

American mahjong cheat sheet

THE TILES: 152 IN ALL



Dots 36

1 to 9, 4 of each



Bams 36

1 to 9, 4 of each. The 1 Bam is a bird.



Craks 36

1 to 9, 4 of each. Read the corner.



Winds 16

North, East, West, South. 4 of each.



Dragons 12

Red, Green and Soap. 4 of each.



Flowers 8

All 8 count as the same tile



Jokers 8

Stand in for a tile in a set of 3 or more

Dragons go with suits: Red with Craks, Green with Bams, Soap with Dots. Soap can also be a zero.

THE SETS

Single 1 tile, as in 2026. No jokers.

Pair 2 of the same tile. No jokers.

Pung 3 of the same tile

Kong 4 of the same tile

Quint 5 of the same tile. Needs a joker, except flowers.

BEFORE PLAY

- East has 14 tiles. Everyone else has 13.
- Pick a hand on the card that your tiles are close to.

THE CHARLESTON

1. Pass 3 tiles face down: **right, across, left**.
2. If everyone agrees, a second round: **left, across, right**.
3. Last, a courtesy pass: 0 to 3 tiles **across**.

Never pass a joker. After the first round, anyone can stop the second round.

YOUR TURN

1. East goes first by throwing one tile. East does not draw first.
2. On your turn, draw a tile from the wall.
3. Throw one tile face up and say its name.
4. Play goes to the right, counterclockwise.

You may call the tile just thrown to finish a pung, kong or quint, then show the set. You can't call for a pair or a single tile, unless it gives you mahjong.

JOKERS

- Use them only in sets of 3 or more.
- Never in a pair or as a single tile.
- A thrown joker can't be called.
- On your turn, you can swap the real tile for a joker in any exposed set.

WINNING

- Your 14 tiles must match one hand on the card exactly.
- Say "Mahjong" and lay all 14 tiles face up.
- Hands marked C are concealed. You can only call your last tile, for mahjong.