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Why the Roulette Numbers Add up to 666 and Other Facts About the Wheel Layout

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A Roulette wheel can look random. But the order of its numbers was set out with care, and it holds a few details most people never notice. Whether you're looking at a wheel in a casino venue or at one of the **live tables running day and night** online, the layout follows the same fixed pattern.

Why the numbers add up to 666

A European Roulette wheel has 37 pockets, numbered zero to 36. Add every one of those numbers together and the total comes to 666.

It's simple maths. To add up a run of whole numbers starting at one, you multiply the last number by the next one up and halve the result. So 36 multiplied by 37 is 1,332, and half of that is 666.

That total gave the game its nickname, "the devil's wheel". One story links it to Francois Blanc, who ran the casino at Monte Carlo in the 19th century. Legend says he made a deal with the devil to learn the game's secrets. There's no evidence for it. The figure is just a result of how the pockets are numbered.

Red and black never sit side by side

Apart from the green zero, the pockets alternate between red and black all the way round the wheel. There are 18 of each colour. The red numbers add up to 332 and the black numbers add up to 334, so the split is close to even.

The colours follow a rule. From one to 10 and from 19 to 28, odd numbers are red and even numbers are black. From 11 to 18 and from 29 to 36, that flips, with odd numbers black and even numbers red.

The numbers aren't in order

On a European wheel, the sequence after zero starts 32, 15, 19, four, 21, two, 25.

This order was chosen so that high and low numbers are spread around the wheel rather than grouped together. Odd and even numbers are mixed in the same way.

The wheel is split into named sections

The European wheel is also divided into sections with French names. Voisins du zéro, meaning neighbours of zero, covers the 17 numbers closest to the green pocket. Tiers du cylindre, or third of the wheel, covers the 12 numbers on the opposite side. Orphelins, meaning orphans, covers the eight numbers left over.

Together they make up all 37 pockets. These names simply describe where numbers sit. They don't change the outcome of a spin, and every pocket has the same one in 37 chance of being selected.

Single zero and double zero wheels

American Roulette adds a double zero pocket, which takes the total to 38. It sits directly opposite the single zero, and the number order is different from the European layout. The numbers still add up to 666, as the double zero carries no value.

That extra pocket changes the house edge. On a single zero wheel it's 2.70%, while on a double zero wheel it's 5.26%.

What the layout doesn't change

The wheel's design is about balance, not prediction. Every spin is independent, so a number that came up last round is no more or less likely to come up again. No sequence, section or colour pattern can tell you what happens next. Online versions use a random number generator, while live tables use a physical wheel and ball. When a round ends, you can stop there, and it's worth setting a bankroll limit before you start.

Photo: Anna Shvets via Pexels

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