

## Abridged Rules for Playing Mah Jongg

The Mah Jongg oracle cards are an exact match of traditional Mah Jongg tiles, and it is therefore possible to play the game of Mah Jongg with them. The rules vary slightly, especially in the matter of scoring, from one community to another, and it is therefore essential that players agree on 'house rules' before play commences. The following is a brief outline of the standard method of play.

There should be four players; however, for friendly games it's possible to play with three or even two players.

Places at the table are decided. Players are

known as East, South, West and North; South sits on East's right and East deals. East remains dealer until losing, when the deal passes to South (who is then called East) and so continues. Play proceeds counterclockwise.

East deals each player thirteen cards, self first (four at a time, plus an extra one), and then a fourteenth card to self.

The object is to make a 'hand' of four sets of three cards, plus a matching pair. Certain combinations of sets produce higher and higher scores, but the winner of the round is the first one to make the complete hand, whatever the score may be. The winner keeps all points; the other players deduct the winner's points from their own scores.

A set may comprise three consecutive cards of the same suit (*chow*) or three identical suit or Honours cards (*pung*). Unless the dealer wins outright with all fourteen cards at once, one card is thrown out and another taken from the pack. Play then proceeds counterclockwise.

However, if any player has two cards that are identical to the one discarded it may be called and the order of play broken. If a card is called, the calling player places the card, and the two others, face upwards on the table to make an 'exposed *pung*'. A set of three identical cards made by a player without having to call for another card is called a 'hidden *pung*'. Hidden *pungs* count for double the points of exposed *pungs*.

If a player has a hidden *pung* in their hand, and a fourth identical card is discarded, a 'kong' may be called. The four cards make an 'exposed kong'. On making a kong, the player must take an extra card, the four cards counting as one set; otherwise it would not be possible to make the required number of sets. For the same reason, an extra card must be taken when a hidden kong is made. The hidden kong has to be displayed – but is still counted as hidden, and differentiated from the exposed kong by the cards being placed criss-cross fashion. Exposed kongs count for double the points of hidden *pungs*, and hidden kongs double again.

If a Guardian is dealt, it is immediately laid

down and an extra card taken. Guardians score points, but are not used for making sets.

As soon as a player has made four sets and a matching pair (two identical cards), play stops and the points are calculated.

### Scoring

For every chow:	0 points
For every exposed pung of 2-8 suit cards:	2 points
For every exposed pung of 1 or 9 suit cards:	4 points
For every exposed pung of Honours:	4 points
For every hidden pung:	double the above
For every kong:	double the points for pung
For every Guardian:	4 points

The following scores only apply to winning hands:

For winning:	32 points
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If dealer wins:	double total score
All cards of one suit:	double total score
For a pung or kong of the player's own direction:	double total score

For a pung or kong of <i>Fa, Chung</i> or <i>Pai</i> :	double total score for each pung or kong
All cards 1 or 9:	double total score
All Honours:	double total score
A Guardian for each season:	double total score

