1. The Basic Game

Pai Gow Poker is played on a table, usually in the pit, which looks like a Blackjack table, except that there are only 6 player spots.

It is (usually) played with a standard 52-card deck, plus one Joker, which is a Bug. That is, the Joker can stand for an Ace, or it can fill a straight flush, flush, or straight.

Each player, including the dealer, receives 7 cards, which are to be divided into a 5-card poker hand and a 2-card poker hand. Flushes and Straights do not count for the 2-card hand.

The 5-card hand must beat the 2-card hand.

- If both hands beat the dealer’s, then you win even money, less a house commission, usually 5%.
- If you lose both hands, or tie one and lose the other, you lose.
- If you win one and lose the other, or win one and tie the other, it is a push.

2. House Percentage

This is hard to calculate, as each house has different rules on making their hands. However, a fair estimate is that you Win 30%, Push 40% and Lose 30%, for a house percentage of 1.5%, using a 5% commission.
3. General Comments

- This is a game in which your money can last a long time.
- The commission is taken out of each win in this game, rather than accumulating, as in Baccarat.
- Split full houses to put a pair in the 2-card hand.
- Split two pair, unless you can put at least A-high in the 2-card hand. However, the higher pair must go in the 5-card hand.
- In rotation, you have the option of Banking, where all hands are compared against yours, and the house takes their percentage of the winnings. If you do so, the house will also play against you, in the amount of your last bet.