

Press Release - Mahjong Friends Online

First Mahjong Platform to Support Nearly All 4-Player Variants in Realistic 3D Environment on Mobile Devices and Computers

Free Pre-Release Trial Now Available

Melbourne, Australia, 05:00 March 23 2021; Plymouth, England, 19:00 March 22 2021; Toronto, Canada, 15:00 March 22 2021.

It is 2020 and COVID lockdowns take hold. From around the world (Melbourne, Plymouth and Toronto), three like-minded strangers find each other online and discuss what this means for people who play Mahjong. Together they hatch a plan to create an online game that gives people the same experience as sitting around a table socialising and playing one of the world's most popular games.

Mahjong Friends Online (MFO) lets players in different locations play together in a natural way. Just like in a game with real tiles, it is the players who impose the style and the rules. This flexibility allows the game to support almost every four-player Mahjong variant in existence. Players move tiles, score, and pay points just as they would in a real Mahjong game. Automated features are employed sparingly and only to overcome deficiencies in the virtual world that would hinder play.



Many features were developed to support different Mahjong variants such as American, British, Classical Chinese, Filipino, Hong Kong, MCR, SBR, Singapore, Riichi, Taiwanese, Wright-Patterson, Zung Jung, as well as most house rules.

The game is best enjoyed when used alongside a voice chat app, such as Zoom or Skype. Alternatively, the game can be played stand-alone using the built-in text chat and game calls. The game is available for iOS, Android and as a browser-based game on any computer. During development the team paid particular attention to ease-of-use on mobile devices.

In addition to hundreds of hours of testing, MFO was used successfully in the Chinese New Year 2021 SBR Online Tournament in Canada. "This event is usually our yearly face-to-face tournament, but that was not possible this year. We chose to run the tournament with Mahjong Friends Online because it is like playing in real life," said Gracie Wang, President of the Canada Mahjong Federation. "I personally think the concept of MFO is very good. If people like to play in real life, MFO would be the best online source right now. I also like the fact that MFO can be used for online training of new players."

Peter Gregory, author of *Mahjong, British Rules*, said, "I was delighted to learn that Mahjong Friends Online allowed one to play with others using British Rules. It's able to do this because it simply presents four walls of tiles which we can move around as we would in our normal game. I found it easy to learn and the help documentation was good. After a year of COVID restrictions, this new online game gives us an opportunity to contact friends or club members and start playing again." Peter's website and related books, playing aids, and blog (which includes advice about getting started on Mahjong Friends Online with British Rules) can be found at mahjong-britishrules.com

This is what some of the early adopters and testers have said about **Mahjong Friends Online**:

“In just a short time playing **Mahjong Friends Online**, it seemed as if we were all sitting around the table together. It’s a great feeling!” -- *Duncan Light, Bristol*

“It’s amazing. I hadn’t played for a few years, but I felt really comfortable in just a few minutes. And it was great to catch up with family while enjoying Mahjong.” -- *Colin Smith, Paris*

“My small group of friends and I have enjoyed playing the beta Mahjong game for the last month or so. Prior to the COVID-19 lockdown here in Berlin, we played Mahjong in person. **Mahjong Friends Online** made it possible to have virtual Mahjong meetings.” -- *Doug Arlig, Berlin*

“I love that you are in control, can play at your own pace, and chat along with the game. It’s just like the real thing.” -- *Margaret Fortune, Bristol*

“It’s so natural that you forget you’re playing on a computer.” -- *Erika Lambert, Bristol*

“Getting together playing **Mahjong Friends Online** is the highlight of my lockdown week.” -- *Chris Lambert, Bristol*

“Even the scoring works like it should. You don’t have tallies, but the process is the same.” -- *Tom Clark, Cornwall, UK*

To sum up, the developers say that **Mahjong Friends Online** is the next best thing to sitting round a table and enjoying a game of Mahjong with friends, wherever they are (even on the International Space Station).

To get your free, full-function trial (no registration needed), go to www.mahjongfriendsonline.com and click on the link in the upper right.

w: mahjongfriendsonline.com

f: www.facebook.com/mahjongfriendsonline

t: @mahjongfriendsonline

About **Mahjong Friends Online**

Formed in May 2020 by a small group of players/programmers during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The objective was to develop a Mahjong game where friends could meet and play Mahjong in a social and realistic environment.

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