CHEAT SHEET

Mahjong rules for beginners

What you need

Four players and a 152-tile set: Dots, Bams, Craks, winds, dragons, flowers, jokers.

Four racks to stand your tiles on.

This year's card from the National Mah Jongg League. Each line on it is one winning hand.

Words you'll hear

Pung, kong: three, four of the same tile.

Exposure: a group you lay face up after calling a discard.

X or C after a line: X lets you call discards, C means you can't until you win.

East: the dealer for this hand.

The deal

Tiles face down, mixed. Each player builds a wall 19 tiles long, 2 high.

Highest dice roll is **East**. East rolls again to break the wall.

East holds 14 tiles, everyone else 13. The deal passes to the right after each hand.

The Charleston, in one line

Before play, trade three tiles face down: **right, across, left**, then an optional second round **left, across, right**. Never pass a joker.

A turn

East discards first, without drawing.

Then, going right: **draw, keep, discard** face up and say its name.

You end every turn with 13 tiles. A named discard can't be taken back.

Taking a discard

Call it to finish three or more identical tiles in an X hand. Lay the group face up, then discard.

Any tile, even for a pair or a single, if it gives you mahjong.

A discarded joker can never be called.

Jokers

A joker stands in for any tile in a group of three or more. **Never in a single or a pair.**

On your turn, take a joker from any exposure by giving its owner the real tile.

Winning

Your 14 tiles match one line of the card exactly: say **"mahjong"** and lay your hand face up to be checked.

Wall runs out with no winner: a **wall game**. Nobody wins.

First game: pick two or three X lines, watch the discards, say every tile's name.

Not affiliated with the National Mah Jongg League