



Find My Mahjong

where players gather

American Mahjong • Course 1: First Steps • Lesson 1.1

What Is American Mahjong?

What you'll get from this lesson: A clear picture of what the game is, where it comes from, and what makes the American version its own thing.

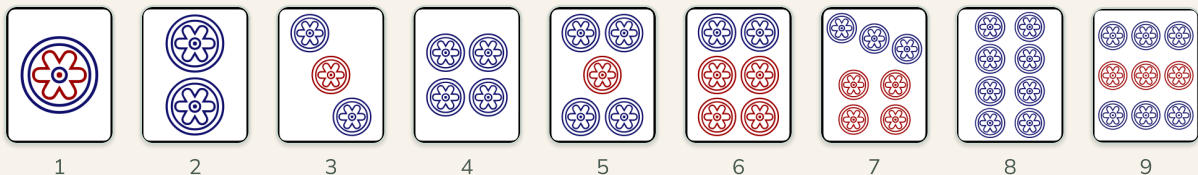
Welcome. If you've ever watched a table of players clicking tiles, laughing, and calling out words like "pung" and "Mah Jongg," you've seen American mahjong in action. It's a game for four players, built around one simple goal: be the first to collect a complete hand of fourteen tiles that matches one of the winning patterns on a printed card.

The two things that make it "American"

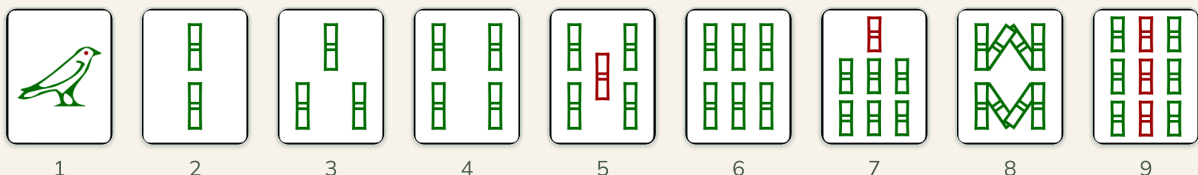
That card is the heart of the American game. Instead of inventing your own combinations, you work from a shared menu of hands that changes every year. The other special ingredient is the **joker** — a wildcard tile that can stand in for tiles you're missing. Together, the card and the jokers make American mahjong wonderfully welcoming to beginners: there's always a hand to aim for, and always a little help along the way.

The American Mahjong Tile Set

Suit Dots (circles) — numbered 1 to 9, four of each. Look for circles.



Suit Bams (bamboo) — numbered 1 to 9, four of each. Look for bamboo.



Suit Cracks (characters) — numbered 1 to 9, four of each. Look for a number over a character.





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Honors The four Winds — four of each.



East

South

West

North

Honors The three Dragons — each pairs with one suit. The White Dragon is nicknamed “Soap.”

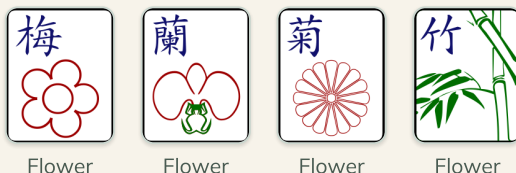


Red Dragon

Green Dragon

White Dragon (“Soap”)

Flowers Eight Flower tiles — used inside certain hands, not set aside as bonuses.



Flower

Flower

Flower

Flower

Wild Eight Jokers — wildcards that stand in for a tile inside a group of three or more.



Joker (wildcard)

Original visual glossary composed for Find My Mahjong. 152 tiles: 3 suits × 9 × 4, 16 Winds, 12 Dragons, 8 Flowers, 8 Jokers. Tile art is public domain.

You don’t need to read Chinese, and you don’t need a perfect memory. You’ll learn the tiles by their pictures, and the card stays in front of you the whole game. Most people play their first full hand within an hour of sitting down.

It’s really about the table

More than anything, American mahjong is social. It became a beloved gathering game precisely because it gives four people a reason to sit together, trade tiles, and enjoy each other’s company. Winning is fun, but the real draw is the company. That’s the spirit we bring to every game here at Find My Mahjong — a place where players gather.



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In the lessons ahead we'll meet the tiles up close, set up a table, learn the famous Charleston passing round, open up the card, and play a hand from the first draw to the winning call. Take it one lesson at a time.