



👋 Hi FSA leadership teams! This is Patrick, creator of **Mahjong Tayo!**

Hosting a mahjong social night is a fun and memorable way to provide a cultural experience for your campus community. As FSA members, you know the value of experiencing culture firsthand. Learning and playing Filipino Mahjong is a powerful way for a piece of our culture to be experienced, enjoyed, & reflected upon.

For many people, Mahjong can:

- bring back memories of playing with family or friends.
- inspire future connection with others by learning to play.
- deepen cultural appreciation for the game's rich history.

Additionally, and importantly, playing Mahjong is just fun and approachable for everyone. Playing games helps build connection, and I have come to understand and appreciate Mahjong as a very tangible, sensory, satisfying, and naturally communal game.

This is why we at “Mahjong Tayo!” encourage you to host your own Mahjong social. Getting together to play Filipino-style Mahjong organically supports your community members in connecting with one another and Filipino culture in unique and memorable ways!

We hope this guide empowers you host such an event in the near future.

If you use our materials, please tag us on Instagram: @mahjongtayo — we'd love to see your photos and videos.

Happy playing!



Planning Your Filipino Mahjong Social

BY MAHJONG TAYO!

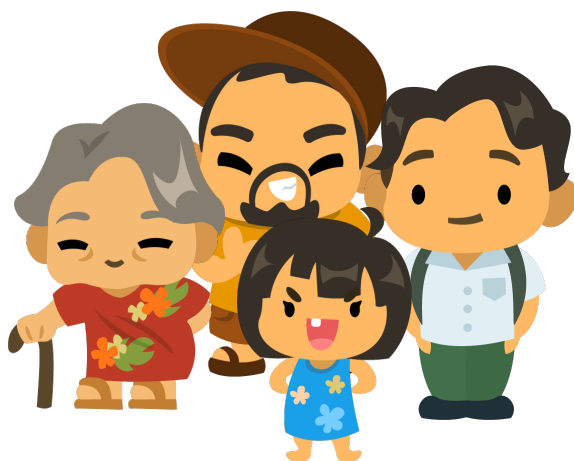


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Pre-Event Preparation

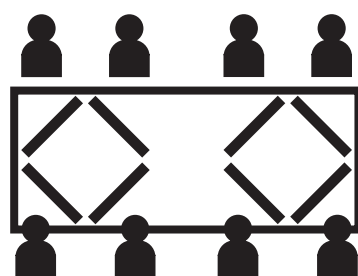
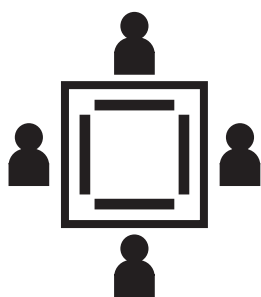
Necessary Items

Refer to the list below for an overview of what you'll need for your social.

Invitation + RSVP (Partiful, Google Form, EventBrite, etc.)	Send this out well in advance of your social so you can gather the most accurate headcount. Ask for name and "Experience Level" using descriptions like: <i>First Time / Learning / Comfortable / Happy to Mentor.</i>
Complete Mahjong sets	One set per 4 players. Numeral-marked sets are recommended.
Dice	Two dice per 4 players. Some Mahjong sets have these included.
Tables	Enough for all players + 3 Beginner Session stations. Ideally square tables are used; rectangle tables are usable by rotating the play area diagonally.
Chairs	At least one per player.
Table mats	One per tile set. About 31 in. x 31 in. of felt fabric.
Table numbers	This will help players locate their tables.
Printouts	Cheat-sheets, QR codes, promotional flyers, etc.

TABLE GUIDELINES

Mahjong is ideally played on a 34 to 40 inch square table, though rectangular tables can work by rotating gameplay.



Quick-Start Checklists

Refer to these checklists as you plan your event.

PRE-EVENT ITEMS

- ☐ Create and send invitation with RSVP instructions.
- ☐ Book an appropriately sized venue for 2.5 to 4.5 hrs.
- ☐ Gather materials.
 - ☐ Tile sets: At least one set for every 4 players + 3 sets for the Beginner Session stations
 - ☐ Tables & chairs
 - ☐ Table mats: One per tile set
- ☐ Print one cheat sheet per player.
- ☐ Create a simple seating chart.
- ☐ Finalize the event schedule.
- ☐ Optional: Update the provided event slide deck.

****If you plan to have table rotations, plan it into the schedule and layout.****

PRE-EVENT CONSIDERATIONS

Music

- ➔ Keep any music volume low.
- ➔ If there will be a DJ or other loud music, place the Beginner Session further away.

Lighting

- ➔ Prioritize bright lighting for tile visibility.
- ➔ Have small lamps if the room is dimly lit.

Guest Needs

- ➔ Consider having signs so players find the venue easily.
- ➔ Know which restrooms to direct players to.
- ➔ Decide if any food/beverages will be provided.

EVENT DAY

Setup

- ☐ Arrive early and complete Pre-Event Inventory list.
- ☐ Set up tables: Chairs, table mats, tile sets, and cheat sheets
- ☐ Set up 3 stations for the Beginner Session.
 - ☐ *Station 1, Goal & Tile Types:* All tiles face up and sorted; examples of CHOW, PONG, KANG, and TODAS
 - ☐ *Station 2, Game Set-up:* Walls set up, ready for selecting dealer
 - ☐ *Station 3, Gameplay:* Game mock-ups ([see pg. 9 for details](#))

Running the Event

- ☐ Greet people as they arrive and direct to their assigned table.
- ☐ Speak to “Happy to mentor” players about expectations for how to help other players.
- ☐ Conduct “Welcome” (optionally using the provided slide deck).
- ☐ Execute the schedule.

Post-Event

- ☐ Complete Post-Event Inventory list & compare to Pre-Event list.
- ☐ Be sure all dice and tile sets are complete.

PRE-EVENT INVENTORY LIST

Item	Amount
Chairs	
Tables	
Table mats	

Item	Amount
Tile sets	
Dice sets	

POST-EVENT INVENTORY LIST

Item	Amount
Chairs	
Tables	
Table mats	

Item	Amount
Tile sets	
Dice sets	

Table Rotations & Schedule

Scheduled table rotations can help support your attendees in meeting and engaging with new people.

WHO ROTATES?	This can be done in many ways. For example, have 2 people rotate to the next table.
WHEN DO YOU ROTATE?	Gameplay should happen in rounds that last about 20 minutes. When playing in rotations, games must be time-blocked to ensure smooth transitions between the groups. <i>Rotate every few rounds or at every round, depending on the dynamic of your group.</i>

Schedule Examples

ONE ROTATION

0:00 - 0:10	Arrival & welcome
0:10 - 0:30	Round 1
0:30 - 0:50	Round 2
0:50 - 1:10	Round 3
1:10 - 1:15	Hard stop & rotate
1:15 - 1:35	Round 4
1:35 - 1:55	Round 5
1:55 - 2:05	Wrap-up

ROTATE EACH ROUND

0:00 - 0:10	Arrival & welcome
0:10 - 0:35	Round 1
0:35 - 1:00	Rotate into Round 2
1:00 - 1:25	Rotate into Round 3
1:25 - 1:50	Rotate into Round 4
1:50 - 2:00	Wrap-up

Note: Extend past 2 hours of play by adding on rounds/rotations as desired.

Welcome & Scripts

Arrival: Don't Let Newcomers "Hover"

One of the easiest ways to lose a new community member is to let them stand around while wondering whether anyone noticed them.

The host(s) should approach every arrival first.



USE: *"Hi, I'm Patrick—I'm hosting tonight. Is this your first Mahjong social with us?"*

THEN: *"Great! It's nice to meet you. Let me introduce you to two people you'll start with."*

Expectation Setting: Prepping "Happy to Mentor" Players

Prepare them to mentor by asking them to:

GUIDE, NOT CARRY: Help players figure out how to do tasks themselves instead of playing for them. Step in only when needed.

KEEP IT LIGHT: Use simple explanations at first. Only coach on more complex aspects of play as needed. Focus on fun and learning.

BE ENCOURAGING: Celebrate other players' wins.

Provide mentors with questions they can use, such as:



"Would you like a hint?"

"Would you like two options?"

"Would you like me to explain what I'd be considering?"

10 min. Welcome Structure

Follow this structure to make sure your attendees have all the information they need during your social. You also have the option of using the Mahjong Tayo! Welcome Slide Deck to guide your welcome.

1) START WITH AN ICEBREAKER (5 MIN)

After introducing yourself, offer some questions to stir conversation at the players' tables for a few minutes.

- When did you first encounter any type of Mahjong?
- Do you have fond family or friend group memories related to Mahjong, or any other game?
- What type of game player are you? Casual? Competitive?

2) ANSWER FIVE QUESTIONS (5 MIN)

What's the vibe? Set the tone for the event.



"Thank you so much for joining our Filipino Mahjong Social! Our goal is for each of you to have a fun time, meet new people, and learn more about Filipino Mahjong."

Who's playing? Set expectations around different experience levels.



"We have players of all levels with us tonight. Remember the goal is to have fun. Please ask questions; we're all here to help."

How do I get help? Point out mentors and introduce the [Beginner Session](#).



"Mentors, please raise your hands. If anyone has questions about the game, mentors are here to help. New players are invited to join us at the Beginner Session which will take place during the first round of gameplay in (describe location)."

How will the night work? Discuss rotations, breaks, and any other logistics.

When are we wrapping up? Give the expected end time and any closing plans.

Beginner Session

Holding a Beginner Session at your social provides a safe space for new players to learn and practice the basic mechanics of Filipino Mahjong. The Beginner Session will occur during Round 1 of gameplay. See the schedule on [pg. 15](#) for a more detailed breakdown.

Set-Up

Included on Event Day checklist, [pg. 5](#)

Have the Beginner Session stations set up prior to the event start:

- **Station 1, Goal & Tile Types**
 - ➔ Full tile set, all face up (1-9 of all suited tiles + flowers)
 - ➔ Examples of CHOW, PONG, and KANG
 - ➔ Winning hand example
- **Station 2, Game Set-up**
 - ➔ 4 walls built
 - ➔ 2 dice
- **Station 3, Gameplay**
 - ➔ Regular game setup with these hands on each side of the table:

SCENARIO ONE (organize hand & discard tile)	Any 16 tiles
SCENARIO TWO (claiming PONG)	3 stick (discard) + 3 stick, 3 stick, and remaining 14 tiles
SCENARIO THREE (claiming CHOW)	6 ball (discard) + 7 ball, 8 ball, and remaining 14 tiles
SCENARIO FOUR (claiming TODAS)	7 character (discard) + two concealed melds, three exposed melds, and one 7 character

Filipino Mahjong 101 (5 min)

Start the session with an overview of the game's history and context. Use the information below to guide your introduction.



Photo: @ocmahjongsocialclub on Instagram

THE ORIGINS OF THE GAME

Filipino Mahjong evolved from traditional Chinese tile games across centuries of maritime trade and cultural exchange between China and the Philippines. The game adapted into a Filipino social tradition, blending elements of regional customs with the warmth and communal spirit of local neighborhood life.

Unlike standard Mahjong types that use 13 tiles, Filipino Mahjong uses a larger hand size of 16 tiles. Traditional honor tiles like winds, dragons, and seasons become non-scoring “flowers” that are replaced at the start of the game.

FILIPINO MAHJONG AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The game has long been used to anchor community gatherings, family reunions, and build cultural connection. For younger generations and Filipinos in the diaspora, Filipino Mahjong can be a tool for identity reflection and the passing of traditions. The game turns casual game nights into spaces for storytelling, sharing family lore, and fostering a sense of belonging.

FILIPINO MAHJONG IS FOR EVERYONE

Although distinctly Filipino, Filipino Mahjong is a game for everyone. The game is a sensory escape from digital scrolling, with physical tile-shuffling, wall-building, and face-to-face social interaction.

It balances deep tactical strategy with an inclusive, welcoming environment that accommodates everyone, from novices learning basic melds to seasoned gamers seeking tactical depth.

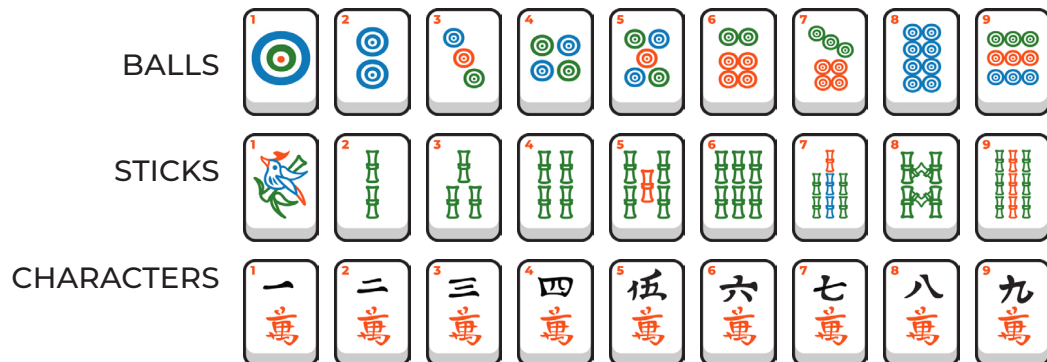
Stations (15 min)

Talk through each station with your Beginner Session players.

STATION 1: GOAL & TILE TYPES

1. Introduce the following:

- **Goal:** Be the first to arrange your hand into 5 melds and 1 pair.
- **Suited tiles**



- **Meld Types**
 - ➔ PONG: Three identical tiles
 - ➔ KANG: Four identical tiles
 - ➔ CHOW: A sequence of three (e.g. 1-2-3) tiles of the same suit

2. Discuss basic gameplay: **Draw/Claim, Meld, Discard**

- **Draw** a tile from the wall or **claim** the most recent discard.
- **Meld** (if possible).
- **Discard** a tile in the center of the table, ending your turn.

Any player can claim the tile that was just discarded IF they can form a meld, which they must reveal face up on the table. That player will then discard a tile and the next turn moves to the player to their right.

If multiple claims are made, the priority order is as follows:

WIN > PONG/KANG > CHOW

If no one claims the discarded tile, that tile is taken out of play and the next turn moves to the player on their right.

Note that players can only claim a tile that completes a CHOW if it is discarded by the player to their left.

STATION 2: GAME SET-UP

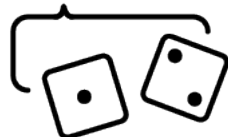
1. Describe shuffling and set-up: Mix tiles, then turn each face down. Each player then builds a “wall” — two lines of 18 tiles stacked atop each other.
2. Demonstrate how to select the dealer (mano), break the wall, and deal. Two options for selecting the mano are listed below. We recommend choosing only one to introduce.

- **Option 1:**

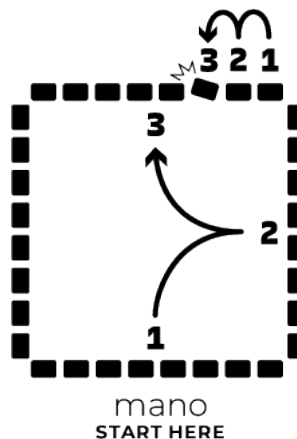
- i. **Select the Mano:** All players roll two dice; the player with the highest total becomes the mano.
- ii. **Select the Wall:** The mano rolls the dice again. Starting with the wall in front of them as “1” and moving counterclockwise, the mano counts off each of the four walls up to the total of the dice, or [rolled number]. The wall that is landed on is selected. If the mano lands on their own wall, they select the wall to their right.
- iii. **Break the Wall:** The mano locates the breaking point of the wall by counting [rolled number] tile stacks away from themselves. Whichever stack is landed on should be picked up and put atop the previous stack.
- iv. **Deal:** Starting with themselves, the mano deals tiles counterclockwise starting at the break. They deal four stacks at a time until everyone has 16 tiles. The mano then draws an extra 17th tile.
- i. **Selecting the Next Manos:** The role moves counterclockwise after each round.

SELECTING AND BREAKING THE WALL

rolled-number = 3

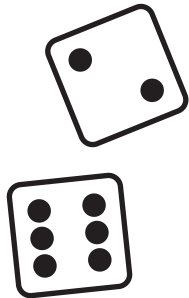


**COUNT 3 WALLS,
THEN 3 STACKS,
THEN *BREAK!***



STATION 2: GAME SET-UP, CONTINUED

- **Option 2:**



- Roll for Priority:** All 4 players throw two dice. The player with the highest total rolls again to determine the [rolled-number].
- Select the Mano:** Starting with themselves as “1” and moving counterclockwise, the roller counts off the players up to the [rolled-number]. The player landed on becomes the mano.
- Select the Wall:** The mano selects any wall other than their own to break.
- Break the Wall:** The mano locates the breaking point of the wall by counting [rolled number] tile stacks away from themselves. Whichever stack is landed on should be picked up and put atop the previous stack.
- Deal:** Starting with themselves, the mano deals tiles counterclockwise starting from the break. They deal four stacks at a time until everyone has 16 tiles. The mano then draws an extra 17th tile.
- Selecting Later Manos:** For subsequent games, the winner of the previous game rolls the two dice to set a new [rolled-number]. Following the same counterclockwise counting method starting from the winner; the player landed on becomes the new mano.

3. Demonstrate replacing flowers: Flowers are not used in gameplay and must be replaced. Starting with the mano, each player lays down their Flower tiles and draws that many tiles from the "Flower wall" (which is the opposite side of the wall that was being dealt from).

If a player draws more Flower tiles, they must wait until each player has completed their first draws from the Flower wall before they can be replaced. This continues until no one has any Flower tiles in their hand.

4. Inform players that the setup is now complete. The mano starts the game by discarding one of their 17 tiles.

STATION 3: GAMEPLAY

1. Remind players of the basic gameplay steps: **Draw/Claim, Meld, Discard.**
2. Go through the following scenarios to demonstrate gameplay.
 - **SCENARIO ONE:** Forming concealed melds and selecting a discard
 - ➔ Hand: Any 16 tiles
 - i. Draw a tile and organize your hand.
 - ii. **ASK:** "Do you see any melds?" and "Which tile should I discard?"
 - i. Select one tile to discard.
 - **SCENARIO TWO:** Claiming PONG
 - ➔ Hand: **3 stick**, **3 stick** + remaining 14 tiles
 - i. Show that a **3 stick** was discarded by the player to your right
 - ii. **ASK:** "Should I claim this tile? Why?" (Yes, to complete PONG.)
 - iii. Claim the discard to form a PONG. Expose your meld. Sort tiles and select a discard.
 - iv. Give a reminder that after any player claims a discard, the next turn goes to the player on their right.
 - **SCENARIO THREE:** Claiming CHOW
 - ➔ Hand: **7 ball**, **8 ball** + remaining 14 tiles
 - i. Show that a **6 ball** was discarded by the player to your left.
 - ii. **ASK:** "Should I claim this tile? Why?" (Yes, to complete CHOW.)
 - iii. Remind players that CHOW can only be claimed if the tile was discarded by the player to your left.
 - iv. Claim the last discard to form a CHOW. Expose your meld.
 - **SCENARIO FOUR:** Claiming TODAS
 - ➔ Hand: two concealed melds, three exposed melds, and one **7 character**
 - i. Show that a **7 character** was discarded by the player across from you.
 - ii. **ASK:** "Should I claim this tile? Why?" (Yes, to claim TODAS.)
 - iii. Claim the discard and claim TODAS.

Practice Game (20 min)

Aim to complete stations and start this practice game at about the time the rest of the room is starting their Game 2 (*at the top of Round 2).

Give some time for beginner players to ask questions, then send them to their tables to start the practice game. This game should be played with all tiles in hand facing up. This way, players can more easily receive help from you or other players.

By Round 3, have the beginner players play with tiles facing down. From there, they can join the table rotations.

Schedule Samples with Table Rotation Details

ONE ROTATION		BEGINNERS	OTHER PLAYERS
0:00 - 0:10	Arrival & welcome		
0:10 - 0:30	Round 1	Beginner Session	Game 1
0:30 - 0:50	Round 2	*Game 1 (Practice)	Game 2
0:50 - 1:10	Round 3	Game 2	Game 3
1:10 - 1:15	Hard stop & rotate		
1:15 - 1:35	Round 4	Game 3	Game 4
1:35 - 1:55	Round 5	Game 4	Game 5
1:55 - 2:05	Wrap-up		

ROTATE EACH ROUND		BEGINNERS	OTHER PLAYERS
0:00 - 0:10	Arrival & welcome		
0:10 - 0:35	Round 1	Beginner Session	Game 1
0:35 - 1:00	Rotate into Round 2	Game 1 (Practice)	Game 2
1:00 - 1:25	Rotate into Round 3	Game 2	Game 3
1:25 - 1:50	Rotate into Round 4	Game 3	Game 4
1:50 - 2:00	Wrap-up		

Event Wrap-Up

You did it! Follow these steps to wrap things up.

Closing Remarks

- Announce that the end of the event is approaching both 10 minutes and 5 minutes prior to the end of gameplay.
- After gameplay ends, thank all attendees for participating.
- Share any information about upcoming events for your organization.
- Ask for volunteers to assist with collecting dice and tile sets.

Last Tasks

- Complete Post-Event Inventory list & compare to Pre-Event list.
- Be sure all dice and tile sets are complete.
- Clean event space.

Additional Resources

- mahjongtayo.com
- Mahjong Tayo! Cheat Sheet
- Mahjong Tayo! Welcome Slide Deck
-  [@mahjongtayo](https://www.instagram.com/mahjongtayo)



*Preserving the sensory and social experience of
Filipino Mahjong for the whole family*