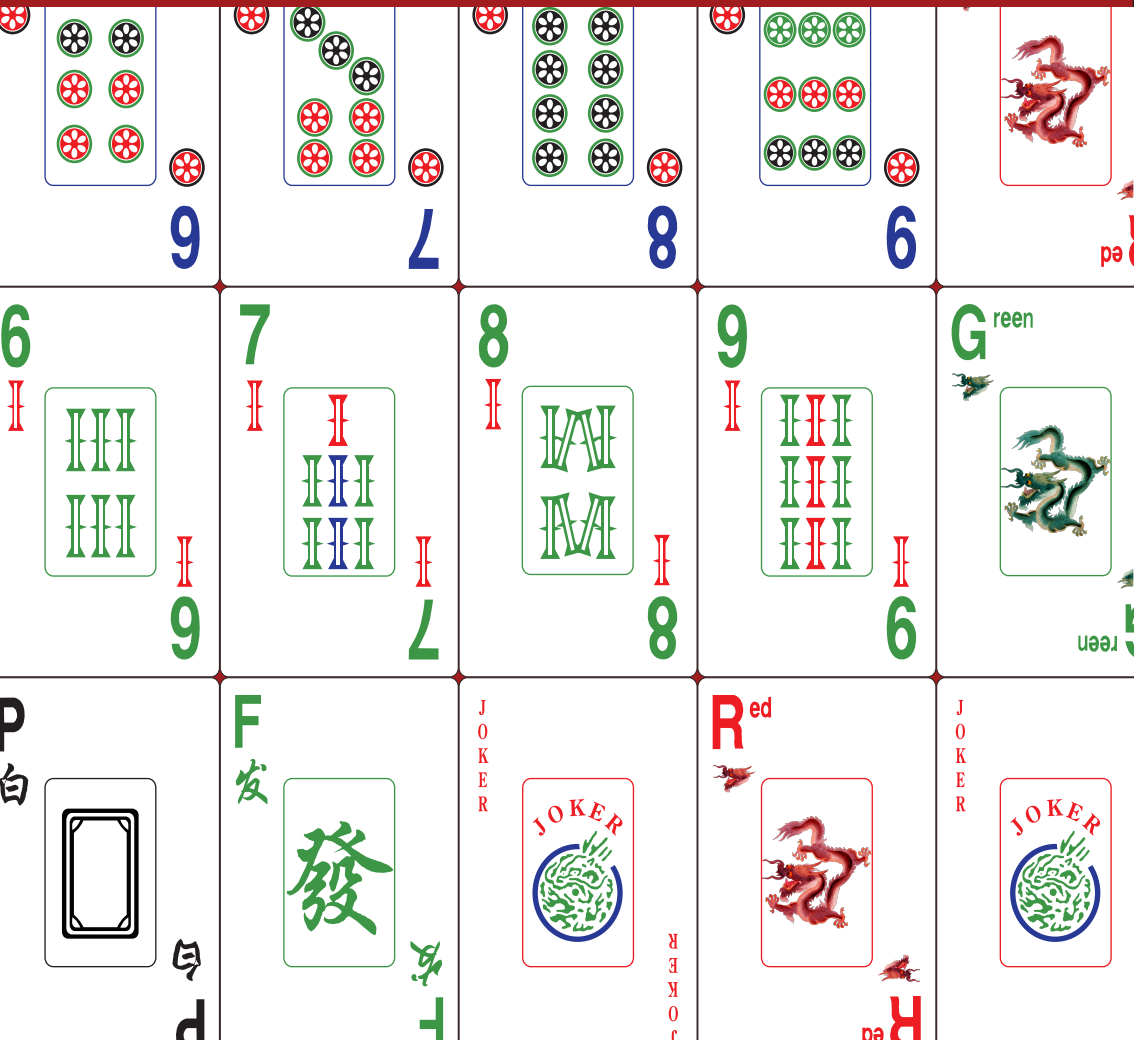


Learn to Play

# AMERICAN MAHJONG (Playing Cards Edition)



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# INTRODUCTION

American Mahjong is a four-player game of skill, strategy, and chance.

This playing-card edition follows the rules of American Mah Jongg (NMJL-style), as established by the National Mah Jongg League (NMJL), adapted for use with American Mahjong playing cards instead of tiles.

The goal of the game is to be the first player to complete a valid 14-card hand that exactly matches a hand on the NMJL scorecard and to declare “Mah Jongg!”

# WHAT’S INCLUDED

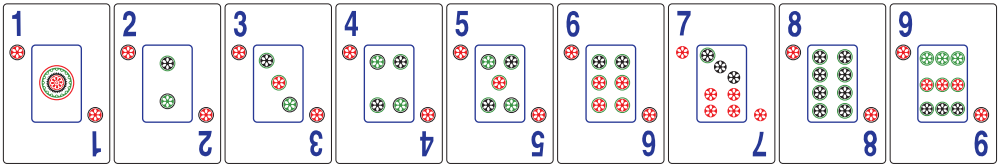
This American Mahjong Playing Cards set includes:

- **152 American Mahjong playing cards, representing:**
  - Suits (Dots, Bams, Craks)
  - Winds (East, South, West, North)
  - Dragons (Red, Green, White/Soap)
  - Flowers and Seasons
  - Jokers

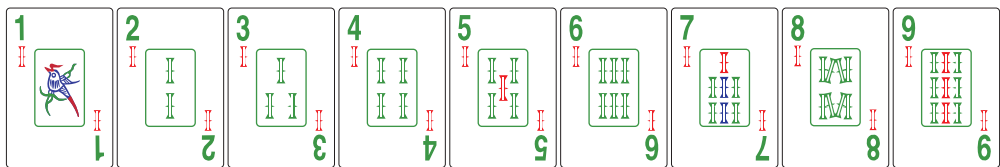
# CARD SET OVERVIEW

## Suits (108 cards)

- **Dots (Circles) – 1 through 9 (4 of each)**



- **Bams (Bamboos) – 1 through 9 (4 of each)**

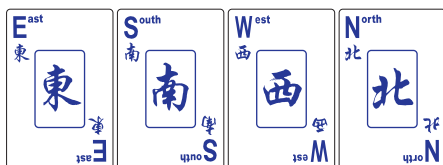


- Craks (Characters) – 1 through 9 (4 of each)

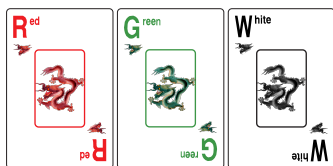


### Honors (28 cards)

- Winds – East, South, West, North (4 of each)

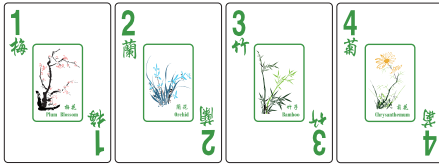


- Dragons – Red, Green, White (also called “Soap”) (4 of each)



### Flowers & Seasons (8 cards)

- Flowers: 1–4



- Seasons: 1-4



For NMJL-style play, all Flower and Season cards are treated as Flowers.

### Jokers (8 cards)



## NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 4 players, seated around a table.

## NMJL SCORECARD (REQUIRED, NOT INCLUDED)



American Mahjong is played using the official NMJL scorecard, published annually by

the National Mah Jongg League (NMJL). This scorecard is required for play and is not included in the playing card set.

Each player should have access to the NMJL scorecard to:

- Choose a hand to build
- Check whether a hand is Exposed (X) or Concealed (C)
- Confirm any scoring/payout rules used by your group

## SETUP

1. Choose one player to be East (Dealer) for the first game. For casual play, choose East at random.
2. Shuffle all 152 cards face down in the center of the table.
3. East (Dealer) draws 14 cards. Each other player draws 13 cards. Place the remaining cards face down as the draw pile.
4. Unlike tile play, no walls are built when using cards.

## PICKING A HAND

Each player selects one hand from the NMJL scorecard to build.

- You may change your target hand during play, as long as any exposed sets still fit the new hand.
- Your cards must exactly match the chosen hand to declare Mah Jongg.

## THE CHARLESTON

Before gameplay begins, players perform **The Charleston**, a unique feature of American Mahjong.

### First Charleston (Required)

1. Each player passes 3 unwanted cards to the player on their right.
2. Each player passes 3 cards to the player across from them.
3. Each player passes 3 cards to the player on their left (“first left”).
  - A blind pass is allowed only on this “first left” pass. This means you may pass 1, 2, or 3 received cards onward without looking at them.

## Optional Second Charleston

If all players agree:

1. Pass 3 cards to the left.
2. Pass 3 cards across.
3. Pass 3 cards to the right (“last right”). A blind pass is allowed only on this “last right” pass.
4. Optional courtesy pass between opposite players (up to 3 cards).

Jokers may NOT be passed during the Charleston or courtesy pass.

## GAMEPLAY

### Starting the Game

- East begins by discarding one card (East starts with 14 cards).
- Play proceeds counter-clockwise.

### On Your Turn

1. Draw one card from the draw pile.
2. Discard one card face up to the center.

Turn Summary: Draw → Discard → other players may call the most recent discard.  
After you discard, keep 13 cards in hand (East starts with 14 and discards to 13).

## CALLING CARDS

A discarded card may be called only if it does one of the following:

- Completes Mah Jongg, or
- Completes an exposed set that is part of the specific NMJL hand you are building.

Exposed set types include:

- **Pung** = 3 identical cards
- **Kong** = 4 identical cards
- **Quint** = 5 identical cards
- **Sextet** = 6 identical cards

Rules:

- The most recent discard only may be called.
- If you call a discard to expose a set, you do not draw a card on that turn. After exposing the set, discard one card to end your turn.
- A discard may not be called to complete a single card or a pair, unless it completes Mah Jongg.
- The exposed set cannot be changed after it is placed on the table.
- If multiple players call:
  - A call for Mah Jongg has priority.
  - Otherwise, the closest player in turn order receives the card.

## CONCEALED HANDS (C)

If you are building a concealed hand:

- Do not call discards to expose sets.
- You may declare Mah Jongg using only the most recent discard as your final card (if it completes your concealed hand).

## JOKER RULES

- Jokers may substitute for any card in a pung, kong, quint, or sextet.
- Jokers may NOT be used to complete:
  - A pair
  - A single card

### Joker Exchange

If a joker is exposed in your own set or another player's set, and you hold the actual card it represents:

1. On your turn, draw or call as normal.
2. Exchange your matching real card for the exposed joker.
3. Take the joker into your hand.
4. Discard one card to end your turn.

You do not expose a new set when making a joker exchange. You may exchange for a joker only from a valid exposed set, not from a hand that has been declared dead. A dead hand is a hand that has been ruled invalid and can no longer win that game.

# ENDING THE GAME

The game ends when:

- A player declares Mah Jongg, or
- The draw pile is exhausted (a draw). No payouts are made.

# SCORING & PAYOUTS

Scoring follows the NMJL scorecard exactly.

Common guidelines:

- Mah Jongg off a discard: the discarder may pay more, depending on your group's scoring rules
- Mah Jongg by draw: all other players pay the winner
- Check the NMJL scorecard for the exact value of the completed hand and any special scoring notes

(Players may score with chips, coins, or simply track wins.)

# AFTER THE FIRST GAME

- The East position rotates counter-clockwise
- Shuffle all cards and begin a new game

# FINAL NOTE


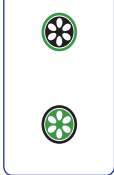
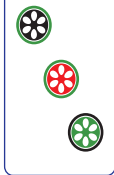
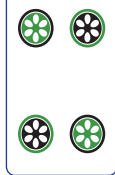
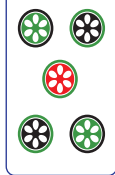

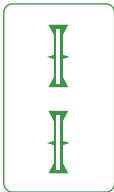
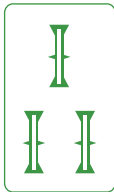
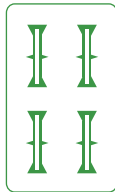
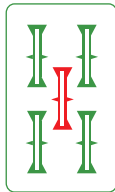
These instructions adapt traditional American Mahjong rules for **playing cards**, maintaining:

- NMJL-compliant hands
- Jokers and Charleston rules
- Authentic American Mahjong gameplay



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 1	 2	 3	 4	 5
 1	 2	 3	 4	 5
South 南 S	North 北 N	East 東 E	West 西 W	Center 中 C