'Quick Start' Mahjong

(*maybe* ;^)

Three Suits – 4 of each (1 – 9) with Dragons D :

- Dots with 'Soap' Dragon (also Zero '0' for 2026)
- Bams (Bambo) with Green Dragon, #1 tile is a Bird
- Cracks with Red Dragon

Winds – 4 of each: North **N** East **E** West **W** South **S**

Flowers – 8 of these: **F** on the card

The Card – TMI ?!?!:

- Official NMJL 2026 Card
- Card changes every year.
- Divided into sections, grouping of tiles with theme/pattern.
- What do the colors mean? Only function of color is to indicate change in suit. Same color, same suit.
- Am I looking for these exact numbers? Sometimes, Yes. Sometimes, No. ⇒ (*Read the parentheses*).
- Is your line **X** Exposed or **C** Concealed?
- The tiles drawn will point the way to the section.

Let's see what comes out in the wash!

Build the Walls 40 / 40 / 38 / 38 ~ Dealer Rolls the Dice

Dealing the tiles – I like to talk myself through it:

- Dealer takes 4, and ***says*** 4 → go right → 4 → 4 → 4
- Dealer takes 4, and ***says*** 8 → go right → 8 → 8 → 8
- Dealer takes 4, and ***says*** 12 → go right → 12 → 12 → 12
- Dealer says/takes – '1 and 3 for me' (cutting the cake) = 14 Tiles
- Go right say/take 1 = 13 Tiles
- Go right say/take 1 = 13 Tiles
- Go right say/take 1 = 13 Tiles
- Organize tiles on your rack
- Count your tiles, 14 for dealer, 13 for other players

Jokers – 8 of these. So, what's the catch:

- Jokers love a crowd with two or more **identical** tiles.
- Jokers can be used in groups of three or more. Ex. You need three green dragons for your line? Jokers can stand in for ALL three dragons.
- Jokers are up for grabs when exposed by a player. They can be swapped out with a like tile during a player's turn.
- Jokers never work alone, not ever.
- Jokers never work in a Pair. (we will never, never, ever get back together – T. Swift)
- Jokers never make the **NEWS**
- Jokers cannot be passed during Charleston or Courtesy.
- Jokers cannot be picked up with a Blank, not ever – I asked!
- Jokers die. Once dead (discarded on the mat), always dead.

Blanks – 4 of these. Too good to be true, almost:

- 'Wild' Tiles
- Use a blank when it is **NOT** your turn.
- Wait...are you saying I shouldn't wait until it is my turn? Yes.
- Stealth is useful.
- Swap out for a discarded tile on the mat.
- What's the catch? Blanks cannot be used to pick up a Joker.

Charleston – Party Like It's ~~1999~~ 1929:

- Object is to pass unwanted tiles in hopes of receiving tiles to better your line/hand.
- Everyone must dance the Charleston once.
  - ***Right...Over (Across)...Left***
- It only takes one player to stop after the first Charleston.
- Do you dance again? Do you have three tiles you can pass?
- Second OPTIONAL Charleston – swing your partner to the left.
  - ***Left...Over (Across)...Right***
- Yes, we frequently forget which Charleston we are on and which direction we are passing. No worries.

- What is a blind pass? You know, when you know. Let's save this for next time.
- Count your tiles again, 14 for dealer, 13 for other players.

Courtesy Pass – Sorry, not sorry:

- Optional and only to the player sitting across from you.
- 0 – 3 tiles can be passed across.
- These two players must pass the same number of tiles across.
- If one player does not want to pass, no tiles will be passed across.

Let's Play – Eyes to See, Ears to Hear:

- To start play, Dealer names and discards their 14th tile.
- Are you the player sitting on the dealer's right? If that is you, draw a tile, place it on your rack. Discard one unwanted tile and say the name of the tile as you place it on the mat.
- Play continues to the right around the table with each player saying the name of their discarded tile.
- **Claiming a discard tile for your Line – *Don't* wait my turn?!?**
  - Player must verbalize the claim – Say '*I want that*', '*Call*' or '*Pause…I need that.*'
  - Only when it will make group of three of more (can use Jokers)
  - Call for a tile by mistake? No, problem. Say '*Continue*'.
  - However, once a player has picked up a called tile, placed it on their rack for exposure **and** discarded – you're committed – no do-over for this mistake.
  - Claimed tile must be placed face up and exposed for other players to see, add other matching tiles to create exposed group of three or more. Remember, Jokers are welcome. Count your tiles. 13? All good.
- There are only two times you will have 14 tiles on your rack – for a win 'Mahjong' or when you are the dealer.

When in doubt, call time out by saying 'Pause'.

It is also okay to say any of the following during the game:

I'm lost. Who's next?
Is it me?
Who's wall is it?
Which one is the 'Soap'?
Why is the #1 tile for the Bams a bird?
How many tiles do I have?
How many tiles do you have?
Who put her in charge?
Are you just making this up as we go along?
When does this get fun?
Are you sure there are Jokers in this set?

Now that you have the basics, here are a few other rules:

- Play is to the right →
- Walls 'go out' to the left ←
- 'Claim Jumping' - if a player calls/claims a discarded tile, your turn may be skipped. After the caller/'claimer' completes their turn (claim tile, expose tiles, discards), play resumes to the 'claimer's' right. If you are not on the claimer's right – then, my friend, you have been skipped or 'claim jumped'.
- 'Racking' a tile is physically placing a drawn tile onto your rack. This is important because the opportunity for calling a tile ends once a tile has been racked. If a 'call' is verbalized and racking occur at the exact same time, the tie goes to the caller.

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