



Mahjong Rules & Illustrated Guide

Everything you need to play PLAYCODE3 Mahjong, explained
from the beginning. No experience needed.



PLAYCODE3 Mahjong · a beginner's guide to the rules of the game

The goal of the game

Build a complete hand of four sets and one pair, then call MAHJONG.

A **set** is three of a kind, three running numbers in the same suit, or four of a kind. A **pair** is two identical tiles. The moment your tiles form four sets plus one pair, your hand is complete and you win. There are no point minimums and no special hands to memorise — if the shape is complete, it wins.

Getting started

1 Choose Solo or Online

Solo plays against the computer. Online seats you with real people.

2 Roll for the dealer

Each seat presses  ROLL DICE in turn. The highest total deals, and that player becomes East.

3 Take your 13 tiles

Everyone is dealt 13 tiles. The remaining tiles form the wall you will draw from. The dealer takes a 14th tile by drawing on their own first turn.

4 Play in turn

On your turn you draw one tile and then discard one tile, so your hand is always 13 tiles when your turn ends.

5 Call MAHJONG when complete

As soon as your hand is four sets and a pair, press MAHJONG. The game checks the shape for you.

Seats and turn order

Which way play goes

Play passes around the table one seat at a time, always in the same direction. The player whose turn comes immediately before yours sits **to your right** on screen — remember that, because it decides who you may Chow from.

The dealer

The dice decide who deals. The dealer is East, and the other seats take South, West and North in order. The dealer plays the first turn.

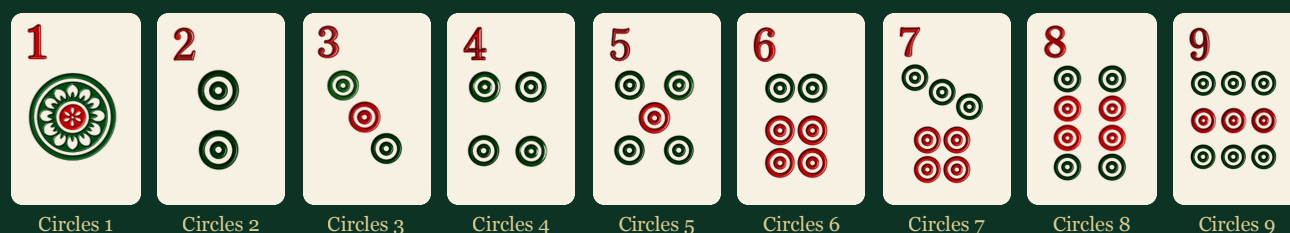
The tiles

The wall holds **136 tiles**: 34 different faces, four copies of each. There are no jokers, no flowers and no season tiles — every tile you see is one of the 34 below.

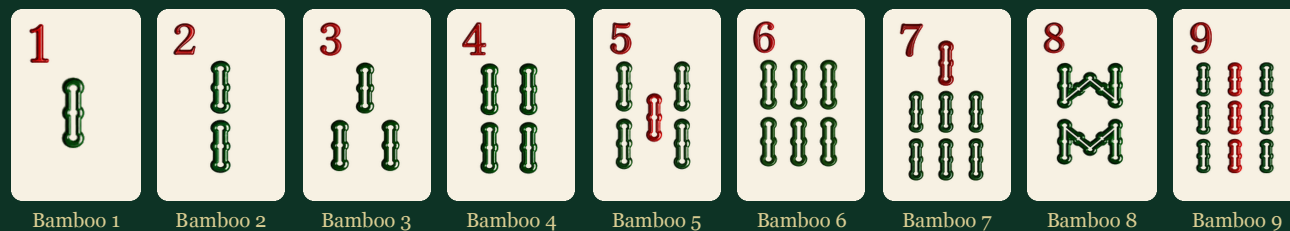
Characters 1 to 9 — shown on screen as “Char”



Circles 1 to 9



Bamboo 1 to 9



Honour tiles 7 faces — these can never form a run



How a turn works

Every turn is the same two actions: take one tile, then let one go.

1

Draw

Press DRAW to take the next tile from the wall. It slides into your hand in order and glows, so you can always see what you just picked up.

2

Decide

Look at whether the new tile helps. Ask yourself which tile in your hand is now doing the least work towards four sets and a pair.

3

Discard

Click a tile to select it, then press DISCARD. It goes face up in the middle where everyone can see it.

4

Others may claim

The discarded tile is offered to the other players. If someone claims it, play jumps to them. If nobody does, the turn simply passes on.

The buttons you will use

- **DRAW** — take your tile for the turn.
- **DISCARD** — click a tile first to select it, then press DISCARD.
- **CHOW · PONG · KONG** — appear only when you are actually able to make that call.
- **MAHJONG** — appears when your hand is complete. Press it to win.
- **PASS** — decline a tile you could claim and let play continue.
-  **TILES** — tap any tile to see how many of it have already appeared.
-  **MENU** — pause, settings, the guide, or leave the table.

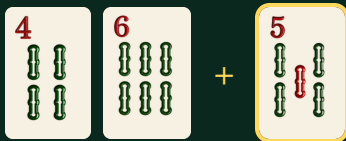
Chow, Pong and Kong

When another player discards, you may be able to take that tile and complete a set with it. Claiming is optional — you can always press PASS.

Chow three in a row

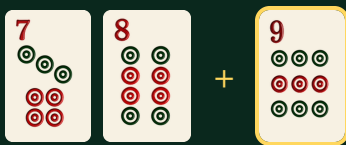
Three consecutive numbers in the **same suit**. Honour tiles can never be part of a Chow.

Filling the middle



You hold Bamboo 4 and Bamboo 6. Someone discards Bamboo 5 and it completes 4-5-6.

Extending the end



You hold Circles 7 and 8. Circles 9 finishes the run. Circles 6 would have worked too.

Who can call it: only the player whose turn is next — in practice, the tile thrown by the player on your right.

Pong three of a kind

Three identical tiles. You must already be holding two of them.

Completing a triplet



You hold two Char 3. Anyone discards the third and you may claim it.

Honours work too



Winds, Dragon, Phoenix and Mirror can be Ponged, even though they can never be Chowed.

Who can call it: any player, from any seat at the table.

Kong

Kong four of a kind

All four copies of one tile. A Kong still counts as only **one** of your four sets, and you draw a replacement tile afterwards so your hand stays the right size.

Claiming the fourth



You hold three West Wind. Someone discards the fourth and you may take it, then draw a replacement tile.

Who can call it: any player, from any seat — or from your own hand, see below.

A Kong from your own hand



If all four copies arrive in your own hand, the game makes the Kong for you and draws your replacement tile automatically. The same happens if you already showed a Pong and later pick up the fourth tile — it is simply added to the set you already have.

Winning the hand

Four sets and one pair. That is the whole requirement.

- A **set** is three of a kind, three running numbers in one suit, or four of a kind.
- A **Kong counts as one set**, not two — the replacement tile keeps your hand the right size.
- The **pair is required**. A hand with no pair is not complete.
- Sets you have already shown on the table count towards your four.
- There is **no minimum score** and there are **no special hands** — no seven pairs, no thirteen orphans. If the shape is complete, it wins.
- You may win on a tile you drew yourself, or on a tile another player discarded.
- A discard you could win on stays available to you right up until your own next draw.

A complete hand: four sets and a pair



A run in Bamboo, a triplet of Circles 2, a run in Characters, a triplet of East Wind, and a pair of Red Phoenix. Four sets plus a pair — this hand wins.

Common mistakes

✖ **Trying to Chow from the wrong player**

A Chow can only be taken from the player whose turn comes immediately before yours. A Pong or a Kong can be taken from anyone.

✖ **Trying to Chow an honour tile**

Winds, Dragon, Phoenix and Mirror have no numbers, so they can never make a run. They can still be a pair, a Pong or a Kong.

✖ **Forgetting the pair**

Four sets with no pair is not a winning hand. Keep two matching tiles set aside as you build.

✖ **Expecting a Kong to count double**

Four of a kind is still only one of your four sets. What it gives you is an extra tile from the wall.

✖ **Waiting to be told you have won**

After a Chow or a Pong completes your hand, press MAHJONG yourself — the game will not claim the win for you.

✖ **Claiming every tile you can**

Every Chow and Pong shows part of your hand to the table and takes away your flexibility. Passing is often the stronger move.

Quick reference

Call	You already hold	You may take it from
Chow	Two tiles that make a run with it, same suit	Only the player to your right
Pong	Two tiles identical to it	Any player
Kong	Three tiles identical to it	Any player
Mahjong	Four sets and one pair	Any player, or your own draw

Worth remembering

- **136 tiles:** Characters, Circles and Bamboo each 1–9, plus four Winds, Green Dragon, Red Phoenix and White Mirror. Four copies of each. No jokers, no flowers.
- **A turn is draw, then discard.** Your hand is 13 tiles when your turn ends.
- **Honour tiles never form runs.** Pair, Pong or Kong only.
- **After a Chow or Pong you discard straight away** — no replacement tile. **After a Kong you draw first**, then discard.
- **House rule:** if two players want the same discard, a win beats a Chow, and a Chow beats a Pong or a Kong. This is the reverse of some published mahjong rules, so do say so if you are teaching someone who already plays.
- **A Kong is one set**, and the pair is always required.
- **Nothing is lost by passing.** You can decline any claim.