Before your first game

Ask about the version before choosing a tutorial.

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01 Which version of mahjong will we be playing, and which beginner resource should I use?

02 Is there a particular rule card or reference I should bring, or can I use one there?

03 Would it work better for me to watch first or join with someone explaining?

A message you can copy

Thanks for inviting me! I am new to mahjong. Which version should I read about, and is there anything I should bring?

Suggested preparation questions, not rules or a way to identify a game from its tiles.

Related guide: Your First Mahjong Night? Ask These Three Questions.

Background: OPB historian interview

https://www.opb.org/article/2026/07/09/uo-professor-shares-history-of-mahjong/

Tell a careful culture story

Keep the roots, the journey, and the people in view.

01 Roots: Which place and period does your source actually describe?

02 Journey: Who helped it travel? What route is supported, and what is still unknown?

03 People: Whose connection are you describing? Leave room for different experiences.

A question worth keeping

Which community, place, and period does this story describe? What is still unknown about this particular set or player?

These are selected historical connections, not the itinerary of one documented mahjong set.

Related guide: How Mahjong Became Part of American Life

Historical basis: OPB historian interview

https://www.opb.org/article/2026/07/09/uo-professor-shares-history-of-mahjong/

Community history: Capital Jewish Museum

https://capitaljewishmuseum.org/exhibition/mahjong-an-american-obsession/

Before a Lunar New Year visit

Let the people hosting you explain their own gathering.

01 What is the plan for the evening, and when should I arrive?

02 Would you like me to bring anything? I will check before choosing food or a gift.

03 Is there anything you would like a first-time guest to know?

A message you can copy

Thanks for inviting me! I would love to come. What time should I arrive, and would you like me to bring anything?

A family practice is not a universal rule. A folk tale is not proof of a historical event.

Related guide: Invited to Lunar New Year Dinner? Start Here.

Background: Library of Congress cultural guide

https://blogs.loc.gov/international-collections/2024/02/celebrating-lunar-new-year-with-the-library-of-congresss-collections/