

BRITISH MAH-JONG - THE GAME OF 4 WINDS

"MAH-JONGG IS SEDUCTIVE. FROM THE RICH LUSTER OF THE TILES AND THE CHALLENGING NATURE OF THE GAME ITSELF TO ITS ENIGMATIC HISTORY AND MAGICAL POWER TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER, MAH-JONGG IS NOT JUST A GAME, IT'S A WAY OF LIFE"

(From "Mah-Jongg from Shanghai to Miami Beach" by Christina Cavallaro & Anita Luu)

The Object of the game

To be the first to go mah-jong i.e. to declare a hand containing a minimum of 14 tiles made up of a combination of:-

- Pungs - 3 tiles of the same suit and number
- Kongs - 4 tiles of the same suit and number
- Chows - a run of tiles of 3 consecutive numbers in the same suit. (A mah-jong hand may contain only one chow in the British variation)
- A Pair or 'Sparrow's Head' - 2 tiles of the same suit and number.

There are also a number of special mah-jong hands that qualify as a completed mah-jong hand and which have a high scoring value.

Preliminaries

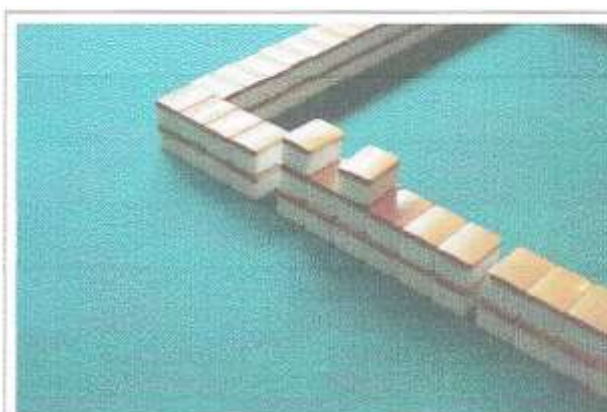
1. At the beginning of the game each player is called by the name of a Wind - East, South, West or North.
2. A game consists of four rounds (a minimum of 16 hands) and a round is complete when each player has had a turn and lost as East Wind (see Rule 27).
3. Each round is known by the name of a Wind and this is called the Prevailing Wind or Wind of the Round. The Prevailing Wind for the first round is always East. The three remaining rounds are South, West and North respectively.
4. At the start of play four Wind tiles or discs should be placed face down on the table and shuffled. Each player draws a tile/disc to determine the order of seating. The person drawing East has the first choice of seat and each of the other players take their seats according to the tile/disc drawn. South sits on East's right, West opposite East and North to East's left. These seats are retained for the duration of the whole game.

The indicator tiles/discs are placed in the tong box which is kept in front of the player who was East for the first round. The Wind of the Round should be visible in the tong box and is changed at the end of each round (i.e. when the player who was originally East becomes East again).

5. The tiles are placed face down in the centre of the table and are 'washed' (shuffled with the fingertips) thoroughly by South and North. This is known as the 'twittering of the sparrows'. East calls 'Pow!' when he feels the tiles have been sufficiently mixed.
6. After the call each player builds a wall 18 tiles long and 2 tiles high which is pushed towards the centre of the table forming a closed square. Traditionally the right end of the Wall abuts the inside of the Wall on the right and overlaps the end of the left hand Wall.

The Wall abutted to the right

7. East throws 2 dice into the square to determine which wall is to be broken. Starting with himself he counts each player in an anti-clockwise direction to the number indicated by the dice.
8. The chosen player throws the 2 dice again and adds the total thrown to the previous total thrown by East.
9. Starting from the right end of the wall the player counts the number of tiles designated by the combined scores of the dice and picks up the 2 tiles at the end of the count.
10. Moving in an anti-clockwise direction the player drops the bottom of the 2 tiles on top of the pair next to the break. The other tile is placed on top of the third pair of tiles from the break. These 2 tiles are known as 'loose tiles'.



The Kong Box

11. The player then counts off 6 pairs of tiles from the break, in an anti-clockwise direction and separates this group of tiles from the rest of the wall. This group of 14 tiles is known as the 'dead' wall or kong box. The remainder of the tiles make up the 'live' wall.

12. East begins by taking the first 2 pairs of tiles (4 pieces) from the live wall in a clockwise direction away from the kong box. South Wind takes the next 2 pairs, followed by West and North. The players repeat this procedure twice more so that each player has 12 tiles. East Wind now takes the top tiles from the first and third pair of tiles of the remaining live wall giving him a total of 14 tiles. The other 3 players take one tile each in turn bringing their total to 13 tiles.
13. If the Seasons & Flowers are being used these are declared and displayed in front of each player to the right of the table. Again, beginning with East and progressing in an anti-clockwise direction, the players replace their Season or Flower tiles with a replacement tile drawn from the loose tiles on top of the kong box beginning with the tile furthest away from the initial break in the wall. As the loose tiles are used they are replaced by another two tiles from the tiles remaining in the kong box. Should all the tiles in the kong box be used during the course of the game any further replacement tiles are drawn from the end of the live wall.
14. East begins by discarding a tile face up into the playing area enclosed by the wall. With every discard a player must call out the name of the discarded tile clearly for the benefit of the other players.
15. Should one of the other players already have 2 or 3 tiles of the same suit and number or denomination (E, S, W or N Wind; Red, Green or White Dragon) he can call "Pung!" or "Kong!" and claim the discard to complete one of these sets. The set must be displayed face-up in front of the player and, in the case of a kong being called, a replacement tile is taken from the kong box.
16. If no-one claims the discard South continues by drawing a tile from the wall and following this with a discard which, in turn, may be claimed by one of the other players as described in Rule 15. Should a player claim a discard he is always the next player to discard i.e. any intervening players lose their turn to draw and discard.
17. Should a player draw a third or fourth tile from the wall to form a pung or kong this is known as a 'concealed' pung or kong and scores double the amount claimed for the equivalent 'exposed' set claimed from another player's discard. A concealed kong must still be displayed in front of the player as he has to take a replacement tile from the kong box before making his discard. A concealed kong is indicated by the 2 middle tiles being placed face down. A concealed pung may be retained in the hand until it is promoted to a kong but when the hand is scored the concealed pung is shown by turning the centre tile face down.
18. A pung that has been declared and exposed on the table cannot be promoted into a kong by calling for a discard but if the fourth tile is drawn from the wall it may be added to the tiles already on the table.
19. If 2 players should call for the discard the higher call takes precedence over a lower - a mah-jong call takes precedence over a kong or pung; a kong or pung call outranks a chow. Should 2 players call mah-jong simultaneously the player who would be the next to play is declared the winner.

20. A call for a discard may be claimed even if the next player has drawn a tile as long as he has not made his discard. The player who has drawn his next tile must replace it in the wall and lose a turn in the normal manner.
21. A completed mah-jong hand may contain one chow. This can be obtained by either i) claiming a discarded tile from the player to the claimant's left and calling, "Chow!" or ii) drawing the tiles from the wall. The only time a player can call "Chow!" and claim a discard from any other player is when by so doing he is able to go "mah-jong!".
22. A hand which requires one tile to complete mah-jong is known as a 'ready' or 'waiting' hand. A waiting hand may be completed by drawing a tile from the wall (this must be shown to the other players immediately after it is drawn to qualify for an extra 2-pt score) or claiming a discard to complete a pung, a kong, a chow or a sparrow's head. Our house rules do not include the 'ready' rule.
23. If a player is found to be holding a short or long hand at any time i.e. more or less than 13 tiles allowing for kongs and bonus tiles, the hand is declared 'dead' and must be played out but the player is not able to go mah-jong
(however, see the note to the Penalties section below).
24. If the live wall is exhausted before anyone has called mah-jong the game is declared a draw or 'wash-out' (also called a 'Wall game').
25. In the British form of mah-jong a goulash is played following a wash-out
26. If a player should draw a tile from the wall and form a kong a player requiring the tile to go mah-jong may claim the tile. This is called 'robbing a kong' and earns the winning player bonus points.
27. After a player has called mah-jong all hands are displayed and scored. The winning player receives his full score from all the others. East must always payor receive double what is owed. After the player going mah-jong has received his score the other players settle amounts between themselves paying each other the difference between their scores.
28. If East is not the 'winner' - the player going 'mah-jong!' - the Winds move round for the next hand. The original East becomes North, South is now East, West is South and original North becomes West. This rotation continues after each hand unless East wins the hand. In the event of East being the winner all players keep the same Wind for the following hand until East loses.
29. The limit score for any hand is 500 points. This means that a winner of a limit hand scores 2000 (500 from each player and 1000 from the dealer, i.e. East) except for the dealer who can win 3000 points (1000 from each player).



Penalties (the only ones we apply):-

1. If a player calls a discard incorrectly *and the discard is claimed by another player for a kong or pung* the player who made the false declaration pays the player who called for the tile 100 points. If the tile is claimed for Mah-Jongg play stops immediately and the player making the discard pays the player who has called Mah-Jongg his full score including the points owed by the other players.
2. If a player calls Mah-Jongg incorrectly and any of the other players have exposed their hands he must pay all the other players the equivalent of a half limit score.

N.B. Any player who has the wrong number of tiles in his hand Le. a *long* or a *short* hand, has a *dead* hand and cannot go 'mah-jongg'. In practice (i.e. because we are such a friendly group!), by agreement with the other players, if it is discovered that a player has a long hand during the game one of the other players can choose a tile which the player must discard and then play can continue as normal. Similarly a short hand may, if it is practicable, be made up from the loose tiles on the dead Wall.

3. If a player accidentally dislodges the tile that is to be drawn and it is seen by any player other than the person about to draw the tile the following procedure should be adopted. The exposed tile is shown to all the players then placed face down on the table together with 11 adjacent tiles Le. the one remaining tile that was below the exposed tile and the 5 adjacent stacks of 2 tiles. These are shuffled and that part of the wall is re-built. If the player who should have received the exposed tile could use it for a call of mah-jongg then he or she may claim the tile and make the call.

Letting off a Cannon

A penalty is incurred if a player 'lets off a cannon' i.e. playing one of the tiles indicated in the brackets that will complete a special mah-jong hand. This applies in the following circumstances, when a player has already exposed :-

1. 2 pungs of Dragons (the third Dragon)
2. 3 sets of Winds (the fourth Wind)
3. All sets are Winds & Dragons (any Wind or Dragon)
4. All sets are Terminals (any other Terminal)
5. All sets are one suit (any other tile of same suit)

A player who lets off a cannon must pay the winning player his whole score i.e. he also pays the amount owed by the other 2 players!! A harsh penalty but justified! No further scores are settled between the remaining players.

If the player who let off the cannon is waiting to go mah-jong and had no other choice he may show his hand and claim 'No choice!' In this case no penalty is incurred.

THE GOULASH

Playing a goulash makes the game more interesting after a draw or 'wash-out'. This is the only time it is played but it is similar to the Charleston which is often played in America as a compulsory opening hand, before the 'real' play begins.

Following a draw the wall is built and tiles are drawn in the usual manner. Tiles are drawn to replace any Seasons or Flowers.

When this has been done play proceeds as follows:

The 4 2-8bamboo tiles are designated as 'wild cards', i.e. they can be used to represent any tile (as the jokers are used in some card games).

Each player now chooses 3 tiles to exchange with the player sitting opposite - East exchanges with West and South exchanges with North.

Having done this 3 more tiles are chosen and East exchanges these with South and West with North.

3 more tiles are chosen and exchanged with the remaining players. i.e. East exchanges with North and South with West.

When each player has exchanged 9 tiles play continues as usual but when playing a goulash **no chows are allowed** except where they may form part of a special hand .

. A special hand, as defined by our 'house' rules, refers to **any hand that qualifies for a half-limit or limit score.** Hands such as a one suit with honours (clean hand, half-flush), one suit only (pure hand), all simples or all terminals and honours therefore are not included although they might be loosely referred to as 'special' hands.

After the goulash play continues as usual.

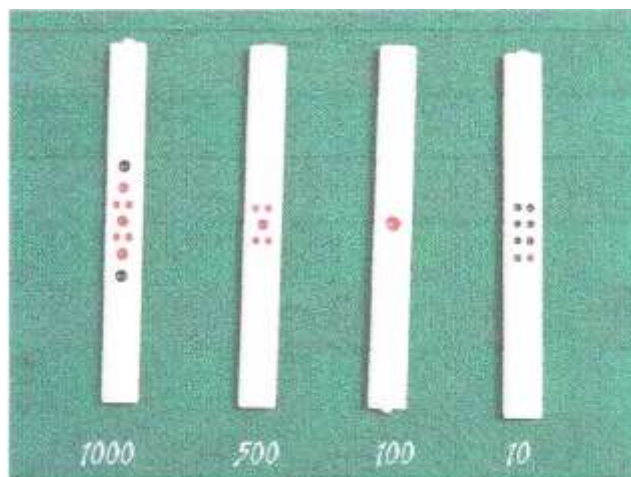
5. RULES FOR THREE-HANDED MAH-JONG

The rules for three-handed Mah-Jong are the same as for the standard game with the following modifications:-

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1. Either South, West or North is regarded as the Dummy (never East).
 2. If Dummy is called upon to throw the dice or breach the wall the player on Dummy's left fulfils this function.
 3. Dummy is never East. The round finishes when the player who was originally West at the start of the round loses as East.
 4. A complete game consists of four rounds.
 5. During the play the player on Dummy's right can chow the discards of the player on Dummy's left.

RULES FOR TOURNAMENT MAH-JONG

1. Only four-handed Mah-Jong may be played.
2. The flowers and seasons are not used.
3. No goulash is played after a wash-out.
4. The limit is set at 1000 points.



Tally Sticks

(N.B. The 10 has only 8 dots - this is a holy number in China and represents the 8 apostles of the ancient sage, Lao-Tse)

SCORING NOTES

A Chow merely serves to complete a hand and has no scoring value.

The British domestic game of mah-jong permits only one Chow in a completed mah-jong hand.

The basic score is totalled first. Any bonuses are added to this. The doubles are then calculated. It is easiest to add up the number of doubles and multiply by the appropriate number.

No. of Doubles	Multiply by:
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128
8	256

There are many Special Hands that merit a limit or half limit score. These will be introduced slowly as our group gains more experience. The score for a Special Hand is doubled if the player has his/her own Season or Flower but no other extra scores are counted e.g. 20 for going Mah-Jong or double for no Chows, etc.

Winning with the last tile from the wall is known as "catching a fish from the bottom of the sea", unless it is the one of circles in which case it is called "plucking the moon from the bottom of the sea". This draw earns a limit score.

Settling the Score

We use the Chinese/Western way of settling the score which is more complicated than the Japanese method but more satisfactory. The Score Card makes the process quite simple and is easy when you become used to it.

First of all every player pays the winner the full amount of his score and East always pays out or receives double.

The remaining 3 players then settle their scores by paying the difference between their scores. East again always pays out or receives double the difference.

As, in theory, it is possible to obtain around 1,000,000 points per hand (or 24,000,000 if you are playing Special Hands and happen to be East Wind!!) it is usual to play to a limit.

House Rule: Our limit score is 500 points (i.e. 1000 for the dealer, East). A special hand receives a specific score e.g. limit or half limit with no additions or bonuses.

Seasons & Flowers

Playing with Seasons and Flowers is optional and although they add an element of luck they also add to the fun of the game. They are never used in tournament Mah-Jong.

House Rule: The Seasons and Flowers are included in our games.

Each Season and Flower corresponds to one of the Winds and this is an important element in the scoring capability of these tiles. In some sets the Seasons and Flowers are numbered.

No.	Wind	Season	Flower
1	East	Spring	Plum
2	South	Summer	Orchid
3	West	Autumn	Chrysanthemum
4	North	Winter	Bamboo



The Seasons & Flowers

MAH-JONG SCORE TABLE

Basic Scores		
Pungs	Exposed	Concealed
Minor tiles (2 - 8)	2	4
Major Tiles (1 or 9)	4	8
Any Wind or Dragon	4	8
Kongs		
	Exposed	Concealed
Minor Tiles	8	16
Major Tiles	16	32
Any Wind or Dragon	16	32
Sparrow's Head		
Any Dragon	2	
Player's own Wind	2	
Wind of the Round	2	
	(No other pairs count)	
Any Season or Flower	4	

Basic Scores (for player going Mah-Jong)	
For going Mah-Jong	20
Winning piece drawn from <i>wall</i>	2
Having no Chows	10

Doubling (Any Player)	
Pung or Kong in player's own Wind	1
Pung or Kong in Wind of the Round	1
Pung or Kong in any Dragon	1
Holding own Season or Flower	1
Holding all 4 Seasons or Flowers	2

Doubling (Winning player only)	
For having no Chows	1
All simples	1
All major tiles	1
One suit and Winds or Dragons (half flush)	1
One suit hand (full flush)	3
Snatching a Kong to go Mah-Jong	1
Winning with a loose tile	1
Winning with the last tile from the Wall	1
Winning with the final discard	1
Going out with concealed, self-drawn hand	1
East goes out without discarding (Heavenly Hand)	Limit score
Going Mah-jong with East's first discard (Earthly Hand)	Limit score
Going Mah-jong with your first tile drawn from wall	Limit Score

MAH-JONG - SPECIAL HANDS (Basic Game)

A player going Mah-Jong with one of the following hands receives a bonus score according to the following table:-









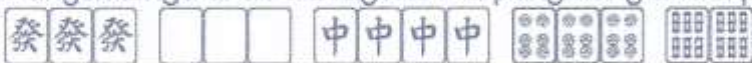





6.

SPECIAL HAND

All One Suit (full Flush)

One Suit + Honours (half Flush)

All

DESCRIPTION
Pungs/Kongs/Chow and pair all in same suit 
All one suit + Pungs/Kongs/Chow in Winds or Dragons 
Pungs/Kongs & pair in 1s,9s,Winds or Dragons 
7 pairs of tiles in any 2 suits – no winds or dragons 
4 sets of 3 tiles in the 3 suits + a pair (2 suits) 
Any 7 pairs of the same suit 
A Pung of 1s, a run of 2 to 8, a Pung of 9s all in one suit and 1 other tile of the same suit 
Pair of 1s and a run of 2 to 9 in the same suit and 1 of each wind 
Pungs/Kongs of all 3 Dragons + a pung/kong and a pair 
Pungs/Kongs + Pair in all Terminals or Honours  or 
4 Kongs + a pair 
1 of each Dragon & Wind, 1 of each 1 & 1 of each 9 + 1 tile to match any of the other tiles to complete the 14-tile mah-jong hand 
Pung/Kongs in each of 4 Winds + any pair 

Wriggling Snake

3 Great Scholars

All Terminals or All Honours

Fourfold Plenty

13 Unique Wonders

4 Blessings

Heavenly

Seven Pairs

Terminals & Honours

Knitting

Triple Knitting

Seven Pairs

Nine Gates of Heaven

n
Earth's Blessing

South, West or North go mah-jong with first discard made by East

SCORE
3
doubles
1 double

- 12-

1 double

Half
Limit

Half
Limit

Limit

Limit

Limit

Limit

Limit

Limit

Limit


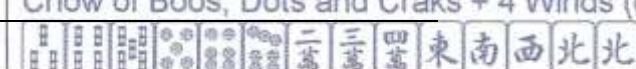
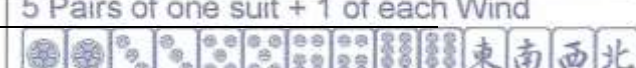
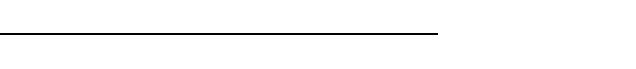

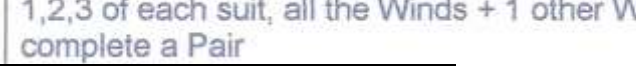

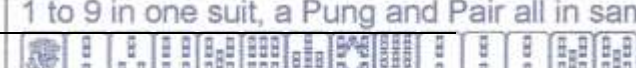
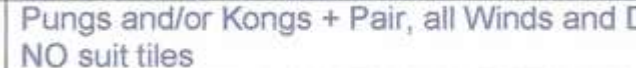

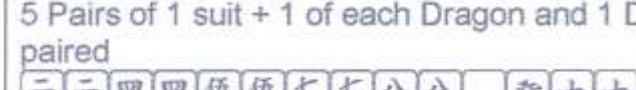
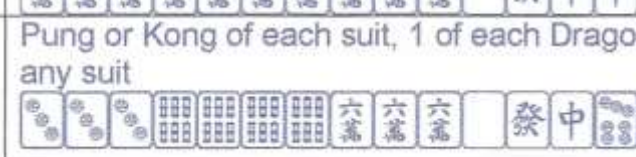
Limit







Limit

Limit

9. SPECIAL HANDS FOR MORE ADVANCED PLAY

These hands may be included to add interest to the game when players have become more experienced and have familiarised themselves with the above table.

SPECIAL HAND	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
All Pair Honours (concealed)	honour tiles in 	% Limit
Windy Chows (concealed)	Chow of Boos, Dots and Craks + 4 Winds (one paired) 	% Limit
Windfall (concealed)	5 Pairs of one suit + 1 of each Wind 	Limit
Gertie's Garter (concealed)		Limit
Greta's Garden		Limit
Heads & Tails		Limit
Chinese Odds	odd numbers 	Limit
Chop Suey (concealed)	1,2,3 of each suit, all the Winds + 1 other W complete a Pair 	Limit
Chow Mein (concealed)		Limit
Run, Pung & Pair (concealed)	1 to 9 in one suit, a Pung and Pair all in same 	Limit
All Winds & Dragons (concealed)	Pungs and/or Kongs + Pair, all Winds and C NO suit tiles 	Limit
Windy Dragons		Limit
Dragon's Breath	Pair of each Wind  5 Pairs of 1 suit + 1 of each Dragon and 1 Dragon paired 	Limit
Dragonfly	Pung or Kong of each suit, 1 of each Dragon + a Pair in any suit 	Limit (concealed) % Limit (exposed)

Windy Ones	Pungs or Kongs of 1s in each suit, 1 of each Wind and a Pair of Winds 	Limit (concealed) % Limit
Windy Nines	As for Windy Ones but with Pungs and Kongs of 9s + Winds 	(exposed) (concealed) % Limit (exposed)
Up You Go (concealed)	2,44,666,8888 all one suit + 1 of each Wind 	Dble Limit
Down You Go (concealed)	2222,444,66,8 + 1 of each Wind 	Dble Limit
Parallel Hand (exposed & NO Terminals)	Pungs of same number in 3 suits (NOT 1s or 9s) + a Pung & Pair of Winds or Pung & Pair of Dragons 	Dble Limit
Red Lantern	Run from 1 to 7 of one suit, Pung or Kong of Red Dragons, Pung or Kong of own Wind + Pair of any tiles from 1 to 7 	Dble Limit (concealed) % Limit (exposed)

We are grateful to Alison Irving, one of our group members, for devising the following simplified tables of the special hands. Members will probably find these very useful when trying to commit them to memory!

NO WINDS/DRAGONS:

- _____ Pungs/Kongs / Chow 2 to 8 any suit
- _____ Pungs / Kongs / Chow + Pair all one suit
- All Terminals** _____ Pungs / Kongs + Pair in all Terminals
- _____ 7 Pairs of matching numbers in 2 suits
- _____ Sets of 3 matching numbers in 3 suits + Pair of matching numbers

Seven pairs

- _____ 11 to 7 one suit all paired
- _____ Pung / Kong odd numbers in one suit + pair odd numbers
- _____ 11 to 9 one suit, + pung and pair same suit
(Concealed)
- _____ Pung of 1's, run 2 to 8, pung 9's - all one suit + 1 other tile same suit
- _____ 14 Kongs + a Pair
- _____ Pungs / Kongs 1's or 9's + Pair 1 or 9

WITH WINDS AND DRAGONS:

!A...!!-M-a=lo...s- _____ |!'S or 9's any suit or dragons or winds

One Suit + Honours _____ | All one suit + Pung(s) / Kong(s) in Winds or Dragons

All Terminals+Honours _____ | Pungs / Kongs + Pair in l's, 9's, winds or dragons

!A...!!-p-a=...H...o...s- _____ | Pairs of l's and 9's and honours (Dragons and Winds)
(Concealed)

!G...re-t-a=s-<G...r=d...e...- _____ | 1 to 7 one suit + 1 each wind + 1 each dragon

!|3...n...9+u...e...W...o...n...d...e...r...s _____ |! of each dragon + 1 each of wind, l of each 1, 1 of each 9 + 1 tile to match

Parallel Hand _____ |Pung same number 3 suits (not 1 or 9) + pung and Pair winds or dragons
(Exposed + NO Terminals)

!R...e...d...e...-d...e...-a...n...t...h...e...r...e...-r...u...n _____ | Run 1 to 7 one suit, Pung/Kong red Dragons, Pung/Kong own Wind +any pair 1-7

1 EACH WIND:

!W...i...n...d...-f...a...c...t... _____ |5 pairs one suit + 1 each wind
(Concealed)

!W...i...n...d...-9...z...h...i...n...9...-s...n...a...k...e...- _____ |Pair l's + run 2 to 9 same suit + 1 each wind

!C...h...o...w...-P...o...-S...t...u...-o...e...-y...l...- _____ | 1, 2, 3 each suit + 1 each wind + 1 other to pair wind
(Concealed)

!C...h...o...w...-M...e...r...i...n... _____ |7,8,9 each suit + 1 each wind + 1 other to pair wind
(Concealed)

!W...i...n...d...-C...h...o...w...-s... _____ |Chow (3) each suit + 1 each wind + 1 other to pair wind
(Concealed)

!W...i...n...d...-O...n...e...-s...- _____ | Pungs / Kongs in 1 's each suit + 1 each wind + pair winds

Windy Nines _____ |Pungs / Kongs in 9's each suit + 1 each wind + pair winds

!B...e...r...-y...-G...o...- _____ |2,44, 666, 8888 all one suit + 1 each wind
(Concealed)

Down You Go _____ | 2222, 444, 66, 8 all one suit + 1 each wind
(Concealed)

!4...B...i...l...e...s...-i...n...9...s...- _____ |Pungs / Kongs in each 4 winds + pair (any suit)

DRAGONS AND WINDS ONLY:

1 Pungs / Kongs + pair in Honours (Dragons and Winds)

Windy Dragons | 2 Pungs of any 3 sets dragons + Pair EACH Wind

All Winds and Dragons | Pungs, Kongs + Pair in winds and dragons - NO SUITS

DRAGONS ONLY:

5 pairs 1 suit + 1 each Dragon + 1 Dragon paired

1 Pung / Kong each suit, 1 each dragon + pair any suit

3 Great Scholars | Pungs / Kongs all 3 dragons + Pung or Kong + a pair (any suit)

House Rule:

The last tile of a concealed hand, enabling the player to go mah-jong, may be called for and claimed from a discard in the usual way.

This makes obtaining the hand slightly easier without affecting the interest in obtaining such a hand.

Some Variations on the Main Line Play

1. Going out with a minimum of 2 doubles - including the Flowers & Seasons
2. Going out with a minimum of 2 doubles - Flowers & Seasons not counted in reckoning the 2 doubles minimum. This is our standard game.
3. Beginning each session with a Goulash.
- . Having to have a 'clean' or 'pure' hand before going out.
- ~ Playing for Special Hands only (acceptable hands need to be clearly defined).
- 4.
5. Playing for a minimum of 3 doubles as 1/2 above.

- 6.

Going out with 2 Doubles

This is a more challenging variation of the game. To go Mah-jong you must have at least **2 doubles** when your hand is scored, or go out with a special hand. The most common elements, and the ones easiest to remember, are listed below to help you in assessing the value of your hand but other special hands (i.e. those listed on our House Rule Cards) may be included if you want to impress the other players!

Going out with no Chows	One double
Pung or Kong with any Dragon	One double
Pung or Kong in Own Wind	One double
Pung or Kong in Wind of the Round =	One double
*Having own Season or Flower	One double
* A Bouquet i.e. 4 Seasons or 4 Flowers =	One double
*Double Bouquet i.e. all 8 Seasons and Flowers =	3 doubles

House Rule: Our standard game (experienced players) ignores the items marked * when assessing the hand for going out. But we include the seasons when counting the final score. This results in a more challenging game and reduces the element of luck in deciding on a strategy for composing a mah-jong hand with two doubles.

Quick Reference Glossary

Major Tiles: 1 sand 9s of any suit, Dragons & Winds

The Major tiles are sub-divided into 2 groups:

Honour Tiles: Dragons & Winds

Terminals: 1s & 9s of any suit

Minor Tiles: 2s to 8s of any suit

These are also referred to (to distinguish them from terminals) as:

Simples 2s to 8s of any suit

Lucky Tiles: Dragons, Own Wind & Wind of the Round

Bonus Tiles: The Seasons & Flowers

The Bonus Tiles are also known as **Supplementary Tiles** as they are not always used (e.g. in tournament play).

Bouquet: A complete set of the 4 Seasons or Flowers
(This scores 2 doubles for the lucky collector')

Tong Box: The container that holds the Wind Indicator Discs.

This is also known as the **Chuang- Tzu, Ming or Jong Box**.

Jong: Another term for East Wind i.e. the Dealer

Washing is another term used for the **Twittering of the Sparrows** i.e. mixing the tiles at the start of each hand.

And finally

A Dreamer: If there are 5 persons present 5 tiles are placed face down on the table, one being a Red Dragon. Each player selects one and whoever draws the Red Dragon is the dreamer for the first hand. He sits with one of the players and may be asked for advice but does not give it unless asked. After each hand the player who was North becomes the next dreamer. This applies even when the following hand is a goulash.

Basic Strategies for our British Domestic Mah-Jong

1. Watch other players' discards carefully and try to work out what they are collecting.
2. Plan what to do with your hand but be prepared to change your plan of action if necessary while the game is in progress. This becomes a crucial manoeuvre in the variation that requires at least two doubles before you can go mah-jong and adds a new dimension to the game.
3. Remember that sets of terminals (1s or 9s), Dragons and Winds are major tiles and are worth twice as many points as minor tiles (2 to 8 of a suit).
4. Sets of Dragons and your own Wind or the Wind of the Round all qualify for a double in your final score.
5. Don't forget that you can promote a pung that is exposed on the table to a kong if you pick the fourth tile from the wall. It is very easy to miss this and discard the tile.
6. Try to build your hand completely from pungs and kongs i.e. no chows, as this earns a bonus of 10 points and a double. Only include a chow in your hand to go out quickly and prevent someone else (especially with a high scoring hand!) from going 'Mah-jong'.
7. Remember - you do not have to make a kong. Sometimes it is advantageous not to declare a kong as a concealed pung can be worth as much as an exposed kong - and that fourth tile could be your only safe discard!
8. Sets of Wind tiles only qualify for a double if they are your own Wind or the Wind of the Round so they should be discarded early in the game to lower the other players' chances of collecting a set of their own Wind tiles.
9. By the same token, be careful about discarding Dragons or the Wind of the Round later in the game as this is when the other players are likely to be holding two (or even three) tiles in their hand.
10. Tiles of your own Wind or the Wind of the Round are worth holding on to early in the game but get rid of them when you can see that they are hopeless or not helping your game plan.
11. Try to construct a high scoring hand - e.g. all concealed, all one suit or even a special hand (see our list - there are some easy ones to remember there, e.g. knitting). One high scoring hand is worth quite a few losses!
12. Get much more cautious with your discards as the wall gets nearer to the end. It is even worth discarding your pairs or concealed pungs at this stage if you know you don't stand a chance of going out. A careless discard at this stage of the game can be very costly!

Some Terms used by Mah-jong Players (who want to be different - or show off!)

Remember 'Legs Eleven' and 'Two Fat Ladies' and other nicknames used for some of the numbers in Lotto or 'Housey-Housey'? Well, Mah-Jong can surpass this. There are many, many nicknames for the various Mah-Jong tiles and you can find these in books about Mah-Jong or on the Net.

Here are a few which we could adopt in our domestic version of Mah-jong which can add to the fun of the game

Tile Nicknames:

The suits names are shortened to 'Boos', 'Dots' and 'Kraks'.

1 of Circles	Soup Plate
2 of Circles	Snake's Eyes, Mr Magoo
4 of Circles	Squircle (Square Circle) contributed by a group member.
1 of Bamboo	A Robertson contributed by a member
2 of Bamboo	Yogi (after Boo-Boo in Yogi Bear) contributed by a group member
3 of Bamboo	Tripod
3 of Characters	Lasagne
4 of Characters	Choppers, Teeth
7 of Characters	James Bond
Green Dragon	Spinach

These are enough for our little domestic group - but feel free to add any of your own to these!

Some Phrases you may come across:

Winning from the bottom of the sea	Winning with the last tile from the live wall.
Catching a fish from the bottom of the river	Winning with the last tile from the live wall that has been discarded by another player.
Winning on the roof	Drawing the winning tile from the kong box
Plucking the moon from the bottom of the sea	Winning by drawing the 1 of Circles as the last tile from the live wall.
Heaven's Blessing	East goes Mah-Jong with his original 14 tiles
Earth's Blessing	South, West or North go Mah-jong after East's first discard

(The two last items score a limit hand even though it is pure luck!)

Some Interesting facts about Mah-jong

Mah-jong is spelled in many different ways throughout the world. It is also known as *Mah-jongg*, *Mah-cheuk*, *Mah-diao*, *Mah-chian*, *Mah-dsjangg*, *Mah-jiang*, *Ma-jong*, *Ma-yong*, *Mah-tsiong*, *Ma-chiao*, *Mah-dshiongg* and there are many other spellings too numerous to mention.

'Mah-jongg', was the name first used by Joseph P Babcock in America in 1920 and which he patented in 1923. Babcock imported the first sets from China into the United States, produced his own rulebook, "Babcock's Rules for Mah-Jongg: The Red Book of Rules", which was the first time any rules for Mah-jong appeared in print, and he first introduced the practice of putting Arabic numerals on the Character tiles to make the kanji symbols more intelligible to the western world.

The kanji symbol for Wan represent the numbers 10,000 to 90,000 and are shown as 1 to 9 on the Character set ('Wan' literally translated means 'myriads').

The 3 Dragons were given this name in English because of the dragon's association with China. The original name for these tiles was the 3 Extremes and they represent the heavens (white Dragon), the earth (green Dragon) and mankind (red Dragon).

Sometimes the Dragons are marked with the initial letter of the Chinese name - P, F and C.

The white Dragon = Po, Pai or Pau meaning 'white', 'pure' or 'blank'. Association: 'eternity'.

The green Dragon = Fa meaning 'to give out', 'commence', 'flourish'. Association: 'fertility'.

The red Dragon = Chung meaning 'middle' or 'to catch'. Association: 'blood'.

In China there were 5 cardinal points - East, South, West, North and Centre. These are represented by the 4 walls enclosing the central playing area.

The number 8 has an important significance for the Chinese. There are 8 bonus tiles and 8 'eyes' on the 10 tally rod. These groups symbolise the 8 sages of the Emperor Lao Tse who held power in the second century BCE.

The 4 Flowers have a special significance in China. The Plum, Orchid, Chrysanthemum and Bamboo have been a favourite subject in Chinese art for centuries. In the Ming dynasty, a native of Songjiang, Shanghai City, the great calligrapher and painter Chen Ji Ru considered that the study of these four flowers would help artists to perfect their skill and they became referred to by Chinese painters as 'The Four Gentlemen'.

The 1 Bamboo is always different to the other tiles. Its name is Pe-ling which is the name of a mythical bird and means 'beautiful singing'. Hence the 1 Bamboo is decorated with e.g. a Lyre bird, a peacock, a pheasant or a crane.

The Wall represents a city wall or the Great Wall of China and should be built carefully, with no gaps to ensure protection from the enemy and evil spirits.

Mah-jong is also referred to as the game of 100 intelligences, 100 thoughts or 100 wonders and as the game of Four Winds.

A brief account of the historical development of the game:-

The game of mah-jong is not centuries old in the tradition of e.g. chess as claimed in some books and rulebooks supplied with the sets. It had its beginnings in its present form in the nineteenth century but there is speculation about its primitive roots in certain ancient games which contain echoes of its elements.

Its most probable direct antecedent is a card game known as 'matiao'. This became popular in the Ming dynasty which held sway from the late fourteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries. There were 4 suits of cards numbered 1 to 9 and 4 Flower cards - a pack of 40 cards. Each suit had some association with money as it was a gambling game.

It is claimed that at the time of the Tai Ping revolution in the mid-nineteenth century (1850-1864) a high-ranking officer of the Chinese Imperial Army, Chin Zheng Vue, known popularly as Chen Yumen, had the designs translated from the matiao pack on to tiles to enhance their appeal for his fellow officers. The coins became 'circles', the strings of coins became 'bamboos' and the groups of coins 'wan' or 'characters'.

The tiles gradually replaced cards among the common folk as they became cheaper to produce and the mah-jong craze spread throughout China. It was outlawed during the time of Mao-Tse Tung's Cultural Revolution because of its association with gambling but it re-surfaced in the 1970's and has been adapted for play as a purely leisure activity.

A popular story in circulation used to be that the card game was played on board ship and the cards were replaced by tiles to make them heavier and therefore less likely to blow away!

In January 1998 the State Sports Commission of China accepted mah-jong as the official 255th sport and the Official International Rules were drawn up in September of the same year. These rules have been used since 2002 in many international tournaments and a definitive, revised version appeared in 2006 under the auspices of the newly established World Mahjong Organization. They have appeared in Chinese and in English but any dispute arising has to be settled according to the original Chinese version.

NB. There is absolutely no truth in the story that it was played in 2350 BCE on Noah's Ark or that it was invented by Confucius around 500BCE!!

Some final words on the etiquette of Mah-Jong

1. Always play as speedily as possible as this adds to the enjoyment of the game (but don't become harrassed - we all need time to deliberate sometimes!)
2. Always call out the name of your discard clearly
3. If you notice that another player has made a mistake in naming their discard point this out as soon as possible so that no-one loses an opportunity causing embarrassment to the discarder
4. Penalties should be enforced and accepted if a mistake should be detrimental to any of the other players
5. Always use the accepted method of displaying pungs and kongs i.e. exposed sets should be placed face up in front of the player, a concealed pung has the centre tile laid face down, a concealed kong has the two middle tiles placed face down
6. The dice should be thrown inside the area enclosed by the walls
7. A discard may be claimed at any time until the next player has made a discard but try not to let this happen as it can be frustrating to the next player who has already drawn from the wall
8. If a player discards a tile which he then realises he needs he may not reclaim it
9. Any player found to have the wrong number of tiles at any time during the game may have to forfeit the opportunity to go 'Mah-jong' for that hand
10. Anyone who calls 'Mah-jong' in error forfeits the opportunity to go out in that hand. If other players have revealed their hands the game ends and the perpetrator pays the other players a half-limit of 250pts with the same rules as usual applying to East Wind, i.e. he receives or pays out double.

but, most importantly

Enjoy the game and have fun!!

Draft Supplementary Material 17/08/13

THE 'READY' HAND

When a player needs only one tile to complete a mah-jong hand he s/he is said to have a 'ready' hand and must declare that s/he is 'fishing' or 'one for mah-jong'. This alerts the other players to the fact that a player is about go out and that they should discard with caution to avoid letting off a cannon or letting the player win.

Once a player has declared that s/he is fishing the hand should be scored as a mah-jong hand but without the 20 point bonus for going 'mah-jong' if that player should subsequently not win the hand.

In the case of a special hand the player receives one fifth of the limit score for a half-limit hand, or two fifths if the special hand merits a limit score. Doubles are also counted as if the player had called 'mah-jong' (e.g. for a clean, i.e. one suit hand). A major advantage of this rule is that the player who is working towards a special hand can still claim a score for his/her efforts (e.g.knitting, all pair honours, etc.,). The ready hand is sometimes referred to as a 'calling' or 'waiting' hand.

Trevor Denniss (Gp. contact)
Shrewsbury Lodge
School Road
Erpingham
NR117QY

Tel: 01263 761566
e-mail: trevdenniss@btinternet.com

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