



# HOLIDAY COUNTDOWN

## TAKE A CHANCE

Feeling lucky this holiday season? Have thoughts of getting away for a while or hosting a poker night at home? Whether you're in Las Vegas to see the lights on the Strip or having a family gathering at home, take a chance on some gambling-themed gifts.

— Rachel Lenzi  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

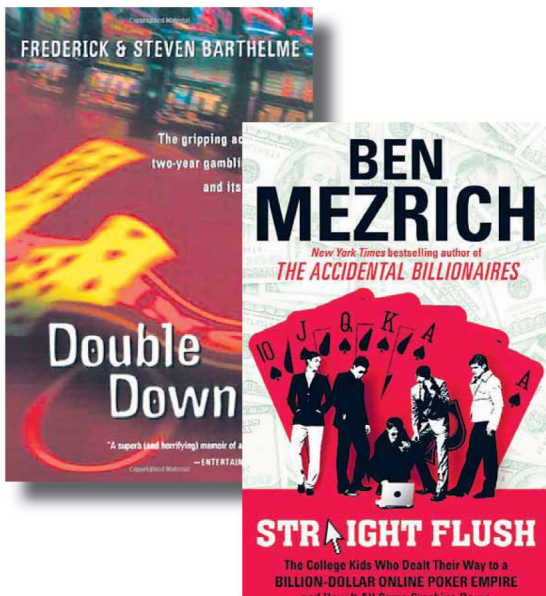


Entertain your friends at home instead of hitting the road to fight for a spot at the gaming tables. Start with a full set of cards, chips, and dice in a sleek aluminum case, Target, \$25.09, and add an oval-shaped Texas Hold 'Em table top, \$159.99, Cabela's.

Front the buy-in fee for a poker tournament for a friend or relative. Hollywood Casino Toledo offers daily tournaments with buy-in fees between \$30 and \$100, depending on the time of day and day of the week, while Motor City Casino in Detroit hosts a Dec. 29th tournament with a \$150 buy-in.



Viva Las Vegas! You might be planning a birthday trip, a bachelor party, or a girls-only weekend and whether it's New Year's Day, Memorial Day weekend, or a midweek jaunt, "Sin City" is open year-round, seven days of the week. Las Vegas is a flight away and local travel agencies or any online service such as Kayak.com, Priceline.com, or Travelocity.com offer hotel and flight packages to "Disneyland for Adults." AAA Northwest Ohio or Central Travel, 419-897-2070.



If you're spending Christmas on a sunny beach or by the pool — or if you're planning that junket to Sin City, there's text to entertain. Beth Raymer wrote *Lay the Favorite* about her experiences as a Las Vegas oddsmaker, while Ben Mezrich examines a group of college friends who establish a Central America-based online poker company in *Straight Flush*. *Double Down: Reflections on Gambling and Loss*, by Frederick and Steven Barthelme, chronicles a gambling binge gone wrong. Amazon.com \$9.99 to \$27.99, Kindle and hardcover.



If you don't like one of the multimillion-dollar lottery games, there's a second option: MegaMillions, which is drawn every Tuesday and Friday. Each play costs \$1 (up to five plays for each ticket) and MegaMillions cards are available online at [ohiolottery.com](http://ohiolottery.com) or at Ohio Lottery retailers. If purchased in Ohio, winning tickets can only be redeemed in Ohio.



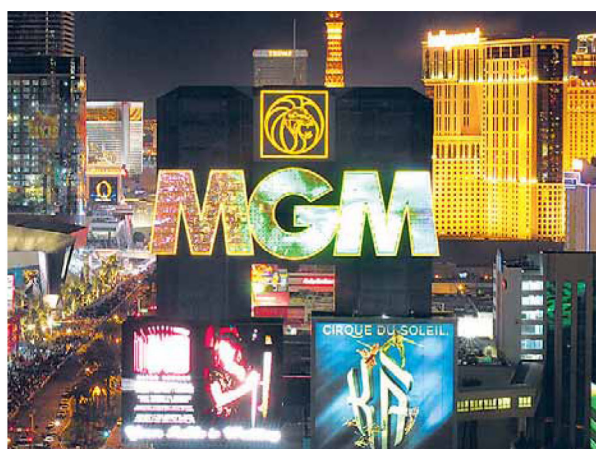
LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU



Feeling like a million bucks? The lottery might agree — and Powerball gives those feeling lucky two nights a week to play for cash prizes, and a multimillion-dollar pot. Powerball tickets (\$2 each) can be purchased at Ohio Lottery retailers.

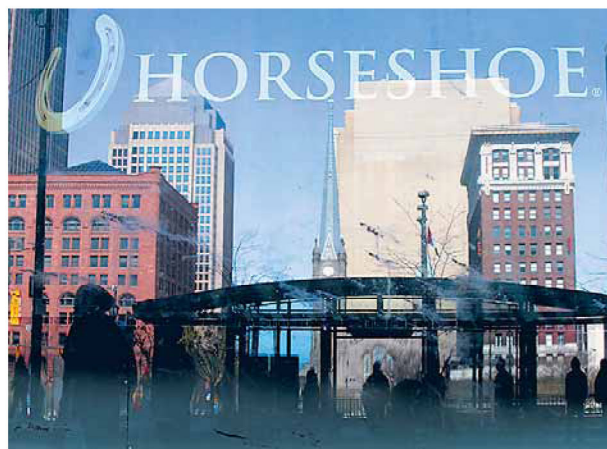


Feel the need to live vicariously through the card sharks on the silver screen? Hollywood has produced dozens of movies with Las Vegas, Atlantic City, or Monte Carlo as the backdrop, with many now on DVD, including *Lay the Favorite*, starring Bruce Willis, Vince Vaughn, and Catherine Zeta-Jones; *Casino*, starring Robert DeNiro and Joe Pesci; and *Vegas Vacation*, starring Chevy Chase. Amazon.com, Best Buy, walmart.com, \$4.49 to \$19.99.



BACKGROUND IMAGE BY LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU

All that gambling works up an appetite, calls for some relaxation, or brings on the urge to shop 'til you drop. MGM Grand offers gift cards for purchases at its casinos in Detroit, Nevada, and Mississippi, which can be used for in-house restaurants, boutiques, spas, and even at the casino's Starbucks. Purchase online at [www.mgmresortsgiftcard.com](http://www.mgmresortsgiftcard.com).



Don't have enough time or dough to make it to Sin City? Consider some of the closer casino locales to Toledo — Rivers Casino in Pittsburgh, Horseshoe Casino in Cleveland, or FireKeepers Casino in Battle Creek, Mich. You can plan your own trip by car, or Lakefront Lines (419-531-3342 or 800-752-7574) offers one-day trips to casinos in Cleveland, Detroit, and Windsor, Ont., starting at \$9 per person and multiday trips to Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort in Mount Pleasant, Mich., \$129 per person.



Make a mobile-device wager without making an impact on your wallet. Apps for free play in online poker, slot machines, and casino table games are available to download on [itunes.apple.com](http://itunes.apple.com). If you're in need of a mobile device, consider an iPad Mini, \$399, or a Google Nexus, \$229.99 to \$269.99. Best Buy or the Apple Store, Franklin Park Mall.

\* Prices and availability subject to change