

PS 48: Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, and Massachusetts Slots 2018

Opening

Hello! Today's episode #48 of the Professor Slots podcast discusses the current state of slot machine casino gambling in the great U.S. states of Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, and Massachusetts.

Thank you for joining me for the Professor Slots podcast show. I'm Jon Friedl and this is the podcast about slot machine casino gambling. It is where I provide knowledge, insights, and tools for helping you improve your slot machine gambling performance.

"Jon Friedl from The Professor Slots Blog reveals all of his tips and tricks for thriving in the casino environment. Discover how to assess casinos to pick the best near you, choose winning slot machines, and identify your gambling goals: being entertained, earning comps, winning take-home cash, or combine them."

On Last Week's Episode...

In case you missed it, on my last episode I went over Big Slots Jackpots – Have a Plan, Just in Case. A special thanks to Richard from Gainesville, Georgia for sharing his win of a \$60,000 at Harrah's Cherokee Casino in Murphy, North Carolina.

Further, I reviewed Kansas and Kentucky slot machine casino gambling 2018.

I hope you enjoyed listening to my last episode as much as I enjoyed making it for you.

Call to Action #1 (add sound effect afterward)

Remember to visit professorslots.com/subscribe to get my Free Report Revealing ... The top 7 online resources for improving your gambling performance, including the one I've used as a top-tier slot machine casino gambler.

Introduction

In this episode segment, I provide a brief overview of the current state of gambling in four U.S. states, territories, or federal district emphasizing, by far, anything of interest to slot machine casino gamblers.

Up first is Louisiana slot machine casino gambling 2018. Here goes!

Louisiana slot machine casino gambling includes 24 casinos of different types, including:

- 15 riverboat casinos
- 1 land-based casino
- 4 pari-mutuel racinos
- 4 tribal casinos

The gaming industry has become an important part of Louisiana's culture and economy. Pari-mutuel wagering received state approval in the 1920s. The collapse of the state's oil-based industry in the 1980s, however, led to the extended presence of other forms of legalized gambling.

Relevant Legal Statutes on Gambling in Louisiana

The minimum legal gambling age in Louisiana depends upon the gambling activity:

- Land-Based Casinos: 21
- Poker Rooms: 21
- Bingo: 18
- Lottery: 21
- Pari-Mutuel Wagering: 18

Louisiana has had a long history of illegal casinos, with the state alternating between raiding illegal casino operations and ignoring them.

Louisiana was the fourth U.S. state to legalize riverboat casinos. These gambling establishments received approval by the state in 1991 along with the return of the state lottery. In 1992, an added provision allowed a land-based casino in New Orleans.

Negotiations began in 1993 for state-tribal compacts with Louisiana's three federally-recognized American Indian tribes. Each tribe opened their own tribal casino once these gaming compacts received approval, as required, by the federal government.

A fourth American Indian tribe, federally recognized in 2002, negotiated a state-tribal compact. They eventually gained U.S. Department of the Interior approval, as well.

In 1997, efforts by pari-mutuel racetracks to add slot machines to their facilities were eventually successful at three locations. Later, a fourth track received similar approval.

Video bingo is the primary type of electronic gaming machine available in Louisiana. According to Louisiana gaming regulations, these are legal slot machines or "electronic gaming machines."

However, the wording used in some parts of the state gaming regulations is ambiguous. For example, a loose definition for “truck stops” has allowed the addition and spread of video poker machines at many businesses across the state.

I find this fascinating. When solving physics problems, it's important to carefully define terms to have any hope of solving the problem. Which direction is gravity, again? I knew it was important to define terms in physics. but I was a bit taken aback with state gaming regulations having to do the same for gambling terms.

It makes sense though if you think about it for a moment. I'd previously written a blog article and produced podcast episode #15 on legal gaming classifications. You know, that Class I is tribal ceremonies, Class II is competition-based games like bingo, and Class III for all other forms of gambling.

What's neat about these definitions, provided by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, is that the Act is a federal law. So, for these gambling terms and these terms alone, all U.S. states, territories, and federal district each have the same definition from them.

Meaning, no other gambling term is necessarily the same from one state to another. This stuff matters because, at a high level, legal definitions for gambling define what is and is not gambling. For example, is poker gambling? Well, Nebraska says it isn't.

For Louisiana, gaming regulations used the word “truck stops” without defining what a truck stop is. That meant bars and taverns could apply for a gaming license even if they weren't a truck stop because, well, trucks stopped there.

I'm not a lawyer, but I think this is called a legal loophole which you could, figuratively speaking, drive a truck through. Which, when it comes to it, is what businesses in Louisiana did.

Slot Machine Private Ownership in Louisiana

Next up is a usually short statement about slot machine private ownership, which I have included in case you live in this U.S. state and are considering owning a slot machine. Here it is:

In Louisiana, it is legal to privately own a slot machine only if it is 25 years old or older.

Gaming Control Board in Louisiana

The Louisiana Gaming Control Board works closely with the Gaming Enforcement Division within the Louisiana State Police to regulate and control the gaming industry in Louisiana.

Casinos in Louisiana

In this section, I'll discuss Louisiana gambling establishments.

As usual when there are too many casinos to mention here, a complete list along with links to their websites, assuming they've set one up, is available on my website blog article for this state at professorslots.com/LA.

There are 23 casinos in Louisiana. Of these, 16 are non-tribal riverboat casinos, 1 is a land-based casino, 4 are pari-mutuel racinos, and 3 are American Indian tribal casinos.

The largest casino in Louisiana is Harrah's New Orleans Casino & Hotel having 3,800 gaming machines and 105 table games.

The second largest casino is Paragon Casino Resort in Marksville, owned and operated by the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe, and having 2,200 gaming machines and 45 table games.

Non-Tribal Casinos in Louisiana

The 20 non-tribal commercial casinos in Louisiana, completely listed along with links to their websites, assuming they've set one up, available on my website blog article for this state at professorslots.com/LA.

American Indian Casinos in Louisiana

Three out of the four Louisiana American Indian casinos have negotiated tribal-state compacts allowing them to offer Class III Vegas-style gaming. Jena Choctaw Pins Casino offers only Class II competition-style games.

The four tribal casinos in Louisiana are, again, available on my website blog article for this state at professorslots.com/LA.

Other Gambling Establishments

As an alternative to enjoying Louisiana slot machine casino gambling, consider exploring casino options in a nearby state. Louisiana is bordered by:

- North: Arkansas
- East: Mississippi
- South: Gulf of Mexico
- West: Texas

To visit any of my articles on these U.S. states, simply visit ProfessorSlots.com followed by its two-letter designation. For example, my Arkansas slots article is available at ProfessorSlots.com/AR.

Payout Returns in Louisiana

Payout return legal limits are set at a minimum of 80% and a maximum of 99.9% for electronic gaming machines in Louisiana's casinos. For video poker machines not in casinos, the legal limits have been set to a minimum of 80% and a maximum of 94%.

I'm going to just in here for a second and point out something I've been thinking a lot about lately. Most states in which slots are legal have set a minimum payout return limit. But, only a few have set a maximum payout return limit. It's this upper limit I'd like to comment on now.

What does it mean for you if there is an upper payout return limit? If an upper limit has been set, I've yet to find one above 100%. Do you see the problem? Depending how it is implemented, it shuts down winning slots strategies in a state.

With this law in place, casinos can't choose to set up a slot machine to be a winning machine for all the good business reasons they might wish to use. Not for promotional purposes to show a winning machines so other players are encouraged to gamble on other machines or as a way for casinos to balance their daily performance metrics by allowing a few jackpot wins the morning after a busy night.

My point here is that a legally established maximum payout return limit handicaps both businesses and advantage players. I don't find playing slots fun if I'm not making money. If I wanted that, I'd just play online. I want a chance to win which involves more than just luck.

I'll need to produce a podcast episode going over all this, but there is some hope here. If you look at the details of state gaming regulations where a maximum payout return has been defined, there are several different types.

What I mean is, sometimes a state makes this legal limit more restrictive than others. For instance, the maximum limit may not be for individual slot machines but rather for all slot machines as a whole at that location. I like this rule, because some slot machines can still be set by the casino for any number of good business reasons to be a winning slot machine.

Another way to set a maximum payout return limit which also isn't very restrictive at all is when the details specify that this limit applies over the lifetime of the slot machine. Frankly, I can live with that. There might even be a specific advantage play possible for states with such a limit.

But, the maximum payout limit which I seriously have a problem with is a daily limit on each individual slot machine. Playing slot machines with that type of legal limit means no slot strategies, no advantage plays, can legally exist. Winning is only luck-based.

As I've been explaining to a few of you through email conversations lately, I can't help you be more lucky. A large part of my job is to point out how casinos have set up their slot machines, and that choosing one slot machine over another can make you more of a winner.

When a maximum limit is in place, particularly the restrictive kind, I'm limited to only being able to help you stretch your dollar to last longer. So, certain types of legal limits prevent casinos from certain business practices which we can take advantage of.

In turn, this limits what I can offer you. I'm currently in my second round of 56 blog articles, one produced each week, including this one on Louisiana. In this series, I provide the maximum payout return limit if it exists.

However, I haven't always emphasized exactly which type of maximum these states have. In series three, I'll start doing so. Why? Because it matters. Now, back to Louisiana payout return statistics.

The Louisiana Gaming Control Board provides annual and monthly reports on gaming revenue. However, these reports only provide overall actual payout return statistics for each of the 4 pari-mutuel racino sites.

The Louisiana Gaming Control Board make monthly Revenue Reports available for:

- Video Poker
- Land-based Casino
- Riverboat Casinos
- "Slots at the Track"

Overall monthly payout returns at the four pari-mutuel racinos are Taxable Net Slot Proceeds divided by Total AGR: In October 2018, each of the 4 racinos had an overall return of precisely 82.00%.

Unfortunately, the other three Revenue Reports above do not offer Net Slot Proceeds. Therefore, no payout returns are available on the Gaming Control Board for video poker, land-based casino, and riverboat casinos.

Fortunately, the Gaming Enforcement Division has a monthly Slot Payout Summary with detailed payout returns. Here you will find the monthly payout return for each slot machine denomination. But, instead of by individual casino, they are by state region.

The four state regions in Louisiana with overall gaming statistics are as follows:

LA, ME, MD, and MA Slot Machine Casino Gambling 2018

1. Baton Rouge with its 4 casinos
2. Lake Charles with its 4 casinos
3. New Orleans with its 5 casinos
4. Shreveport/Bossier City with its 7 casinos

The September 2018 payout return statistics for these 4 regions are tabulated for your convenience on my website blog article for this state at professorslots.com/LA. The regions with the highest and lowest payout return for a specific denomination are in red.

Denom.	Baton Rouge	Lake Charles	New Orleans	Shreveport/Bossier City
1-cent	88.7%	88.7%	89.1%	89.2%
2-cent	91.5%	90.6%	90.0%	88.6%
5-cent	91.9%	94.6%	94.1%	93.0%
10-cent	93.6%	91.6%	-	92.0%
25-cent	92.8%	92.4%	92.8%	90.9%
50-cent	94.6%	92.2%	93.1%	91.4%
1-dollar	93.7%	92.5%	92.4%	96.1%
2-dollar	90.7%	92.3%	90.5%	98.2%
5-dollar	93.8%	93.3%	93.5%	92.0%
10-dollar	93.9%	92.4%	94.7%	91.9%
20-dollar	-	-	-	-
25-dollar	93.8%	91.5%	86.4%	90.1%
50-dollar	-	97.1%	90.5%	-
\$100	89.9%	91.3%	78.4%	89.2%
\$500	-	-	25.0%	-
\$1,000	-	-	-	-
All	90.7%	90.8%	90.4%	90.5%

September 2018 Payout Returns [Louisiana Slot Machine Casino Gambling 2018]

Averaged over all slot denominations, each region has a very similar payout return for September 2018. Note that these summary reports include the number of slot machines for each region and denomination. This can be very helpful.

For instance, as I look at that table right now, there are only 2 slot machines with a \$50 denomination in the Lake Charles region, yet their combined payout return is 97.1%. That's the highest return for any denomination in Lake Charles. One of these slot machines wins more than the other, most likely, and you'd only have to figure out which one, out of 2. Not out of 2,000.

As is often the case with negotiated state-tribal compacts, any legal limits on payout returns for gaming machines at American Indian tribal casinos in Louisiana is unknown.

However, the tribal-state gaming compact between Louisiana and at least the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana has a section 10-c-4 at the top of page 34 which states

“The stands and rules of each game and odds paid to winning bets shall be visually displayed or available in pamphlet form in the gaming facilities and operation.”

Does this mean each slot machine at tribal casinos has its individual payout returns available? If not, what does this mean? If you know, I'd ask that you contact me with that information. My contact information is available at the bottom of this page. Thanks!

Summary of Louisiana Slots 2018

In summary, *Louisiana slot machine casino gambling* includes 24 casinos, including 20 non-tribal casinos and 4 tribal casinos. There are also video poker gaming machines located in many businesses across the state.

Payout return limits are available for non-tribal casinos and non-casino sites. Actual payout return statistics are something of a mixed bag. They are publicly available from the Louisiana State Police Gaming Enforcement Division by state region and machine denomination. The 4 pari-mutuel racinos have site-specific payout returns available from the Louisiana Gaming Control Board.

Annual Progress in *Louisiana Slot Machine Casino Gambling*

Over the last year, there has been little change in the state of slots gambling in Louisiana.

Call to Action #2 (add sound effect afterward)

Remember to visit professorslots.com/subscribe to get my Free Report Revealing ... The top 7 online resources for improving your gambling performance, including the one I've used as a top-tier slot machine casino gambler.

Introduction

Up next is the second state comprising this episode segment: Maine Slot Machine Casino Gambling 2018. Here goes!

Maine slot machine casino gambling consists of three pari-mutuel racetrack casinos, two of which offer slot machines and table games. Maine also has four off-track betting sites. Bingo is available throughout the state.

Relevant Legal Statutes on Gambling in Maine

The minimum legal gambling age in Maine depends upon the gambling activity:

- Land-Based Casinos: 21
- Poker Rooms: 21
- Bingo: 16
- Lottery: 18
- Pari-Mutuel Wagering: 18

In 2003, Maine offered a referendum to its voters to approve slot machines at two racetracks. The residents of Bangor approved it, but residents of the city of Scarborough did not. To this day, the racetrack in Scarborough does not offer slot machines.

In 2010, voters in Oxford approved slot machines for their casino. The next year, the casino in Bangor approved table games. Now, Maine law allows two racetrack racinos.

Maine's legal rights with regards to tribal gaming are unusual relative to other states. The application of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act does not apply here due to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act. Because of this legal precedent, and unlike most states with tribal gaming, tribal land in Maine is subject to state law.

Maine's tribal gaming laws really are different from other states. I've been through the state gaming regulations for all U.S. states, in fact rather thoroughly, and only Texas has anything remotely similar.

The basic idea here is like the chicken and the egg. Meaning, which federal law came first? The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act is a federal law which came out in 1988. More specifically, because it turns out this matters, it was officially signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on October 17, 1988.

Just the year before, another federal act called the Restoration Act of 1987 gave federal recognition to two tribes Texas. That Act came with conditions regarding gaming, and Texas has argued in court that it takes precedence over the IGRA of 1988. I explain this further on my blog article for Texas at ProfessorSlots.com/TX.

But what about Maine? Well, here too the IGRA of 1988 was preceded by another federal law called, as I've mentioned, the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980. My research on this Act has been interesting, to say the least.

I'm from Michigan, so I'm familiar and comfortable with having reservations all around. It's part of my culture and upbringing. I have no American Indian ancestry myself, but my family farmland was originally purchased from a reservation many, many years ago.

Further, in Michigan, the tribes are sovereign nations. All my life, I've taken this as a given in all other states. In legal terms, and again I'm not a lawyer so this is just me talking about what I've read, another way to say tribes have sovereignty is "live claims of aboriginal title in the United States." Apparently, it's also known as "original Indian title" and "Indian right of occupancy". The U.S. was the first to acknowledge this common law.

Anyway, it can only be revoked by an act of Congress. Do you see now where this is going? Maine revoked it for their state in 1980 through the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act. As a result, Maine tribes are subject to state laws including State of Maine gaming regulations.

As an aside, the only other state in which the U.S. Congress has revoked Indian right of occupancy is Rhode Island via the Rhode Island Claims Settlement Act.

Finally, there are more than a few other Claim Settlement Acts in other U.S. states as well as Canada, but they do not fully extinguish all aboriginal title as Maine and Rhode Island have. These other Acts, like those in Florida, relate only to water rights. More than a few Acts are still in process.

Slot Machine Private Ownership in Maine

Regarding slot machine private ownership, it is legal to privately own a slot machine in Maine.

Gaming Control Boards in Maine

The gaming control bureau for the State of Maine is its Gambling Control Unit.

Casinos in Maine

There are two non-tribal racinos and one pari-mutuel racetrack in Maine. In addition, Maine has four pari-mutuel betting sites.

The largest casino in Maine is Hollywood Casino Hotel & Racetrack Bangor, having 923 gaming machines and 16 table games.

The only other casino with slot machines is Oxford Casino, having 800 gaming machines and 22 table games.

Non-Tribal Casinos in Maine

Maine's three non-tribal casinos and racinos are:

1. Hollywood Casino Hotel & Raceway Bangor in Bangor located 128 miles northeast of Portland.
2. Oxford Casino in Oxford located 43 miles north of Portland.
3. Scarborough Downs Race Track in Scarborough located 10 miles southwest of Portland.

American Indian Casinos in Maine

Maine has four federally-recognized American Indian tribes. State law permits them to offer high-stakes bingo games without restriction on the size of prizes. The Penobscot High Stakes Bingo Casino previously offered 1,800 bingo seats and pull-tab gambling but has permanently closed.

Other Gambling Establishments

As an alternative to enjoying Maine slot machine casino gambling, consider exploring casino options in a nearby state. Maine is bordered by:

- East: Canadian Province of New Brunswick
- Northwest: Canadian Province of Quebec
- South: Atlantic Ocean
- West: New Hampshire

To visit any my article on the state of New Hampshire, simply visit ProfessorSlots.com followed by its two-letter designation. That's ProfessorSlots.com/NH.

Payout Returns in Maine

Maine law requires payout returns have a minimum of 89% on all electronic gaming machines. There is no maximum legal limit for payout returns. Note that this state law requirement applies to Class II bingo-style gaming machines offered by Maine's tribes.

Maine's Gambling Control Unit offers Revenue Information for each casino. This information is monthly except for the most recent month, which is weekly.

This reporting includes average slots win% which, when subtracted from 100%, provides the payout return percentage. For October 2018,

- Hollywood Casino Hotel & Raceway Bangor had a payout return of 89.84%.
- Oxford Casino had a payout return of 89.96%.

Summary to Maine Slots 2018

In summary, Maine slot machine casino gambling consists of two pari-mutuel racinos offering slot machines and table games. The third racetrack offers only pari-mutuel wagering.

The minimum legal limit for payout returns is 89%. Actual payout return statistics are available by month except for the most recent month, where they are available weekly.

Annual Progress in *Maine Slot Machine Casino Gambling*

In the last year, the Penobscot High Stakes Bingo Casino in Old Town has permanently closed.

Call to Action #3 (add sound effect afterward)

Remember to visit professorslots.com/subscribe to get my Free Report Revealing ... The top 7 online resources for improving your gambling performance, including the one I've used as a top-tier slot machine casino gambler.

Introduction

Up next is the second state comprising this episode segment: Maryland Slot Machine Casino Gambling 2018. Here goes!

Maryland slot machine casino gambling consists of six casinos. These land-based casinos offer only video lottery terminal (VLT) style slot machines. Maryland also has cruise ships offering onboard gambling options when traveling in international waters.

A minimum payout return percentage has been legally set by Maryland law. However, actual payout return statistics are not publicly available.

Other gambling locations exist in Maryland, such as bingo halls and pari-mutuel wagering facilities, but none are legally allowed to have slot machines.

Relevant Legal Statutes on Gambling in Maryland

The minimum legal gambling age in Maryland depends upon the gambling activity:

- Land-Based Casinos: 21
- Poker Rooms: 21
- Bingo: 18
- Lottery: 18
- Pari-Mutuel Wagering: 18

Further, anyone intoxicated is prohibited from playing VLTs per state law. Also, cruise ships out of Baltimore have a minimum legal gambling age of 18.

I wonder what the details are for intoxicated individuals being prohibited from gambling. How does the casino decide if someone is intoxicated? Further, is alcohol even offered at Maryland's six casinos?

Are only obviously intoxicated individuals prohibited? I doubt anyone is subjected to a breathalyzer test. Maybe alcoholic beverages are counted per individual with a limit of how many are consumed in an hour? I've certainly heard of such limits elsewhere.

When I just went to the websites of Maryland's casinos, I do see that they have pubs in the casino offering alcohol. I've just tried reaching out to a couple of Maine casinos, but wasn't able to get an answer if alcohol is even allowed on the gambling floor much less how individuals are identified as being intoxicated.

Perhaps you've gambled at one of Maryland's casinos? If so, would you mind letting me know if alcohol is served on the casino floor and if you have any observations to offer about what happens if someone has too much to drink? Just leave a message at 937-696-0086 or email me at jon@professorslots.com where Jon is spelled J-O-N. Thanks!

In 2008, Maryland voters approved a constitutional amendment authorizing slot machines at five locations in the state. This included a licensing and regulatory legal framework for casino operators, employees, and contractors as well as specifying where to spend state gaming proceeds.

In 2012, Maryland voters approved a gaming expansion bill legally allowing table games at Maryland casinos. It also allowed a sixth Maryland casino. This gambling license was awarded in December 2013, resulting in MGM National Harbor opening 3 years later.

Slot Machine Private Ownership in Maryland

Regarding slot machine private ownership, it is legal to privately own a slot machine in Maryland if it is 25 years old or older.

Gaming Control Boards in Maryland

The Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Commission along with the Gaming Control Agency are responsible for gaming regulations. Together, for each facility, they oversee:

- Internal controls
- Auditing and accounting procedures
- Safety and security
- Surveillance
- Employee background investigation and licensing
- Day-to-day operation of machines
- Compliance
- Responsible gambling program

Casinos in Maryland

There are 6 non-tribal casinos, 1 non-tribal racino, 2 cruise ships based in Maryland, and no tribal casinos.

The largest casino in Maryland is Live! Casino & Hotel in Handover, reported having 3,813 VLTs and 198 table games in November 2018.

The second largest casino is MGM Casino – National Harbor in Oxon Hill, reported having 3,136 VLTs and 198 table games.

Non-Tribal Casinos in Maryland

A complete list of the six casinos and two cruise ships in Maryland offering VLT-style slot machines are available on my website blog article for this state at professorslots.com/MD.

American Indian Casinos in Maryland

Maryland has no tribal casinos. In part, this is due to Maryland having no federally-recognized American Indian tribes.

Other Gambling Establishments

As an alternative to enjoying Maryland slot machine casino gambling, consider exploring casino options in a nearby state. Maryland is bordered by:

- North: Pennsylvania
- East: Delaware
- South: Virginia and District of Columbia
- West: West Virginia

To visit any of my articles on these U.S. states, simply visit ProfessorSlots.com followed by its two-letter designation. For example, my Pennsylvania slots article is available at ProfessorSlots.com/PA.

With regards to gambling in Maryland, it's important to consider its neighboring states. Of its 5 neighbors, only [Pennsylvania](#) offers a good assortment of slot machines. [West Virginia](#) has slots at only five locations and [Delaware](#) has three racinos while the [District of Columbia](#) and [Virginia](#) has no slots at all.

So, if you're in [Delaware](#), the [District of Columbia](#), [Virginia](#), and [West Virginia](#) then Maryland is a great go-to destination for slot machine casino gambling. From what I've heard regarding heavy traffic there, alongside high limits at craps tables, Maryland casinos certainly are aware of this.

It's an interesting dynamic, though. For how many years is this going to be sustainable? As I've mentioned before, the state of gambling in the U.S. is dynamic with significant changes every year. Just look at sports gambling ever since the U.S. Supreme Court ruling last year.

When will gambling be expanded in Maryland's neighbors and what effect will it have on Maryland's casinos. Frankly, I think it'll make them more competitive. But, it will likely be a mess getting to that point.

Just look at the border war, if I may be so dramatic, occurring between Connecticut and Massachusetts since the MGM Springfield was planned much less since it opened last year.

Payout Returns in Maryland

Maryland state gaming regulations require an average minimum payout return of 87% for each VLT gaming machine. Further, each casino licensee must establish an average payout return percentage between 90% and 95%, overall, for their VLT machines.

Summary to Maryland Slots 2018

In summary, Maryland slot machine casino gambling consists of six casinos with VLT-style slot machines controlled by the Maryland gaming control board. Further, two cruise ships sailing out of the Port of Baltimore offer casino gambling via slot machines while traveling to international destinations.

Annual Progress in *Maryland Slot Machine Casino Gambling*

Over the last year, the largest casino in Maryland reduced their number of VLT-style slots from 4,337 to 3,813, a 12% reduction, while table games increased from 125 to 198. The second largest casino only had a 5% decrease in slots but table games increased from 140 to 198.

Call to Action #4 (add sound effect afterward)

Remember to visit professorslots.com/subscribe to get my Free Report Revealing ... The top 7 online resources for improving your gambling performance, including the one I've used as a top-tier slot machine casino gambler.

Introduction

Up next is the next state comprising this episode segment: Massachusetts Slot Machine Casino Gambling 2018. Here goes!

Massachusetts slot machine casino gambling consists of the MGM Springfield, a slot parlor in Plainridge, and a cruise ship sailing to international destinations.

Massachusetts has set a legal minimum payout return for slot machines. No actual payout returns are made publicly available.

Relevant Legal Statutes on Gambling in Massachusetts

The minimum legal gambling age in Massachusetts depends upon the gambling activity:

- Land-Based Casinos: 21
- Poker Rooms: 21
- Bingo: 18
- Lottery: 18
- Pari-Mutuel Wagering: 18

In late 2011, the Governor approved a bill allowing three land-based casino resort gaming licenses to be located in three gaming regions of Massachusetts:

1. Eastern Region A: This license went to MGM, who constructed a casino in downtown Springfield. It opened on August 24, 2018.
2. Western Region B: This license went to Wynn Resorts, who is constructing Encore Boston Harbor in Everett. It is planning to open in the summer of 2019.
3. Southeastern Region C: This license has not yet been awarded

Massachusetts gaming regulations define Category 1 and Category 2 casinos as follows:

- Category 1 casino:
 - Pay a daily tax of 25% of gross gaming revenue
 - Appropriate documentation of infrastructure improvements onsite and around the vicinity of the gaming establishment
- Category 2 casino:
 - Pay a daily tax of 40% of gross gaming revenue
 - Pay an additional daily assessment of 9% of its gross gaming revenue
 - Appropriate documentation of infrastructure improvements
 - Limited to 1,500 gaming positions

Massachusetts law, Section 97 of Chapter 194, includes a research initiative. This section is a legal requirement to collect customer tracking data from:

- Loyalty programs

- Player tracking software
- Player card systems
- Online gambling transactions or any other information system

Interestingly, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has engaged a nonprofit research group to make this player data anonymous by removing personally identifying information such as player name, address, and bank or credit information.

Further, the gaming manufacturers also have their data removed to protect corporate intellectual property. This includes game identifying information such as device game name and the name of its manufacturer.

Gameplay data kept includes player characteristics. The law is clear that Massachusetts is not legally limited to collecting only the following:

- Frequency, length, speed, and the denomination of play
- Amounts wagered including the number of lines and hands played
- Reel configuration, return-to-player (RTP), the volatility index, and denomination

This anonymized behavioral data will be sent to a research facility to conduct analyses to improve the understanding of how gambling addiction grows and changes, help develop strategies to minimize harm to players and to develop systems to monitor, detect, and intervene in high-risk gambling situations in an ongoing manner.

None of this data analysis is necessarily bad. It might even be helpful. How would you know if were helpful if you didn't check? But, and this may be the most important aspect of all this, the data has been anonymized.

That means your privacy and the intellectual property of slots manufacturers has been protected. This condition has been clearly stated within Massachusetts state gaming regulations. So, you know, there's that.

I wonder if any of this data will eventually be made publicly available. I'd really like to see a study based on it. It should be very interesting. When Iowa recently requested two companies perform an analysis of Iowa gambling, several interesting trends came out of it. You can find my thoughts of those Iowa studies at professorslots.com/IA or my podcast episode #46.

Slot Machine Private Ownership in Massachusetts

Regarding slot machine private ownership, it is legal to privately own a slot machine in Massachusetts if it is 30 years old or older.

Gaming Control Boards in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission, also known on their website as Mass Gaming, was signed into law on November 22, 2011, by Governor Deval Patrick via the Expanded Gaming Act.

Mass Gaming has an extensive Frequently Asked Questions section useful to players, but also those wishing to be approved by the state to work or have a career, in the Massachusetts gaming industry.

Massachusetts is a prime example of why I have an annually-updated online resource for state gaming regulations and other changes. For this state, there is a lot going on quickly.

The state of gaming being such a dynamic environment is another prime reason for moving my podcast's state-by-state episodes to be more in sync with the publication date of my website blog articles.

I'm already doing it for the articles, but I'd be more helpful to you if my latest information were more immediately available for you – not 2 months old. In terms of advantage plays, this short delay occasionally matters.

Casinos in Massachusetts

There is currently one non-tribal casino, zero American Indian tribal casinos, one non-tribal racino, and one cruise ship based in Massachusetts.

The largest casino in Massachusetts is MGM Springfield having 2,500 gaming machines and 125 table games.

The second largest is currently the only other casino in Massachusetts, Plainridge Park Casino in Plainville having over 1,200 gaming machines and electronic table games.

Once it opens, Encore Boston Harbor will be the largest casino in Massachusetts. If the tribal casino ever opens, Project First Light Resort & Casino will be its second largest casino.

Non-Tribal Casinos in Massachusetts

There are currently two open casinos in Massachusetts offering slot machines plus a planned casino:

1. Encore Boston Harbor is a planned casino expected to open in the summer of 2019. It is located 5 miles north of downtown Boston.
2. MGM Springfield located 92 miles west of Boston and 26 miles north of Hartford, Connecticut a few miles from the Connecticut border.
3. Plainridge Park Casino located 36 miles southwest of Boston and 22 miles northeast of Providence, Rhode Island near the border to Rhode Island.

The cruise ship out of the Port of Boston is NCL Dawn from Norwegian Cruise Lines, where international gambling is allowed, with 199 slot machines.

American Indian Casinos in Massachusetts

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe have signed a tribal-state gaming compact governing tribal gaming in Southeastern Massachusetts, which includes Bristol, Plymouth, Nantucket, Dukes, and Barnstable counties. This compact was approved, as required, by the U.S. Department of Interior.

The First Light Resort & Casino by the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe has been planned for Taunton. However, progress on this tribal casino resort has been the subject of lawsuits. Construction has been on hold since mid-2016. It is uncertain whether the casino will ever be completed.

Other Gambling Establishments

As an alternative to enjoying Massachusetts slot machine casino gambling, consider exploring casino options in a nearby state.

Massachusetts is bordered by:

- North: New Hampshire and Vermont
- East: Atlantic Ocean
- South: Connecticut and Rhode Island
- West: New York

To visit any of my articles on these U.S. states, simply visit ProfessorSlots.com followed by its two-letter designation. For example, my New Hampshire slots article is available at ProfessorSlots.com/NH.

Payout Returns in Massachusetts

Massachusetts law has set a minimum payout return percentage of 80% for gaming machines, established through modification of LLC Standard GLI-11: Gaming Devices from Gaming Laboratories International.

This minimum limit is calculated to include:

- Acquisition cost of complimentary merchandise
- The value of promotional gaming credit

Monthly revenue reports from Mass Gaming provide actual payout returns for each of Massachusetts' open casinos. These reports are currently available for MGM Springfield and Plainridge Park Casino.

The MGM Springfield revenue report shows a November 2018 payout return of 92.10%. The payout return for this casino has increased month-over-month since the casino opened in August 2018, starting from a slot payout of 89.88%.

The Plainridge Park Casino revenue report shows a November 2018 payout return of 92.20%.

Summary to Massachusetts Slots 2018

In summary, Massachusetts slot machine casino gambling consists of one casino resort, a slot parlor, and an international cruise ship. MGM Springfield opened in August 2018, with Encore Boston Harbor planned for mid-2019.

The minimum limit for slot machine payout return is 80%. Monthly actual payout return statistics are publicly available for each of the open casinos in Massachusetts.

If you're interested in slot machine casino gambling in Massachusetts, then you'll want to know as much as possible about the MGM Springfield casino which opened last year.

And, for lots and lots of details about this casino located in downtown Springfield, you'll want to consider subscribing to [Art In The Game](#) by Christopher DiMauro, a relatively new podcast devoted to all things MGM Springfield. I've recommended them before, but they're still doing well.

I could wish for more local podcasts within various states. Of course, lots of recreational podcasts are about Las Vegas, too many to mention here. Okay, fine, I'll mention a few of them: [There's Five Hundy by Midnight](#), an original recreational gambling podcast (they're up to nearly 700 episodes), [Gambling With an Edge](#) by Bob Dancer and Richard Munchkin, formerly a long-running radio show.

There is one entirely about Atlantic City casinos, called [Due For A Win](#). And, [Podcasts – Casinos USA](#) by Coach Fav will often talk about casinos in the midwestern states. Also, of course, [Cousin Vito's Casino Podcast](#) covers Connecticut casinos. There are a few others.

But my point here isn't to promote these other podcasts. Not directly, anyway. My point is to offer you, yes you, a suggestion. You like going to casinos, yes? And, you like podcasts, right? So, what state are you in and why don't you start a recreational gambling podcast for your city or state? After all, you have boots on the ground where you are at, and all that.

If you are considering making your hobby into a podcast, whether it be about gambling or not, and you want help getting started, consider reaching out to the guy that helped me figure out the basics of podcasting – Dave Jackson from The School of Podcasting.

He's been podcasting since 2005, was recently inducted into the Podcasting Hall of Fame, and has an online school for getting started in podcasting. I've made an easy way to remember his website because I made a short-cut. Just go to ProfessorSlots.com/SOP, and it'll take you right to his page.

Fair warning, that's an affiliate link. Meaning, Dave's sends a little finder's fee my way if you sign up at no cost to you. Anything I receive goes to paying my bills for my Professor Slots business.

My first affiliate link was with Amazon, so they send me a small cut if you go to Amazon by clicking on the Amazon books shown on my website. Again, it's at no cost to you.

With this second affiliate link to the School of Podcasting, which I'll also put into the show notes for this podcast episode #48 at ProfessorSlots.com/e48, I am continuing to offer links to products and services I think you might find useful.

Eventually, as my business grows, I'll be in a better negotiating position with Amazon and others and, you better believe it, I'll be trying for any discount I can get you. It's still too early for that, though. Unfortunately. But, patience!

Annual Progress in Massachusetts Slot Machine Casino Gambling

In the last year, the MGM Springfield in downtown Springfield opened in southern Massachusetts near the Connecticut border.

Call to Action #5 (add sound effect afterward)

Remember to visit professorslots.com/subscribe to get my Free Report Revealing ... The top 7 online resources for improving your gambling performance, including the one I've used as a top-tier slot machine casino gambler.

On the Next Episode of Professor Slots

Part I of the next episode of the Professor Slots podcast is a review of a YouTube video with several slots tips while I'll evaluate and comment on. I found out about this YouTube from a listener. Thanks, Leslie! If you know of an interesting slots-related website, book, or YouTube video you'd like me to review for you, to see if there might be anything useful for you and I, just let me know.

To make a suggestion or ask a question which might end up as a blog article or on a podcast episode, email it to jon@professorslots.com where Jon is spelled J-O-N or by calling 937-696-0086 to leave a 3-minute or less voicemail. I also appreciate your casino trip reports about slots, if you'd care to offer that.

Part II of the next episode of the Professor Slots podcast are more brief overviews of the current state of gambling in two U.S. states, territories, or federal district. Next time, I'll be talking to you about the great U.S. states of Michigan and Minnesota.

Closing (closing music)

That's the end of another great episode of the Professor Slots podcast. Thanks so much for listening!

Show notes for this episode are now available within most podcast Apps, but are also available on my website at professorslots.com/e48.

I plan to have the next episode come out very soon for you, where I'll have more amazing content for the show.

Until the next episode: Have fun, be safe, and make good choices! Bye.

320-character description:

Louisiana slots consists of 1 land-based, 4 tribal, and 16 riverboat casinos. Maine slots consists of 2 pari-mutuel racinos offering slot machines and table games. Maryland slots consists of 6 casinos with VLT-style machines and 2 cruise ships. Massachusetts slots consists of the MGM Springfield, a racino, and a cruise ship.

156-character description:

Louisiana slots at 24 casinos. Maine slots at 2 racinos. Maryland slots at 6 casinos and 2 cruise ships. Massachusetts slots at 2 casinos and a cruise ship.