Yes, on paper, a slot with a 96.5% return to player (RTP) has better theoretical odds for players than one with a 94% RTP. But that doesn't mean you'll win more on your next spin—or even over a long evening. RTP is a long-run average, not a forecast for an individual session.

For a useful RTP comparison, look at what the figures mean, how the house edge changes, and what else matters when choosing a game. Slot mechanics, volatility and the way a game feels to play can all affect your experience, even though they don't change the published RTP.

What does RTP mean?

RTP is the percentage of total stakes a slot is designed to return to players over a very large number of spins. In plain English: it's a theoretical average across play, not a promise about what any one player will get back.

So a 96.5% RTP means the game is designed to return an average of £96.50 for every £100 wagered over the long run. A 94% RTP means £94 for every £100 wagered. The remaining percentages are the theoretical house edge: the portion the game is expected to retain over time.

Published RTP Theoretical house edge Average return per £100 wagered over the long run Theoretical amount retained per £100 wagered 96.5% 3.5% £96.50 £3.50 94% 6% £94 £6

These are averages across a huge volume of wagering, not the result a player should expect from a particular £100 deposit. The UK Gambling Commission (UKGC) explains how RTP is calculated in its guide to calculating return to netent slots player. That's a useful reference if you want the regulatory detail behind the headline percentage.

How much difference does 96.5% make?

The gap is 2.5 percentage points in RTP. Put another way, the theoretical house edge falls from 6% to 3.5%. That is a meaningful difference in the long-run mathematics: the 94% game has a higher built-in advantage for the casino.

For a simple illustration, imagine £100,000 in total wagers on each game. At 96.5% RTP, the theoretical return to players would be £96,500 and the theoretical amount retained would be £3,500. At 94% RTP, those figures would be £94,000 and £6,000. This example describes aggregate results over substantial play, not what any individual will win or lose.

It also uses total wagers, sometimes called turnover—not the amount a player deposits. If someone deposits £20 and repeatedly bets winnings, their total stakes may add up to more than £20. That does not change the RTP, but it does mean the simple "per £100 wagered" example isn't the same as "per £100 deposited."

Why a higher RTP doesn't guarantee a better session

Slots use random outcomes. A higher RTP improves the theoretical return across a very large number of spins, but short-term results can be far above or below that average. A player might get a big win on a 94% slot, while another might lose quickly on a 96.5% slot. Neither result contradicts the RTP.

Jargon translation: **volatility** describes how a game's wins tend to be distributed—whether they're generally smaller and more frequent or less frequent and potentially larger. It does not tell you when a win will arrive, and it doesn't override the game's RTP.

That is why experienced players don't treat RTP as a prediction. They may use it as one point of comparison, then look at volatility, the paytable, bonus features and whether the game suits their budget. None of those checks can make a slot reliably profitable.

- **RTP:** a long-run theoretical return, not a session target.
- **House edge:** the gap between 100% and the RTP.
- **Volatility:** a description of the pattern of wins, not a promise about their size or timing.
- **Slot odds:** the chances of particular outcomes. These can't be worked out from RTP alone.

What the RTP figure doesn't tell you

RTP is useful, but it doesn't describe every part of a slot. A single percentage won't tell you the probability of triggering a feature, the size of a possible payout, or how long you might play before a particular outcome. Those details depend on the game's design and may not be captured by the headline figure.

Also check whether the published RTP applies to the version available where you play. Some games have different RTP settings, so the title alone may not tell you the precise return figure for a particular casino. Look for the game information or help section, and check the casino's terms if the figure is unclear.

For UK players, the UKGC sets rules for licensed gambling businesses, including requirements around fair and open gambling. Its RTP guidance is written for licensees and businesses, but it helps explain why the figure is a calculated theoretical measure rather than a guarantee for individual play.

How slots have changed in the UK market

The UK online gambling market has matured considerably over roughly two decades. The shift from basic online games to polished, mobile-friendly products has changed what players expect: clearer menus, better presentation and more varied game formats. Regulation and consumer expectations have also developed alongside the industry.

That evolution is easy to see in the slots themselves. Earlier games often relied on a simpler reel layout and a small set of features. Modern releases may include elaborate bonus rounds, changing reels, multiple ways to win and layers of animation. NetEnt is one of the established studios associated with the development of online casino games and the move towards more produced, feature-rich titles.



Megaways and cascading wins

Some modern slots use mechanics such as Megaways, a system in which the number of symbols on each reel can change from spin to spin. Cascading wins—also called tumbling wins—remove winning symbols and let new ones fall into place, potentially creating further wins from the same paid spin.

These features can make a game feel more dynamic, but they don't automatically mean better slot odds. A feature's excitement and the game's RTP are separate questions. Check the published RTP and game information rather than assuming that more ways to win, more animations or a busy bonus round means a better return.

Production quality is not a measure of value

Soundtracks, animation and detailed visuals are now a bigger part of many slots. A well-produced game can be enjoyable to look at and easier to follow, but polish doesn't make its house edge smaller. A dramatic soundtrack is not evidence of a generous paytable, and a plain-looking game is not automatically a poor-value one.

This is where marketing can muddy the waters. Words such as "epic," "massive" or "high potential" are not substitutes for a published RTP or clear game rules. Experienced players tend to separate presentation from maths: they may appreciate the production, but they still check the numbers and avoid treating a feature as a sign that a win is due.

How to make a practical RTP comparison

If you're comparing two slots, use a short checklist rather than judging by the biggest feature or the most eye-catching design.

1. **Find the RTP for the version you're playing.** Check the game's information screen and don't assume every casino offers the same setting.
2. **Compare the house edge.** Subtract RTP from 100%. For example, 96.5% RTP means a 3.5% theoretical house edge; 94% means 6%.
3. **Check volatility and the paytable.** These provide context for how outcomes may be distributed, but they cannot predict your session.

4. **Read how the features work.** Understand what triggers a bonus and whether the rules explain how wins are counted.
5. **Set a limit before you play.** Decide what you can afford to spend and stop when you reach that limit. Don't chase losses or increase stakes to try to recover them.

For example, a player comparing a 96.5% slot with a 94% slot can reasonably say the first has the better theoretical RTP. They can't reasonably say it will pay out during their next visit, that its bonus will trigger soon, or that it will be more enjoyable. Those are different questions.

Where MrQ fits into the picture

If you're browsing games at MrQ, or at another online casino, the same checks apply: find the game rules, confirm the relevant RTP and read the operator's information before playing. Don't rely on promotional wording alone to understand a game's odds.



Checking the operator and checking the game are separate steps. A casino's licensing information concerns the business; a slot's RTP concerns the game's theoretical return. Neither tells you what will happen in an individual session. If you're unsure what a figure means, the UKGC's explanation of RTP calculation is a better starting point than a marketing headline.

So, is 96.5% RTP actually better than 94% RTP?

Mathematically, yes. A 96.5% RTP has a lower theoretical house edge—3.5% compared with 6%—and a higher average return across a very large volume of wagers. That makes it the better figure in a straightforward RTP comparison.

For any one player, though, it is not a guarantee. Short-term results can vary sharply, and RTP doesn't reveal the exact slot odds for each feature or tell you when a win will arrive. Treat it as one useful measure, not a promise of a better session.

The sensible approach is to check the game's actual RTP, understand the rules and volatility, and set a firm spending limit. A higher number can improve the long-run maths; it cannot make a slot predictable.