

MAISON LUDE

# MAHJONG

HORSE LUNAR YEAR EDITION

MANUAL



## Basic Introduction

Mahjong is a 4-person game of skill and chance that originated in China. There are many variations of the game, but in these instructions, we focus exclusively on the American version.

The objective of the game is to be the first, by drawing and discarding tiles, to match tiles. This guide follows the National Mahjong rules, but many players establish table rules when learning and playing for fun.

The excitement of Mahjong lies in the continuous decision-making process. Whether playing for fun or to win a tournament, there is a place for all in the game of Mahjong.



SCAN HERE TO KNOW HOW TO PLAY

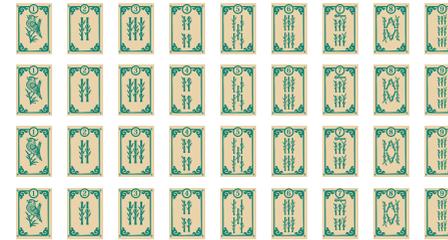


## OUTLINE

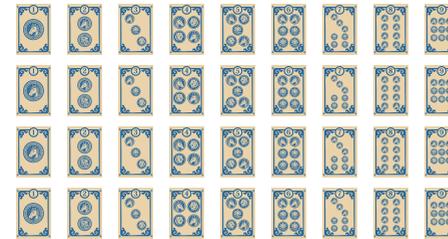
1. Identify your tiles.
2. Identify all other items used in playing Mahjong.
3. To Start
  - Selection of East
  - Build Wall, Break Wall
4. To Play
  - Exchange
  - Round
5. Mahjong Winner

### SUITS

#### BAMBOOS



#### DOTS



#### CRAKS



## STEP 1 Identify your tiles.

This mahjong set has 160 tiles. 152 are used in play and the rest are spares. The 152 tiles are divided into four groups with their subgroups:

1. Suits (108 tiles)
2. Honors (28 tiles)
3. Flowers (8 tiles)
4. Jokers (8 tiles)
5. This simple chart lets you view all 160 tiles in their family arrangement, making them easy to recognize instantly.

### HONORS

#### DRAGONS



#### WINDS

### JOKERS



### FLOWERS



**SUITS are divided into 3 sub groups, BAMBOOS, DOTS, CRAKS (108 tiles).**

### SPARE TILES

These tiles are not required to play but are used as spare tiles.



These numbered tiles have a symbol (based on the suit) and the numbers from 1 to 9. There are 4 of each tile.

### Craks (36 tiles - 4 of each)

CHARACTERS are usually called Craks. There are 36 CRAK TILES, 4 of each number, from number 1 to number 9.



### Dots (36 tiles - 4 of each)

CIRCLES are usually called Dots. There are 36 DOT TILES, 4 of each number, from number 1 to number 9.



### Bamboos (36 tiles - 4 of each)

There are 36 Bamboo tiles, 4 of each number, from number 1 to number 9.



### HONORS are divided into 2 subgroups, WINDS and DRAGONS (28 tiles)

#### Winds (16 tiles)

There are 4 types of wind tiles: North, East, West, South. There are 4 of each wind tile in the game.



### Dragons (12 tiles)

There are 3 types of dragons: Green Dragon, Red Dragon, White Dragon (also called Soap). There are 4 of each dragon tile in the game.

Each dragon is associated with a suit:

- Bams with Green Dragons
- Craks with Red Dragons
- Dots with White Dragons (Soap)



**Note:** the white dragon is also used to represent a zero in the game.

### Flowers (8 tiles)

There are 8 tiles needed in the game.



### Jokers

There are 8 JOKERS which are used as WILD tiles. This means a player can substitute a JOKER for any tile to help improve his hand.

The set includes 10 JOKERS, 2 of them are extra pieces.



### SPARE TILES

This set includes 6 blank tiles and two extra jokers.

These tiles are not required to play but are used as spare tiles.



### STEP III To Start

So far, we've discussed the various items included, now it's time to play!

Setting up

- A.** Racks are placed in a square, one rack in front of each player.
- B.** All 152 tiles are mixed and placed face down in the center of the square formed by the racks.



**C.** All four players throw the dice. The player with the highest number becomes East.

**D.** To Build the Wall.

Each player builds a wall of tiles face down in front of his rack two tiles high. All 152 tiles should now be part of the wall.



**E.** To Break the Wall:

The number rolled by East is used to count stacks of tiles in front of their rack, from right to left, stopping at that number.

Example: If East rolls a seven (7), they start at the right side of their wall, count seven stacks of tiles to the left, then take the next 4 tiles:

2 tiles from the top row

2 tiles from the bottom row

Each player (always moving to the right of East) then takes the next 4 tiles:

2 tiles from the top row

2 tiles from the bottom row

This process is repeated three times. At this point, each player has 12 tiles. East then takes the next 2 top tiles. Each other player takes 1 more tile in turn. East ends with 14 tiles, all other players have 13.



**F.** Each player arranges their tiles on their rack in groups to help decide which hand to set as their goal for the game.

**G.** The goal in Mahjong is to match your tiles exactly to form a winning hand.

**H.** A hand is composed of 14 tiles. Before the game begins, players can choose a hand from the National Mahjong League Card (not included in the set), or use the 15 basic hands and values included in this booklet for convenience.

**Note:** Hands are divided into 2 types: EXPOSED HANDS and CONCEALED HAND HANDS.

- a. A KONG is 4 of a kind with the same numerical value. Example: Four number 5 Bams is a Kong. If a player is working on an exposed hand and has three number 5 Bams, He may call for a pick up a discarded number 5 as long as done right after it is thrown and before the next person goes.
- b. A PUNG is 3 of a kind with the same numerical value.
- c. A QUINT is 5 flowers.

**EXAMPLE OF TWO HANDS WITH VALUES:**

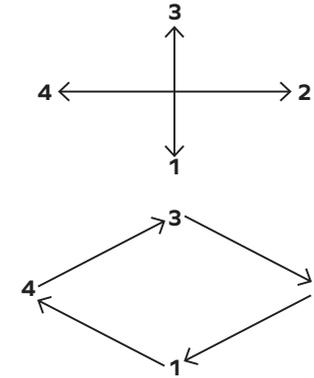
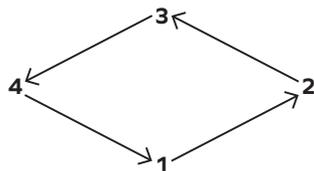


**Color Rule**

If you use Bams and Dragons in the same hand, the Dragons must be GREEN.  
 If you use Craks and Dragons in the same hand, the Dragons must be RED.  
 If you use Dots and Dragons in the same hand, the Dragons must be WHITE.

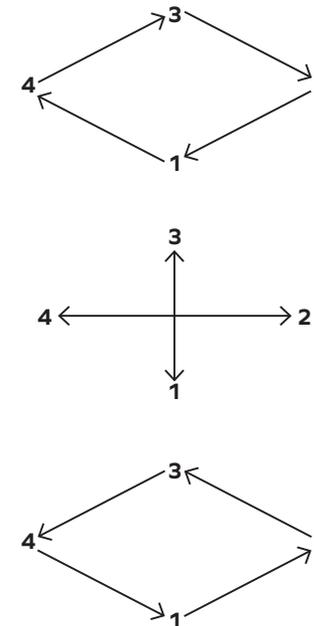
**Charleston**

After each player sets their tiles and decides on a goal, the first Exchange (or Charleston) begins. This step is compulsory.  
 The Exchange is an opportunity to improve your hand by trading unwanted tiles at the start of the game.  
 The three steps to the First Exchange are:  
 1. Each player passes 3 unwanted tiles to the player on their right.  
 2. Each player passes 3 unwanted tiles to the player opposite them.  
 3. Each player passes 3 unwanted tiles to the player on their left.  
 When passing in the Charleston, you must first give away your chosen tiles before looking at the new tiles you receive.  
 The Second Exchange is optional and must be agreed upon by all players.



- 4. Each player passes 3 unwanted tiles to the player at his left.
- 5. Each player passes 3 unwanted tiles to the player opposite him.
- 6. Each player passes 3 unwanted tiles to his right.

**Note:** Once you start the Exchange you must complete all 3 steps.  
 If you are satisfied with your tiles and do not wish to exchange, then you may pass the 3 tiles given to you without looking at them. This is called a **Blind Pass**.  
**No** Jokers are passed during an Exchange.  
 All other tiles may be passed.



## STEP IV To Play

Each player, working clockwise from East, picks up the next tile from the wall. Tiles are taken top, bottom, top, bottom from the wall stacks. They look at the tile and place it concealed on the flat top part of their rack. Then discards one unwanted tile by They look at the tile and place it on the rack with the rest of their hand. Then they discard one unwanted tile by announcing it and placing it face-up in the center area.

A player must always have exactly 13 tiles on their rack (except East, who starts with 14). If a player ever has more or fewer than this number, their hand is considered dead.

A dead hand means the player may no longer participate in the game until it ends. The player keeps their hand concealed and does not show it to anyone until the game is over.

If a player needs a tile discarded by another player, and the tile is now in the center, they must follow these rules:

**a.** If the player's hand is concealed, they may only call for a tile if it is the last tile needed to complete Mahjong.

**b.** If the player's hand is exposed, they may call for any tile needed to complete a Kong, Pung, Quint, or Mahjong, as long as the tile is the final one required.

**Note:** Players cannot call for a discarded tile to complete a pair (two of a kind). Jokers cannot be used to complete a pair, and if a joker is discarded, it cannot be claimed.

A round consists of each player taking a turn to pick up a tile from the wall and discarding one face-up to the center.

Rounds continue until a player declares Mahjong by completing a valid hand. If no one wins and all tiles are used, a new wall is built and play continues until someone wins.

## STEP V Scoring

Each hand is assigned a numerical value, agreed upon by the players before the game begins. Chips are used to pay the winner.

If a player wins Mahjong because another player discarded the final tile they needed, the discarding player pays double the value of the hand. All other players pay the single value of the hand.

Definitions BLIND PASS	In the Exchange or Charleston, a player takes three tiles from one player and passes them to another player, without looking at them. In this way, the other player's original tiles have not been changed. Players use the blind pass if they want to keep all their original tiles. <b>Note: A blind pass can only be done in the first left and last right.</b>
CONCEALED HAND	A player who is trying to obtain a hand which is valued as concealed may pick up a discarded tile from the center of the square formed by the racks, ONLY if it is the LAST tile he needs to win Mahjong.
DEAD HAND	If a player makes an error, either picking up too many or too few tiles, his hand is considered DEAD. He may not continue playing Mahjong until the game is over. He keeps his "DEAD HAND" out of view of all other players until the game is won. He must still pay the winner the full value of the hand.
EAST	The host player; has an advantage of one more tile than all other players, 14 tiles instead of 13.
EXCHANGE	Is a three-step process used by all players in an effort to improve their hand. Each player passes three unwanted tiles to another player. (For sequence of passes see page 13).
EXPOSED HAND	In an EXPOSED HAND, a player may pick up a discarded tile from the center of the square formed by the racks if it is the last tile he needs to complete a KONG, PUNG, QUINT, or Mahjong.
HAND	The main goal in Mahjong is to match your tiles with a HAND. A HAND is a grouping of 14 tiles made up by the players before the game starts. Several hands are usually made and one copy is given to each player.
KONG	4 of a kind with the same numerical value. Example: 4 number 8 Bams is Kong.
PUNG	3 of a kind with the same numerical value. Example: 3 number 5 Craks is a Pung.
QUINTS	5 of a kind. Example: 5 flowers.
ROUND	Each of the four players, having picked up a tile and discarded one, completes a round.

<b>RULES</b>	<b>PENALTIES</b>
No player may pick a tile out of turn.	<b>WARNING</b> - No Penalty.
No player may look at more than one tile each time he picks a tile from the wall.	<b>WARNING</b> - No Penalty.
If two players both claim a discarded tile, the tile is awarded to the player who needs it as the last tile to complete Mahjong.	
If a player has too few or too many tiles, his hand is considered "dead."	A player with a dead hand can not continue the game. He must keep his tiles concealed until the game is over. He must still pay the winner. Play must stand.
Once a player discards a tile, it cannot be exchanged.	
To claim a tile, the player must name the tile correctly.	If a tile is incorrectly named, it may not be taken.
If Mahjong is called in error and no one exposes his hand, the game continues.	No penalty.
If Mahjong is called mistakenly and a hand was exposed, the player with the exposed hand is out of the game.	The player with the exposed hand must pay the winner.
If Mahjong is mistakenly called and all but one player exposes his hand, the game is over.	The game is over and all pay the player with the unexposed hand.
If a player wins Mahjong because of a tile discarded by another player, the player who discarded the tile pays double the worth of the hand.	Player who discarded tile pays double to winner.
If a player wins Mahjong without calling for a discarded tile and without using a joker, the value of the hand is doubled.	All players pay double — the value of the winning hand.
Betting must always be cancelled.	If number is shown before the end of the game, all bets are cancelled.
The bettor pays and/or receives the full value of the hand he is betting on.	All penalties or awards received by the player backed by the bettor are also charged to the bettor.

## Examples of Hands

3-3-3 Bams	4-4-4 Bams	3-3-3-3 Dots	4-4-4-4 Dots			E . 25pts
5-5-5 Cracks	6-6-6 Cracks	7-7-7-7 Bams	8-8-8-8 Bams			E . 25pts
1-1-1 Dots	9-9-9 Dots	2-2-2-2 Cracks	3-3-3-3 Cracks			E . 25pts
1-1 Dots	2-2 Dots	3-3 Dots	4-4-4 Dots	5-5-5 Dots	F-F Flowers	C . 15pts
5-5 Bams	6-6 Bams	7-7 Bams	8-8-8 Bams	9-9-9 Bams	F-F Flowers	C . 15pts
3-3 Dots	4-4 Dots	5-5-5 Dots	6-6-6 Dots	F-F-F-F Flowers		E . 15pts
1-1 Bams	2-2 Bams	3-3-3 Bams	4-4-4 Bams	F-F-F-F Flowers		E . 15pts
5-5 Cracks	6-6 Cracks	7-7-7 Cracks	8-8-8 Cracks	F-F-F-F Flowers		E . 15pts
4 Red Dragons		8-8 Cracks	4 East Winds	4 West Winds		E . E 20pts
4 White Dragons		8-8 Dots	4 South Winds	4 North Winds		E . E 20pts
1-1-1 Dots	1-1-1 Bams	1-1-1 Cracks	3 North Winds	F-F Flowers		C . 20pts
4-4-4 Dots	4-4-4 Bams	4-4-4 Cracks	3 South Winds	F-F Flowers		C . 20pts
9-9-9 Dots	9-9-9 Bams	9-9-9 Cracks	3 East Winds	F-F Flowers		C . 20pts
1-1-1 Dots	9-9-9 Cracks	4-4-4 Bams	5-5-5 Bams	F-F Flowers		E . 15pts

E = Exposed Hand

C = Concealed Hand

Pts. = Point Value of Hand

### Official Hands Card

**American Mahjong uses the National Mah Jongg League Official Hands & Rules Card, updated yearly. We recommend purchasing the latest card at [www.nationalmahjongleague.org](http://www.nationalmahjongleague.org) to ensure fair and consistent play.**



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