



## What's the Right Kind of Casino Gaming?

No specific formula determines what form of gaming is "right" for a particular location, city, or state. The constant across all the forms of casino gaming that exist today in North America is the fun and social interaction that springs from the playing of various games of skill and chance. Typically, these include card games like poker and blackjack, the dice game of craps, the casino table game of roulette, and slot machines. But though the games may be similar from one casino to another, the venues for casino gaming show great variation, demonstrating how local communities have successfully tailored casino developments to satisfy their particular capital investment, physical planning, aesthetic, and entertainment needs.

Modern casino gaming in North America takes these forms:

- **Land-based, unlimited license** commercial casino gaming. This category includes both unlimited stakes casinos in the traditional markets of Las Vegas, Reno, Lake Tahoe, and Atlantic City, as well as limited stakes casinos in Deadwood, South Dakota, and the Colorado towns of Cripple Creek, Central City, and Black Hawk.
- **Land-based, limited license** commercial casino gaming. This appears to be the preferred form in Canada, found in Montreal, Quebec; Windsor and Niagara Falls, Ontario; Halifax, Nova Scotia; and Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is also the form that has been approved in New Orleans, Louisiana and Detroit, Michigan.
- **Tribal** casino gaming, in which Indian tribes own casino facilities on their reservations. Indian-owned casinos are operating in more than 20 states which are home to federally-recognized Indian tribes, including California, New York, Connecticut, North Carolina, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Washington.
- **Riverboat** casino gaming, which has been implemented by six states. This category includes casinos on cruising riverboats (such as those in Indiana) as well as on waterborne vessels that are either permanently moored or that cruise infrequently (such as those in Illinois, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, and some locations in Louisiana).

Another form of commercial gaming, **slot machine or video gaming machine facilities at pari-mutuel racetracks**, sometimes known as "racinos," is now operational in Delaware, Iowa, Louisiana, Rhode Island, and West Virginia.

Physical geography, political geography, and economics all must factor into the decision on which form of gaming is most appropriate. For example, if a goal of casino legislation is to revitalize river towns (as was the case in Illinois), then allowing river towns and not a state's major urban cores to host riverboat casinos is an appropriate course of action. States that want to preserve live pari-mutuel racing might permit casinos at racetracks and use a portion of gaming revenue for purse enhancements. "Racinos" have the added advantage of not representing a geographic proliferation of gambling. Cities with vacant historic structures (for example, abandoned train depots or breweries) might consider land-based casinos as a means to restore these buildings both to their original charm and splendor as well as to return them to local tax rolls.