



Rules That Drive Us Nuts



Different tables. Different rules. Same confusion. You're not alone!

Mahjong is a game we love — but let's be honest, some of the rules can be downright baffling. Here are some of the most common things that drive players crazy (and why!).

1

EVERY CARD IS DIFFERENT

Just when you think you've learned the card, you sit at a new table and it's completely different! Different hands, point values and even which hands are allowed can be confusing, especially for new players.



2

WHAT CAN I CLAIM?

Can I take this discard?
Is it a Pung, a Kong or a Chow?
And what tiles are safe to pass?
It's hard to know in the moment, especially with different rules from table to table.



3

JOKERS — FRIEND OR FOE?

Can I use a Joker here?
Is it better to keep it or replace it? Jokers make the game more flexible, but forgetting the rules (or using them incorrectly) can lead to mistakes.



4

HOUSE RULES CHANGE EVERYTHING

Every group has their own twist — extra jokers, different passing direction, special tiles, or unique rules for exposures. It can be so frustrating when you're used to one style and then play somewhere new.



5

FLOWERS AND SEASONS

Do we play with flowers?
Do they have to be replaced?
Do they count as part of your hand? It's one of the most confusing rules for new players, and it can be different depending on the group.



6

SLOW PLAYERS

Overthinking every move, constantly counting tiles or taking a long time to decide can slow the game down. We all want to play thoughtfully, but it can be challenging when the pace drags.



7

THE CHAOS OF THE CHARLESTON

Passing tiles sounds simple... until it's not! Passing the wrong way, passing too early (or too late), or mixing up the order can be stressful, especially for newer players.



8

DISTRACTIONS AT THE TABLE

Phones, side conversations, questions mid-game — it's easy to lose focus (or miss a discard)! Trying to keep track while staying social can be tricky, especially in a lively game with friends.



THE GOOD NEWS



YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Every mahjong player — new or experienced — has felt confused or frustrated.



IT GETS EASIER

The more you play, the more familiar the rules become, even when they change.



THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT INTERESTING!

Different rules keep the game fresh and give you new ways to think and build your hand.



FOCUS ON THE FUN

Despite the confusing bits, mahjong is a wonderful game — and the quirks are part of what makes it so unique.

Same tiles. Different rules. Still the game we love.

