

U3A MORAIRA MAHJONG GROUP

There are many variations of Mahjong played in China and other parts of the world. Our group uses the new International Rules (sometimes called Majong Competition Rules) devised by China in 1998 after analyzing many different forms of play and scoring. It was used for the first World Mah Jong championships in Tokyo in 2002.

If you are new to the game, you will play Mahjong in its simplest form (Pungs, Kongs & Chows) for a few weeks in order to get used to the tiles and the form of play. Then a variety of proper scoring hands will be gradually introduced, and this is the real appeal of the game. The more you learn, the better you will become, and the more enjoyment you will get from the game. If you have played Mahjong before, then you will move on to the proper scoring hands more quickly.

THE TILES

There are 144 tiles in a Mahjong set which consist of:-

3 Suits: each suit has numbers 1 – 9, four of each number.

Characters,

Circles and

Bamboos,

Honour tiles: four of each
4 winds: East, South,
West, North.

3 dragons: Red, Green
and White.

Bonus Tiles: Flowers and
Seasons, 8 in
total, not
included
towards initial score.



Often a few blank tiles are included in a set in case of loss.

THE AIM

In order to 'go Mahjong', players need to combine their tiles into 4 groups of 3 and a matching pair (14 tiles in all). This means that no tile is discarded when you call Mahjong!

The groups of 3 can be:

A **Pung** = 3 identical tiles

A **Kong** = 4 identical tiles (If you have a Kong, you will need to claim an extra tile in order to make up the 4 groups and a pair to 'go Mah Jong'.)

A **Chow** = 3 tiles of same suit in sequence (a run).

SETTING UP

Normally four players per game using square tables (but it is possible to play with three people and a 'dummy'. Players are called East, South, West or North wind. (You could think of East wind as the 'dealer')

All tiles are placed face down on table and then well mixed up or 'washed'.

Each player then arranges a row of 18 tiles in front of them and then another row on top. i.e. 36 tiles, all face down.

The four rows are pushed together to form an unbroken square, representing the Great Wall of China and then the game starts

GETTING STARTED

Initially, each player throws the 2 dice - highest becomes East Wind (after the first game the next person anti-clockwise becomes East wind).

- a. East wind then throws again and counts anti-clockwise starting with him/herself. e.g. count of 6 would mean that the player to his right (South wind) has to throw the dice next.
- b. South wind adds the original 6 to his throw of say 7 which equals a total of 13, and then counts from right to left and makes a break in the wall between tiles 13 and 14.
- c. East wind starts by taking 4 tiles i.e. stacks 14 and 15. The next 4 tiles (2 stacks) are taken by South, next 4 by West and next 4 by North. Repeat until all players have 12 tiles.
- d. Then each player takes one tile to make the correct playing number of 13 tiles in ones hand. Then only East takes a 14th tile.
- e. All players then look at their tiles. If any player has a Flower or Season tile, it is laid down, face up and East wind invites players to take a replacement tile.
- f. East wind then starts the game by discarding a tile (so that he has 13 tiles again).
- g. Play takes place anti-clockwise, so it is South's turn to pick up an extra tile.

PLAYING

Each player picks up one tile per turn, usually from the 'wall', and then discards the tile which seems the least useful. At each turn (except when going Mah Jong) the player has to discard one tile stating out loud and clear the type and value of the tile.

Players may also pick up a discarded tile in order to make a group of 3 if they already have the other 2 tiles in their hand. Convention dictates that the other two tiles making up the 'set' are placed down first, and the picked up tile is immediately placed with them.

Players can pick up anyone's discarded tile if it is to make a **Pung** or **Kong**, **but** if it is to make a **Chow**, the player may only pick up a discarded tile from the person to their left.

Discarded tiles are placed in neat rows of 6 in front of the player, and preferable inside the original square.

Any player may claim a discarded tile to go **Mah Jong**, and their claim on that tile would take precedence over any other claim; otherwise a claim for a Pung takes precedence over a Chow.

Whilst playing, once the next player has taken a new tile from the Wall and looked at it, it is too late to call for a discarded tile.

Surely that is enough for the first few weeks!

It is easier play than it is to read the rules, but I wanted you to have this guide as an aid to play the simplified form before you buy the official book.

The New Mahjong by D B Pritchard ISBN 0-7160-2164-1

Buy at Bookworld Espana in Javea Tel 966 462 253 or

Best Buy at www.thebookdepository.co.uk (free p+p) or www.amazon.co.uk

(The book appears to be out of print at the moment, but should be reprinted soon)