

TICHU

Tichu is a 4-player partnership trick-taking card game. Typically, first team to 1000 wins.

Chinese style, players deal to themselves: starting with the dealer and moving right, each player draws a card until the deck is exhausted and all players have 14 cards.

Each player then pushes one card (face-down) to each other player.

The player with the Mah Jong is the first lead.

Regular Play

The lead plays one of the following combinations:

- A single card (example: 4)
- A pair (example: 8, 8)
- Three of a kind (2, 2, 2)
- A full house (5, 5, 5, 9, 9)
- Multiple sequential pairs (JJ, QQ, KK)
- A run of at five or more cards (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

The next player to the right either passes or plays a higher combination of the same type. Sequential pairs or runs must match the initial number of cards. Aces are always high and the value of a full house is determined by the triplet.

When 3 adjacent players pass, last player to play takes the trick and is the lead for a new trick. If this player has no more cards, the player to his or her right is the new lead. Once three players are out, the fourth passes all remaining cards to one of his or her opponents and all tricks to the first player out.

Scoring

- +10 for each K or 10
- +5 for each 5 ± 100 for a Small Tichu
- +25 for the Dragon ± 200 for a Grand Tichu
- 25 for the Phoenix

If one team goes out first and second, the round ends and that team earns 200 points.

A player may declare a Grand Tichu (done before drawing his or her 9th card at the start of a round) or a Small Tichu (before playing his or her first card). If this player is the first to go out, he or she earns bonus points. If this player is not the first out, that team loses the points.

Bombs

A bomb is

- A run of at least 5 cards of the same suit
- All four cards of the same rank

Bombs can be played at any time during a trick—even out of turn—to take the trick. A bomb beats regular combinations and lesser bombs. (Bomb rankings are determined first by number of cards and second by value of cards.)

Special Cards

The deck has the standard complement of 52 cards (albeit in the suits Stars, Pagodas, Jade, and Swords). It also has four special cards.



The Mah Jong

- Owner is the first lead, but need not play the Mah Jong.
- When the Mah Jong is played that player may state a wish for a certain rank of card. A possessor of this card rank must take every step to play this on his or her turn, perhaps even using bombs. The wish remains in effect until fulfilled, perhaps across tricks.

The Hound

- This move cannot be bombed. Playable only in lieu of leading a new trick, this transfers the lead to the player's partner, making that person lead the trick. If the partner is out, the player after the partner leads the trick.

The Phoenix

- Can be played as a Joker, acting as any other card value in a combination. May not be used to make a bomb.
- Can be played as a single card, in which case it beats the previous card by half a value. That is, after a 6, it acts as a 6.5, and will be beaten by a 7. The Phoenix can beat an Ace, but not the Dragon.
- Costs 25 points at hand end.

The Dragon

- The highest card in the deck, beating Aces and the Phoenix.
- May not be used in a run.
- Is worth 25 points at hand end.
- If the Dragon wins a trick this trick is given to an opponent of the holder's choice.