are deemed "foul" and both lose. **The joker can only be used to complete a straight, flush, or straight flush, otherwise it is treated as an ace.** When used in a flush, the joker takes the rank of the highest unused card.