

CARD FREE AMERICAN MAH JONGG

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE - UPDATED APRIL 2025

RULES FOR GAMEPLAY: All gameplay rules are identical to standard American Mah Jongg except for winning hands and scoring.

WINNING HANDS: Winning hands require both a valid CATEGORY and a valid PATTERN of BLOCKS. The category is the SET of number tiles or wind tiles used. The pattern is the various groupings of identical tiles, known as blocks, that are used to build a 14-tile winning hand.

BLOCKS: Blocks are groups of between 2 and 5 identical tiles. Block types are named as in American Mah Jongg: Pair (2 tiles), Pung (3 tiles), Kong (4 tiles), Quint (5 tiles). Jokers can be used to replace tiles in any block except for pairs.

PATTERNS: Patterns are created with combinations of blocks that add up to 14 total tiles, using two different block types. Any number of blocks of each type can be used, as long as the total number of tiles adds up to 14. Different block types can be used in any order in a pattern. A special pattern of 7 pairs is also allowed.

CATEGORIES: The category chosen determines which types of tiles are used in the various blocks in the pattern. The numbers or wind tiles selected from the category are known as the SET. For example, the set 4-5-6 can be taken from the Consecutive Run category. Each number or wind in the set must be used in its own block. Numbers or wind tiles cannot be repeated in more than one block unless playing the Any Like Numbers category.

CATEGORY	TILES	SET RULES
Consecutive Run	123456789	Use a set of at least 3 consecutive numbers from the category, making 1 block with each number for at least 3 different blocks in your pattern.
Consecutive Odds	13579	
Consecutive Evens	2468	
Multiples of Three	369	Use all three numbers, one number per block.
Any Like Numbers	123456789	3 blocks, 1 of each suit, all the same number.
Winds	NEWS	4 blocks, one of each wind (N-E-W-S) or 2 blocks of opposite winds (N-S or E-W)

CardFreeMahj@gmail.com

SUITS: All blocks of number tiles with the same suit must be next to each other in the pattern when tiles are arranged in sequential order. Hands with suits that alternate in the pattern, commonly known as “woven” or “braided” or “knitted” hands, are not valid winning hands.

DRAGONS & FLOWERS & NEWS: If there are more blocks in your pattern than there are number tiles or wind tiles in your set, then you must complete the pattern using blocks of Flowers, Dragons, or a NEWS singles block.

- Dragons of the same color cannot be used in more than one block.
- Flowers can only be used in one block, and that block must be a pair.
- NEWS block, a group of one of each wind tile, is allowed to be used as a Kong in any pattern that contains Kongs. Only one NEWS block per hand.
- Jokers cannot be used to replace flowers, or the single tiles of the NEWS block. You cannot call a tile in a Flower Pair or NEWS block unless it completes your hand for Mah Jongg.

SCORING: Winning hands have a base value of 25 points. Add any applicable bonuses for the final point total. Payouts by opponents follow same rules as standard American Mah Jongg.

BONUSES: Bonuses are applied whenever applicable to the winning hand. Multiple bonuses can apply to the same winning hand.

BONUS	DESCRIPTION	POINTS
PAIRS	More than 2 Pairs blocks in winning hand. Add 5 points for 3,4, or 5 pair blocks. Add 10 points for using 7 pairs pattern.	+5 or +10
QUINTS	Each Quint block	+5 each
SET	Only number tiles used, no flowers, dragons, winds	+5
SUIT	All numbers in one suit, Dragon matches if used	+5
CONCEALED	No exposures except calling winning tile.	+10

DRAGON HANDS: Dragon Hands have a set point value and bonuses are not applied. Rules for opponents paying double do apply to Dragon Hands.

NAME	DESCRIPTION	VALUE
Dragon's Love	Two different Dragon Kongs, Two Flower Pungs	50 Points
Dragon's Wing	One Kong of each Dragon + Pair of 1 Bamboo.	50 Points
Dragon's Breath	1 Pair of each Wind and 1 Pair of each Dragon	100 Points

OPTIONAL HOUSE RULES: Experienced players of Card Free American Mah Jongg may want to increase the difficulty of the game by including advanced house rules. Players may agree before starting the first game to add any of these optional rules. Implementing any or all of these house rules increases the difficulty in forming a winning hand, which both increases the overall challenge of the game, and allows time for more interesting and challenging winning hands to be built. The optional house rules include:

1. Always skip the second round of the Charleston
2. Remove 4 Flowers and 4 Joker tiles from the game permanently. When building walls, build 18 stacks per player instead of 19.
3. A hand must score at least 1 bonus, use no Jokers, be self-picked, or be a special Dragon hand in order to be a valid winning hand. If using this rule, the base value of a winning hand may be reduced to 20, making the minimum winning hand only 25 points.

SKILL LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS: to level the playing field for players of different skill levels in the same game, advanced players may add additional hand restrictions to themselves. This allows players of different skill levels to play in the same game together with closer to equal chances of winning. Players must choose for themselves what skill level adjustment they should take based on their experience. Each increasing level includes the restrictions from the lower levels. For example, a Level 3 player, will have the restrictions for levels 1, 2, and 3.

Level 0: No additional restrictions

Level 1: You can only use the 2 Pungs 2 Kongs pattern with Wind tiles

Level 2: If using the Consecutive Run set category, your hand cannot contain any Flowers, Dragons, or Winds.

Level 3: If using one or more Dragon blocks, the hand must be concealed.

Level 4: If using number tiles, the hand must earn the SUIT bonus (only containing 1 suit and if using a Dragon block it must match that suit).

Level 5: Your hand must use no Jokers, be self-picked, or be a special Dragon hand in order to be a valid winning hand.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, OPINIONS?

Email John Burton, the designer of Card Free American Mah Jongg:

CardFreeMahj@gmail.com

CARD FREE AMERICAN MAHJONGG

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE
UPDATED APRIL 2025

