

American Mah Jongg quick reference

1 The tiles: 152 in all

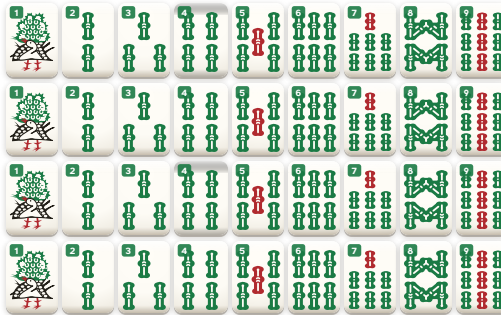
Every tile in the set is drawn on this page. Each number tile, wind and dragon comes four times.

Bams

also called bamboo

1 to 9, four of each: 36 tiles

The 1 Bam is the bird.



Green Dragon, 4 tiles. It goes with the bams.

Craks

also called characters

1 to 9, four of each: 36 tiles

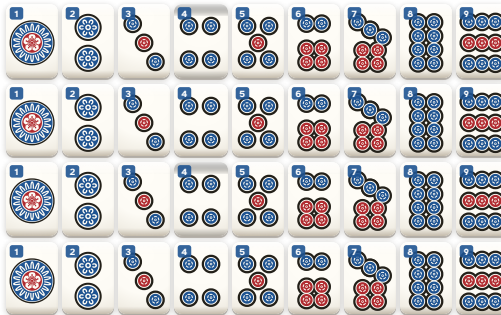


Red Dragon, 4 tiles. It goes with the craks.

Dots

also called circles

1 to 9, four of each: 36 tiles



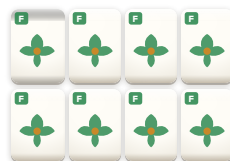
White Dragon, 4 tiles. It goes with the dots.

Winds



North, East, West and South, four of each: 16 tiles.

Flowers



8 tiles. Every flower counts as the same tile, whatever its picture.

Jokers



8 tiles. A joker stands in for a tile; page 2 says where.

White Dragon as zero



The White Dragon (players call it soap) is also the zero, as in a year: 2026.

108 number tiles + 12 dragons + 16 winds + 8 flowers + 8 jokers = **152 tiles**

2 Groups and jokers

A hand is fourteen tiles made of groups. Check the group before you use a joker or call a discard.

GROUP	EXAMPLE	JOKER ALLOWED?	CALL A DISCARD TO SHOW IT?	CALL A DISCARD TO WIN?
Single one tile		× No	× No	✓ Yes
Pair two of the same tile		× No	× No	✓ Yes
Three of a kind (pung) three of the same tile		✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
Four of a kind (kong) four of the same tile		✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
Five of a kind (quint) five of the same tile		✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
Separate tiles a run, NEWS, a year		× No	× No	✓ Yes

- **To win**, you may call a discard for any group, even a single or a pair, but only when that tile finishes your whole hand.
- **Five of a kind** of a number tile, a wind or a dragon always uses at least one joker, because only four of each exist.
- **A hand marked C** on the card is concealed. It stays on your rack until you win, and the only discard you may call is the tile that wins. A hand marked X may show groups made with called tiles.

Jokers can be used to make 3 of a kind or more, but not pairs.



Allowed. Three of a kind: two 7 Dots and a joker.



Not allowed. A pair: a 5 Crak and a joker.

Two more joker rules

A thrown joker is dead. Nobody may pick it up, not even to win.

Swap for a joker. On your turn, if any player has shown a group with a joker in it, you may put the real tile in its place and take the joker.



+ your

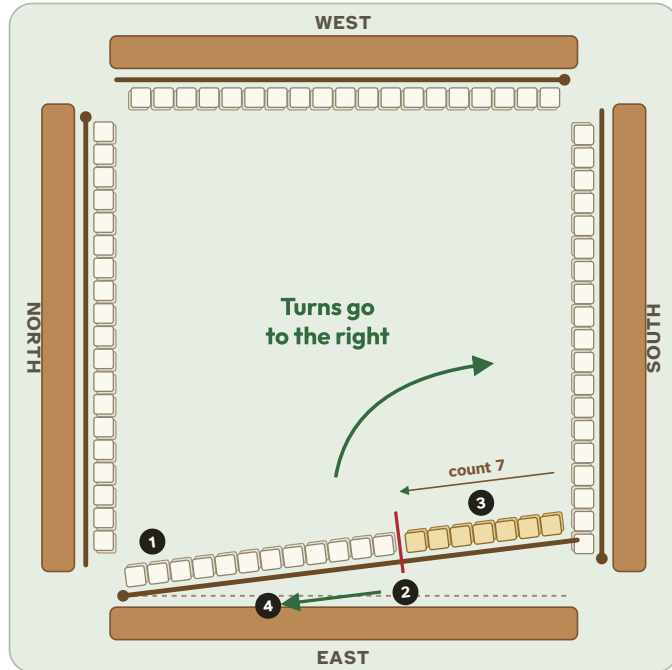


→



and the joker is yours

3 The table



1. Each player builds a row of 19 stacks, two tiles high, along the rack. The rack is as long as the row. Its rod is hinged at the owner's left end and swings the row in at an angle when it is needed.
2. East rolls two dice, counts that many stacks from the right end of East's row (7 here), and splits the row there.
3. The stacks to the right of the split are drawn last.
4. The deal starts on the other side of the split. East gets 14 tiles, everyone else 13.

5 A turn

1. **East goes first by throwing a tile.** East starts with 14, so East does not draw.
2. **Draw one, throw one.** Take the next tile from the wall, then throw one face up and say its name, such as "four dot".
3. **Turns go to the right.**
4. **Calling a discard.** Any player may call the tile just thrown to make three of a kind or more, or to win. Show the group face up, then throw. Do not draw. Play goes on to your right.

The hands you may win with are the lines on the card your table plays.

4 The Charleston

Before the first throw, everyone passes three tiles at the same time, face down.

First Charleston everyone passes



Right



Across



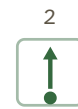
Left

blind pass allowed

Second Charleston optional: anyone may stop it before it starts



Left



Across



Right

blind pass allowed

Courtesy pass optional



Across only, 0 to 3 tiles. You and the player across each say a number, and you both pass the smaller one.

- **Never pass a joker.**
- **Blind pass:** on the last pass of each Charleston, you may pass on tiles just passed to you without looking at them. You still pass three.

6 Reading a line on the card

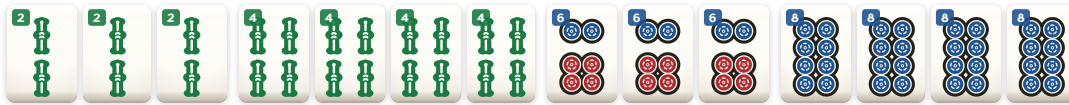
Each line on the card is one hand of 14 tiles. The colours tell you how many suits; you choose which ones.

FF 1111 3333 5555 X 25



One colour for the numbers: all one suit, any suit you like. Here it is Craks.

222 4444 666 8888 X 25



Two colours: two different suits. Here the green numbers are Bams and the red are Dots.

On the card	Means	Tiles
F	A Flower	
0	The White Dragon (soap), used as zero	
D	A dragon: Red, Green or White	
NEWS	The winds	
X	Exposed: you may call thrown tiles for its groups	
C	Concealed: it stays on your rack, and only the winning tile may be called	
25	What the hand is worth	

7 Winning and paying

Call "Mah Jongg" and lay all 14 tiles face up. Everyone checks the hand against the card.

How the game ended	The player who threw it	Each other player
You won on a thrown tile	pays you 2 times the value	pays you the value
You won on a tile you drew	nobody threw it	pays you 2 times the value
The wall ran out	nobody wins and nobody pays	

- **No jokers in your hand doubles every payment**, except in Singles and Pairs and in Quints.
- **A dead hand still pays.** Once your hand cannot be made, stop throwing tiles others might need.

