

Spanish 21 Reference

A 48-card deck with no tens changes the count and the basic strategy — here’s what’s different.

thecardcounting.com/spanish21/reference · for learning and practice

THE SPANISH DECK

All four **10-spot cards** are removed from every deck — the Jacks, Queens and Kings stay (still worth 10). That’s **48 cards** per deck; a six-deck shoe is 288 cards. Fewer tens means you bust less and make fewer 20s, which is why the strategy shifts toward hitting and the house adds its bonuses.

COUNTING THE NO-TENS SHOE

Hi-Lo tags are unchanged: **2-6 = +1**, 7-9 = 0, **10/J/Q/K/A = -1**. But with the four 10s gone, Hi-Lo is no longer balanced — a Spanish deck drifts about **+4 per deck**. So Spanish counters **start the running count at -4 × decks** (e.g. -24 for six decks); that restores a meaningful zero, with the neutral point near a true count of -4 and the player edge appearing around -3. The Counting Trainer starts you at that offset and grades against it.

BONUS PAYOUTS

5-card 21	3 : 2
6-card 21	2 : 1
7+-card 21	3 : 1
6-7-8 / 7-7-7 — mixed suits	3 : 2
6-7-8 / 7-7-7 — same suit	2 : 1
6-7-8 / 7-7-7 — spades	3 : 1
Player 21 vs dealer 21	player wins
Player blackjack vs dealer blackjack	player wins

LIBERAL RULES

A player 21 always wins — even against a dealer 21.

Player blackjack always beats a dealer blackjack.

Late surrender is allowed.

Double-down rescue: surrender after doubling, forfeiting your original bet.

Double on any number of cards; re-doubling is allowed.

HOW THE STRATEGY DIFFERS

Always **hit hard 12** (you stand on it in blackjack).

Double 9 only vs 6; 10 only vs 2–7; 11 only vs 2–8 (a narrower range).

Surrender 16 and 17 vs an Ace, and 8-8 vs an Ace.

Chase the multi-card 21 bonuses: keep hitting stiff totals as your hand grows more cards.

COUNT-BASED PLAY (INDEX PLAYS)

In Spanish 21 the count mostly changes how you **play** the hand. As the true count rises you stand on more stiff totals, and you surrender 17 vs an Ace only at higher counts. The full index sets (Katarina Walker's "**Ilustre 17**" and "**Fabuloso 3**") are proprietary, so they aren't reproduced here.