

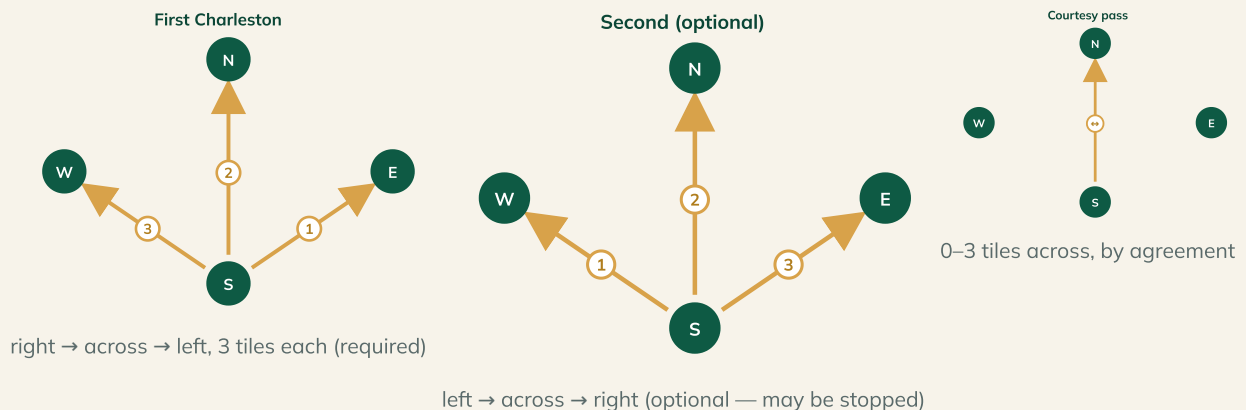


The Charleston, Step by Step

What you'll get from this lesson: Pass tiles correctly and confidently — the two required rounds, the courtesy pass, and the joker rule.

The Charleston is one of the most distinctive parts of American mahjong, and it happens at the start of every hand. It's a series of passes that lets all four players trade away tiles they don't want and pick up ones they do. The first time, it feels a bit like a dance — which is exactly where the name comes from.

The Charleston — How Tiles Pass



Original arrow diagram. "S" is you; passes go to the seat shown, 3 tiles per pass. Jokers are never passed. Numbers show the order within each round.

The first Charleston

Three passes in a row, three tiles each: first to your **right**, then **across** the table, then to your **left**. You receive three back each time, so your hand stays at thirteen. Pass away what doesn't fit the hand you're eyeing, and hold onto pairs, Flowers, and jokers.

The second Charleston and the courtesy pass

There's an optional second round that runs the other way — left, across, right — and it can be stopped if your hand is already coming together, or skipped entirely if everyone agrees. Finally, the



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where players gather

two players across from each other may agree to one last **courtesy pass** of zero to three tiles.

Watch out. One firm rule: jokers are NEVER passed during the Charleston. They stay on your rack, no matter what.

Tip. A **blind pass** lets you pass along a tile you just received without looking at it, when you don't have enough you're willing to give up. Tables differ on exactly when it's allowed, so ask how your group plays.