Your first night at the table

A little room to learn. Keep your own NMJL card beside you and ask questions as you go.

01 · MEET THE TILES

Three suits.


Dots


Bams


Craks

Each suit runs 1–9. Four of each tile.

Dragon partners
Dots + white (soap)
Bams + green · Craks + red


Wind


Soap


Flower



Joker

Four winds, three dragons; four of each. Eight flowers and eight jokers. Flowers are interchangeable. Soap can be 0 in a year.

02 · BEFORE YOU PLAY

The Charleston.

Pass to: Right · Across · Left

Receive from: Left · Across · Right

> Pause. Anyone may stop here.

Pass to: Left · Across · Right

Receive from: Right · Across · Left

Second round only if everyone agrees. Stop before anyone looks at second-left tiles. Once begun, finish all three passes. Pass three; receive three. Blind only on first left and last right; your tiles plus unseen tiles total three. No jokers.

Courtesy: exchange 0–3 agreed tiles across.

Then take turns.

1. Draw a tile, unless you legally call a discard.
2. Check your options against your card.
3. Discard one tile and say its name, or declare a complete mahjong.

East starts with 14 and discards first, without drawing. Play moves to the right.

03 · KEEP THESE IN MIND

Think before you call.

Call the latest named natural discard before the next player racks, discards, starts a joker exchange or declares mahjong. Drawing alone does not close the window. A simultaneous call/rack favors the call.

To expose: complete a matching group of 3 or more that fits an exposed hand on your card and earlier exposures.

For mahjong: a discard may complete a single, pair or concealed hand if the whole hand matches your card.

Jokers: groups of 3+.

Never singles or pairs, even to win. Never in a pass. Never call a discarded joker.

The goal: complete a 14-tile hand on your own card. Match its suits, numbers and all the notes.

Four-player American mahjong reminder. A dealer dealt a complete winning hand may declare before the Charleston.