

# Cultural Daily

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## European Roulette vs American Roulette

Our Friends · Wednesday, May 13th, 2020

The roulette wheel is truly an iconic sight in any casino.

One of the most famous gambling pastimes of them all, the roulette wheel, with its spinning wheel and rolling, shiny silver ball, is a treat for the eyes and, of course, a potential threat for the wallet, too.

Despite being one of the oldest casino games, the roulette wheel is still very popular today. Famous for featuring in a number of films and TV series, with the likes of James Bond and Tony Soprano enjoying a flutter on the iconic wheel, we all know what the [online roulette game](#) looks like but there is plenty that a lot of people don't know about the famous game.

There are so many different ways to bet. Not only can you pick red or black, odds or even, but more intricate and thought out bets and betting strategies exist in the game of roulette and have very much become part of the culture of the game.

Also, did you know that the American and European roulette wheels are actually different?

### Where was the roulette wheel invented?

The game of roulette was invented in France and dates all the way back to the 17th century. The age old game was founded in Paris and immediately enjoyed by gamblers and mathematicians alike, for the number of outcomes that the 'little wheel' offered.

Hosted by a croupier who spins the wheel in one direction and then rolls the ball the opposite way, against the rotation of the wheel, the game was played in the fanciest of establishments. The more primitive version of the game evolved into something more similar to what we know now in the 18th century, even being cited in a famous French novel from the time called *La Roulette, ou le Jour*.

With (at least) one of the pockets reserved for the hosting house on the reel, the game of roulette offers a slight mathematical advantage to the casino that makes it an easy to run, profitable game that is straightforward and transparent. It became popular almost instantly and eventually found its way across the Atlantic to America.

However, despite the obvious similarities between the roulette wheels found in Europe and America, there are some well known differences.

## **What is the difference between American and European Roulette?**

As the game of roulette found its way across to the fairly newly formed United States of America, some subtle changes were made to the game. Telling the difference can be like a game of spot the difference, but it is a well know fact of gambling and casino history that American and European roulette wheels are different.

Simply put, the American roulette wheel has one extra slot, reserved for the house as a green double zero pocket. Whereas the traditional French roulette wheel has just one green pocket reserved for the house, American wheels having two means that the odds are ever so slightly swung towards the casino more.

Some of the earliest American roulette wheels would even add an eagle pocket, too, which would have a similar effect to the green pockets. When the ball lands in one of these slots, as unlikely as it may seem, the banker can sweep up all the money or chips on the table, making quite the pay day for the casino at times.

With 36 numbered pockets and one green zero in the game of European roulette and 36 numbers packets and two green pockets in the game of American roulette, there is a subtle yet quite important difference between the two formats.

## **Why do America and Europe have different roulette wheels?**

The French roulette wheel did find it's way to America, first arriving in Canada as the North American country was a colony of France. The French speakers in Canada are more likely to spin the French roulette wheel even today and naturally, French wheels found their way across the border and into the states.

But why are American roulette wheels different anyway? In all honesty, there has never been a factual reason as to why the American game has an extra green pocket. The only explanation is, of course, to tilt the odds further towards the house. Assumptions about the American Dream and Capitalism can be made here at your own discretion, but officially there is no factual information as to why American and European roulette wheels are different.

## **Are the rules different?**

The rules of American an European roulette are exactly the same.

Despite the change in the number of slots, the same betting options, traditions of when to call your bet and how you cash in and out are exactly the same. Even in the popular online roulette format which is thriving today's modern gambling industry, you can choose between playing American and European roulette wheels and the rules are just the same.

As per, there is often minimum and maximum bets in each format, with winning bets remains on the board be it a physical one or a virtual one. The only difference is that extra pocket on the American roulette wheel and the effect that this has.

## **Which roulette wheel has better odds?**

Quite simply, the odds are slightly better for the gambler when playing the French version of the

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roulette wheel. The originators of the game, it seems like they got it right on the first occasion. That said, there is no reason to be discouraged from the American format.

The nature of online roulette games means that there are some really greta titles to play of each format. Great graphics, animations and smartphone functionality means that there has never been a better time to play roulette wheel from the comfort of wherever it is you may be sitting.

However, your odds for picking just one number on the wheel and getting it right are 1 in 38 on the American wheel and 1 in 37 on the European wheel. So if you are simply playing the odds game, it is an easy choice.

*Photo by Macau Photo Agency on Unsplash*

This entry was posted on Wednesday, May 13th, 2020 at 10:05 pm and is filed under [Lifestyle](#), [Sponsored](#)

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