

PLAYIRO

How to Play Mahjong (Traditional Chinese Rules)

Mahjong is a classic four-player tile-based strategy game originating in China. Players aim to complete a 14-tile winning hand by forming sets and a pair before their opponents.

Game Overview

Players	4 (standard)
Tiles	144 total (3 suits, winds, dragons, bonus tiles)
Objective	Form 4 sets + 1 pair (14 tiles)
Turn Structure	Draw → Discard → Maintain 13 tiles
Winning Call	Declare 'Mahjong' or 'Hu'

Types of Sets

Set Type	Description
Pung	3 identical tiles
Chow	3 consecutive numbers in same suit
Kong	4 identical tiles (extra draw required)
Pair	2 matching tiles

Claiming Discards

- Pung or Kong can be claimed from any player
- Chow only from player to your left
- Pung/Kong claims have priority over Chow
- Revealed sets must be placed face-up immediately

Simplified Scoring Examples

Combination	Points
Pung (number tiles)	2
Pung (honor tiles)	4
Kong	8
Flower/Season	+1 each

Special Hands	Multipliers apply
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Strategy Tips

- Focus on one or two suits instead of all three
- Track opponents' discards and exposed sets
- Play defensively if someone appears close to winning
- Discard honor and terminal tiles early unless needed

Popular Variants

- Hong Kong Mahjong – simplified scoring
- Japanese Riichi Mahjong – yaku-based scoring and riichi declarations
- American Mahjong – uses jokers and NMJL scorecards
- Mahjong Solitaire – single-player puzzle variant