



matcha
How to Play

抹茶

A Matcha card...

Card number and suit

Card rank reminder



Image

Card number and suit

The four card suits...



Matcha
Green



Bowl
Red



Water
Blue



Scoop
Yellow

matcha



Players: 2

Ages: 10+

Time: 15 mins

*The Japanese tea ceremony is a tradition centred on spirituality and servitude. Preparing and presenting a beautiful matcha (tea) for your guest is the ultimate expression of culture, ceremony and respect. In **Matcha**, players attempt to collect the utensils they need to perform a tea ceremony by matching cards on the table by their number (1-4) or suit (tea, water, bowl & scoop.) Cards are played secretly, and sometimes it will be to your advantage not to match at all..*

Contents

- 18 tea ceremony cards
- 2 mat cards
- 3 mat boards
- 34 tea utensil tokens (6 each of green tea, blue water, red bowl & yellow tea scoop, and 10 white tea whisks.)
- This rule book

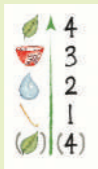
The tea ceremony cards

Matcha is played using an 18-card deck of tea ceremony cards.

- 16 of these cards are in one of four suits (denoted by their colour and icon), and are numbered 1-4.
- The remaining 2 cards are white zeros.

Card rank

When playing cards in *Matcha*, it is important to understand their rank in relation to each other. Cards are ranked both by number and suit. Ranking, however, is more like a loop than a straight line.



A 4 is ranked higher than a 3, which is higher than a 2, which is higher than a 1, but a 1 is “higher” than a 4. Green (tea) is ranked higher than red (bowl), which is higher than blue (water), which is higher than yellow (tea scoop), but yellow is “higher” than green.

In other words... A 4 is higher in rank than any other numbered card except a 1, and a 1 is lower in rank than any other card except the 4. (And similarly for the suits.)

The “0” cards have no rank or suit. They are lower than all the other cards and will never make a successful match (further explained below).

Setting up the game

First, place the 3 mat boards on the table between the two players in a row, with a small space between them.

The oldest player will be the first dealer. To deal, remove the two “0” cards from the tea ceremony deck and shuffle the remaining 16 cards. Place one card face up on each side of every mat board. These are the cards players will be trying to match in the game. Then add the “0s” back into the deck of cards that remain, shuffle, and deal five cards face-down to each player to form their starting hands.

The two cards left over from this deck should be set aside - they will not be used - and neither player should see what is on their faces.

Two mat cards are included for players to store the tokens they earn

during the game. Place these in front of each player with the supply of tokens nearby.

Player 2 will play cards face down on this side of the boards.

Players will try and match these cards in round 1



Players will try and match these cards in round 2



Players will try and match these cards in round 3



Player 1 will play cards face down on this side of the boards.

Playing sets and rounds

A game of *Matcha* is played in a maximum of 2 sets of 3 rounds each. During each round, players will take turns either playing a card to the table or passing. After three rounds are completed, if the game is not finished (explained below), all the tea ceremony cards are shuffled together to start a new set of three rounds as per the set-up rules.

Matcha is played until one of the players has collected the required number of tea ceremony utensils (tokens). If a player can declare victory at the end of a round, the game ends immediately, otherwise, the game will end at the end of the second set (after the 6th round).

During a round, players may place cards on their side of the current mat board (see image above). For the first round, players can only play cards next to the mat board at the left of the dealer. For the second round, the board in the centre is used. For the final round, the board on the right of the dealer is used.

Taking a turn

Starting with the dealer, players will take turns either playing a card next to the current mat board or passing. Each round, players will have two turns to either play one card or pass.

Playing a card face-down to the table:

On their turn, players may place one of the cards from their hand face-down next to one of the two tea ceremony cards beside the mat board for that round. On their next turn, they will have to play a card next to the other face-up card (or pass). By playing a card, the player is declaring that they are trying to match the face-up tea ceremony card with it.

To make a match, the face-down card must have either the same number or the same suit as the tea ceremony card. Each round, one tea ceremony card must have its number matched, the other must have its suit matched. This is denoted by the icons on the board nearby.



This round, player 2 has played their two cards here.



EXAMPLE: In this instance, the cards marked X are both trying to match the **suit** on the yellow '2' tea ceremony card (scoop). The cards marked O are trying to match the **number** on the blue tea ceremony card (4).

The required match is shown on the mat boards.



This round, player 1 has played their two cards here.

Players can only have one card face-down next to any of the face-up cards at any one time.

Passing:

On their turn, a player may instead declare that they are passing. A player who passes does not play a card that turn. A player who passes will only have played 1 face-down card next to the current mat board at the end of the round. If a player passes twice, they will have played zero cards for the round (which is not recommended).

After both players have had two turns, the current round ends and the face-down cards that were played that round are resolved.

Resolution of a round

During the resolution phase of a round, face-down tea ceremony cards are revealed, and tea utensil tokens are awarded to the players.

If both players had played a card next to the same face-up tea ceremony card, then both players' cards are flipped over to determine which player's card was the "best match." The player with the best match receives a token of the same type of utensil as designated by the **suit of the face-up tea ceremony card that they matched**. They will place this token on their personal mat card. Only one player will earn the matching token.

The best match:

If both players' cards match the number-match tea ceremony card, the card of the higher-ranking suit is the best match. If both players' cards match the suit of the suit-match tea ceremony card, the card with the higher-ranking number is the best match. If only one player's card matches the tea ceremony card it is automatically considered the best match.

Players should refer to the card rank diagram on the tea ceremony cards as a reminder for what card is the best match in each situation.

Not matching:

If, after the players' cards are revealed, one - and only one - of the players had played a card that DID NOT match the tea ceremony card, that player receives a white tea whisk token, while the other player will receive the utensil token of the matched card as normal.

However, if BOTH players played a face-down card that did NOT match the tea ceremony card in question, then neither player receives ANY token.

Therefore, the only way to obtain tea whisks is by NOT matching a tea ceremony card when your opponent DID match that same tea ceremony card.

Remember that the "0" cards NEVER match any card.

Once both tea ceremony cards beside the current board are resolved and tokens are awarded, play continues to the next round.



EXAMPLE 1: In this round, both players matched the correct suit on the left card (macha/green) but a 1 is higher in rank than a 4 so the top player wins the green macha tea leaf token. Likewise, both players matched the right tea ceremony card's number (2) but the bottom player had the best match because their card's suit was higher in rank. (Green ranks over red.) The bottom player wins a yellow tea scoop token.



EXAMPLE 2: In this situation, the bottom player matched the right tea ceremony card's number (2) and earns a yellow tea scoop token. The top player did NOT match the tea ceremony card and therefore, earns a white tea whisk token instead.

EXAMPLE 3: Here, neither player matched the left tea ceremony card's suit and so neither earned a token.

For the right card, only the bottom player played a card next to it (the top player passed instead), so that player receives a token of the type designated by the suit of the tea ceremony card **WHETHER OR NOT** the card they played matched it. The played card should **NOT** be turned over.

(If neither player plays a card next to a tea ceremony card, then no token is awarded to either player at the end of the round.)

Note: The top player received zero tokens this round.

At the end of a set

If a player has not won the game by the end of the first set of 3 rounds (further explained below), the player who was not the dealer for the previous set of rounds becomes the dealer for the next set. They collect all the tea ceremony cards - including the two previously removed from the game - shuffle them, and deal the cards out as mentioned previously. The new dealer will play first throughout the second set.

Winning the game

The game is won in any one of three ways:

- A player earns their 3rd green tea, blue water, red bowl or yellow tea scoop token, or,
- A player earns their 4th white tea whisk token, or,
- A player earns at least 1 of each of the five different tea utensil tokens.

The game typically ends at the end of the round in which a player has met one of these winning conditions (ie: both face-up tea ceremony cards beside the current mat board must be resolved before ending the game).

It is possible for both players to meet one of the winning conditions at the end of the same round. In such a situation, the winner is the player with the most green tea tokens. If this is a tie, then the player with the most red bowl tokens wins. If that is a tie as well, then the player with the most blue water tokens, then yellow tea scoops, then white tea whisks.

If the second set of 3 rounds is completed and neither player has won the game, the game ends anyway, and the player with the most tokens of the higher suit is the winner.



Strategy

It is important for players to note that for every set they will only have 5 cards to play with 6 tea ceremony cards to match. This means that at least once in a set of 3 rounds they will have to pass and leave a tea ceremony card without a face-down card played next to it.

Remember that when only one player places a card beneath a tea ceremony card, their card remains face-down for remainder of the set. By keeping the card hidden it will be more difficult for a player to predict what cards may be in their opponent's hand.

Table talk is allowed. For example, a player may say they have played a matching card to the table (before resolving the cards) when in reality they have played a non-matching card (or vice-versa) in order to bluff their opponent.

Remember that to win the game, players must NOT match tea ceremony cards sometimes!

Matcha is an extremely tight game. Much of the time, both players will near a winning condition at the same time. Every move counts!

Credits & info

Game design: David Harding

Illustrations: TJ Lubrano

Special thanks to: The Charpentiers, Jennifer Harding, Chris Morphew and Phil Walker-Harding.

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Resolution chart

If both players play cards next to a face-up tea ceremony card...

- Best match wins a token of the matched tea ceremony card's suit.
- Lower ranked match wins nothing.
- Non-matching card wins tea whisk token.
- If both cards are non-matching, neither player wins a token.

If one player plays a card next to a face-up tea ceremony card...

- That player wins a token of the tea ceremony card's suit.
- The played card remains face-down.

If neither player plays a card next to a face-up tea ceremony card...

- No token is awarded to either player.

To win...

- At the end of a round, a player needs either:
- 3 tokens in either green, blue, red or yellow, or,
- 4 white tea whisk tokens, or,
- at least 1 of each of the five types of tokens.



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