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Ffxiv mahjong cheat sheet

assume you've watched the guide or otherwise know the rules. If you want any background, I've been playing the game for a few years, including some time spent talking to and playing against members of the European Mahjong Association (all of which are a better player than I am). I'm no expert and I'm still at an intermediate stage of sorts, but what I've learned should help you get started. First things first: Just Play! If this is your first time ever playing the game, then just play it. Have some fun figuring out the different aspects of the game, throwing tiles around and finding the luck for that one big hand you'll never see again. Ended up in furiten, denied that big win and learn how not to make that mistake again. Just having fun. Once you've had a few games (maybe 10-20, with friends or against random people) come back here and have a read further. The Great Strategy: Lost by Less Before I get into individual strategies, I'm going to cover the aspect that will hold over long strings of games, and will ultimately (hopefully) lead to a slow-but-steady increase in rank: Don't aim to win, seek to reduce losses. Sure, you want to win hands and you want to win games, or you'll never get rating. Keep in mind, there are 4 people playing this game and it depends moderately on happiness; even most pro players out there have a game winning rate of 30 ~35%, with greater than that extremely rare. The main overall is to win a hand when you have a very good chance of doing it, but otherwise know when and how to cut your losses; the eventual winner wins by tsumo will cost you a lot less, a draw will cost you virtually nothing and someone else doing in their ron will not only cost you anything, but also put you in front of the person who has venged. I'm not sure how rating is going to turn into FFXIV's version of the game, but if the developers were smart about it, they'd do it based on posturing and not much on actual score — a 2nd place will hopefully get rating whether they're by 100 points or by 40000 to a lucky yakuman, or even if your score ends up negatively. That hopefully means that, despite being gone, way behind 1st place, being at or holding 2nd place should be your top priority. This will hopefully leave you grading and you can continue with your climb. The lodestone specifically says in its mahjong play guide that your rating and rankings will only be decided on your posting and the other players' ratings. I'll edit this section (more) later on if the player base finds out how (a lot) rating changes on a game. For the record I played 5 games – two wins, a 2nd and two 3rd – and I am now on R1549. It will depend on my opponents' is too, but it seems similar systems I've seen follow (namely Tenhou's system, although Japanese players are brutally so climbing is a lot harder there). Read your Hand Since I'm going to start getting into the nitty-gritty side of things, I'll start getting full hands, and I'll format them with code formatting, as follows: 223m45677s99pE Wh This indicates a hand with three tiles of characters (man like me will use) of two 2 and a 3; 5 bamboo tiles (should) of 4, 5, 6 and two 7; three dot tiles (pen), all 9; two East wind tiles and a White Dragon tile just drawn (note space). Hopefully it should be easy to read this hand; I'll use Wh for White Dragon and Us for West wind, but nothing else shares an initial, so it should hopefully make sense from there. But this section is supposed to be not only about reading this syntax, but also how to read what to do with a hand, so let's use that example. What would you throw away? Hopefully this one is simple - your hand is pretty close to getting ready and the White Dragon you just pulled can't go with anything you have, so you just throw that Wh away. A lot of your trek will be like that, so knowing the tile is all-but-useless is the very first step. Of course, you'll get the odd time you throw away a seemingly useless tile before later pulling tiles that, if you would have kept that tile, your hand would have kept ready faster or scored much higher. That's the nature of the game, you didn't throw away wrong, but the tiles just fell that way. Let's have another example: 678m1345678s678p 2s This one is a lot harder and will depend on more factors than you can immediately see through these tiles, but if we assume it's the first draw on first hand (and count yourself lucky if it ever happens because you don't have to much to win a decent scoring hand from here). There are two obvious ways you can go from here: you can either go for a full straight (ittsu) of 1-9s, since you just need a 9s to finish it, or you can go for a triple run (sanshoku) with the 678 in all three packs. Both score 2 han when closed, and both will give the same fu unless something changes drastically, so scoring will generally be identical either way. The key here is that the straight require you to get a 9s, and then also make some with what remains (discard from either the 678m or 678p twice and make some with the last tile). For the triple run option the hand is already ready - you actually only needed another 1s to win the hand with the triple run, making the 1s the pair. Now that you've drawn a 2s, what you can do now, though, is throw the 1s away and keep the 2s, hoping to make some out of it instead. It will give us the same triple run as before, but also all simple ones (tanyao) for another han, boosting the hand's score. Since it is counted as turn 1, you can discard the 1s and call riichi, as your hand will be closed; it will add double riichi if you win, one-shot (ippatsu) if you win before or on your next draw, and with any dora, the score can start going crazy, easily in mangan or haneman territory. This is one example of how to increase a hand's score. However, if it takes time to build that hand, someone else can win in front of you and go and waste that effort. Let's go into the next section doing the opposite: quickly make a hand. Tile efficiency This is a concept I learned from the EMA guys I knew a while back, which is about how easy your hand is to finish. Let's look at another example, but this time we'll look at some groups instead of quite a hand. Look at each group and see what's needed to complete a melting. 123m 46m 89m 23s SS R First, the 123m is done - you have a full melt here, so it's not waiting on anything. The second group is 46m – it only awaits a 5m. There are four 5m tiles elsewhere in the wall, in players' hands or in the dead wall (or in discards if it doesn't turn 1, but we'll assume it is). It's a center guard. The third group is 89m – it can only become a run with a 7m. Same as the previous group, there is only quad of 7m to complete this run. It's an edge guard. The fourth group is 23s, which can use either a 1s or a 4s to complete it. It lets you choose eight tiles to complete it (four of every 1s and 4s). It's a side guard. The fifth group is SS. It could either be your pair as is, requiring no extra tiles to complete, or it could become a set of 3. To become a set, it needs another S; however, you already have two, so there are only two tiles available to complete them. It may be better to leave it is some in some cases. It's a set guard. The sixth group is a lonely R. It has little chance of itself to make anything, so if that's the last thing to do to win your hand, you look at three remaining R tiles to find one of your pair. That's some waiting. So, in order of the highest tile efficiency - the chance to actually sign or someone who discards a tile you need to complete the group - you want groups of: Side guard > Edge/Closed Guard > Pair guard > Set guard Of course, if you don't care about calling and opening your hand, set waiting is pretty easy to call pon on, since they can be from any player, while pairing cannot be called unless it is for ron to win the hand. There's one thing that shut down waiting slightly before the rim waits though. Take these examples: examples: 24s The 12s edge guard can only be completed with a 3s. There's little you can do about this in 1 tile apart from hoping you get a 3s. The 24s closed guard can only win on a 3s as well, but what if you happen to draw a 5s instead? You can then throw away the 2s and you have a 4s side guard instead. You can now win on either 3s or 6s, increasing your tile efficiency from the front. It's purely beneficial above the side guard than, in order to make the 12s more efficient, you need to pull a 4s to get 24s, which only puts you in the same position as this but 1 tile later. Of course, if you're 123m and 123p then generally you want to keep 12s instead of going for efficiency as it increases scoring (for triple run, sanshoku), but giving yourself more tiles to win on in general case is a good practice to get in. There are some groups that give more tile efficiency than the base 8 tiles of a side guard, or similar groups. This will be more fluid than standard, as you can customize them to suit your needs. Here are some more sample groups: 667p 6789m 1123s 246m 5588p This first group, 667p, means you can either grab another 6p (two left elsewhere) and throw away the 7p, or a 5p or 8p to complete a run and throw away a 6p (another eight as per a wait. It gives ten tiles to complete the group at 6789m you can complete some with either the 6m or 9m, and leave the other three as a run. Each pair has three tiles elsewhere, so it gives six other tiles you can choose to complete. (You can also pick up a 5m that will allow you to find a 4m or 7m to complete two runs, which promote tile efficiency further to seven - you already have a 7m - and in a different way, useful if you already have some elsewhere). This group can allow you to use the 11s as a pair and look for another 1s or a 4s to complete the 23 run. These are six tiles available. You can also use a 1s to complete a set, but then you're still looking for a 1s or 4s to complete a run, scoring only five tiles. 246m you can find either center guard of 3m or 5m, discarding the 6m or 2m respectively if you find one. That changes a normal center guard of four into eight tiles, the same as a side guard. The last group, 5588p, counts for any two pairs, suits or honours, but the principle is the same. You wait on a tile to make a set of three, and leave the other as the hand's pairing. In this case, you're waiting on a 5p or 8p, and you already have two of each. This leaves two of each tile, or four total tiles available for you to await. Tile efficiency goes into much greater depth than that, and there are many more groups than I've listed here, but it's relatively common and should give you an idea of where to start. Riichi: The name of the Game This game is more interesting in my opinion than other versions, purely because of this mechanic. If you watched the video (or already know) then you should have the rules behind this and what the rewards are to take the risk. So when do you call you when the opportunity arises? The answer, for a simple strategy primer, is also pretty simple: Pretty much always. There are very few cases where you shouldn't mention Riichi, such as if you're less than 1000 points ahead of someone and the game is about to end. There are times you need to know when not to, but for a general guide, you should pretty much always riichi when available. The only time you absolutely shouldn't riichi is when you're in furiten. If you have a hand ready waiting with 67p and you have a 5p in your discard, you are in furiten until you change your guard to include nothing in your discards. If you're riichi, you can't change your guards, which means you can't leave furiten for the rest of the hand. You can only win by tsumo from that point, which reduces your chances of winning to about 1/4 of normal. (I did it. Recently. Like, yesterday. I'm still kicking myself.) Easy stuff, eh? Defense: The art of not losing (by much) So you have a basic understanding of how to build a hand, and how to build it a little faster. Let's set up a short scenario. You just clung to 2nd place, but you're dealer now and you just drew a tile that will allow you to riichi turn 5. It's a cheap hand, but a win means you'll get another turn as a trader (and another round to catch up in points). Then a disaster - someone ron'd on your throwaway and you have to pay them 8000 points, push you in last place. As it turned out they had called Riichi the turn before and were ready, faster than you, on a better hand. So what can you do when you can't see the opponents' hands? How do you prevent yourself from dealing with it? There are a few things to consider: when to defend, and how to defend. In front of one of them, though, there's one thing that will be a good general rule to follow: In most cases, you either push or you fold completely - don't fold half-ass. Of course, there's a lot you can do to fold while keeping options open, or pushing for a hand while reducing ron risk. Since this is a basic guide for beginners, I would only recommend for now that if you try to defend too hard while still building a hand, you can't do effectively. So how about when to defend? This may vary heavily, but again, for a general beginner's guide to strategy, we might leave it something like: If your hand isn't ready (you couldn't riichi, even if it was fully closed). Even if it's ready, it's not going to score too high. Even if it's ready, it has a bad wait (pretty much anything but a side wait is bad, but we can cover it in more detail another time). Based purely on your own hand, these are the things to think about when to decide whether to push or defend. If your hand is ready and a lot of points will score if you win, then go ahead and push on. You're about as likely to hand than theirs is; the reward outweighs the risk. If your hand can score really well, but you await some or aren't in a State, it might be better to defend. In most cases, it will defend completely by breaking your hand apart and discarding the tiles that are safest to throw away, even if it breaks up your highest scoring parts of your hand. Now we're moving on to how to defend. The first step is to go over some of the rules again, especially those around the state of furiten. If you suspect someone is ready (which when under riichi, it will always be when playing digitally... unless the game is life-like, but does not count from FFXIV's version so), then they must obey the rules of furiten. You can use it to your advantage when defending against it. Let's go over the basics of the rule again: You can't win on ron if one of your potential awaits in your throwaway heap (even if one of the other tiles comes up). If you pass a winning seal, you can't win on ron on the same tile in the same turn of someone else. It expires on your next turn or when someone can make a chii, pon or can call. If you mentioned riichi and pass a winning seal, you can't win by ron at all as you can no longer change your guards at all. All cases of furiten (while they last) can only be won by tsumo. So how do we use these rules to our advantage? There are some perfectly safe, and somewhat safe options. The first rule means that anything in an opponent's throwaway pile is perfectly safe from them. If an opponent has a 5p in their throwaway hopes, you can safely discard one if they either don't wait at 5p, or wait at 5p, but in furiten, meaning they can't claim your discards. It doesn't make a 5p throwaway safely from the other two players (unless they also have a 5p in their discards), but it's a safer choice than something you can't see any copies of. These tiles are known as a player's genbutsu tiles, and they can never be won by that player on ron that round. If you're just starting learning defenses, this is your simplest and most effective defensive tool. Another tile that is perfectly safe is the same tile the player on your left just discarded. Since a player can't win with ron on a tile if they passed the same tile within the same innings, it goes without saying that if two other players passed on the left fielder's tile, they can't win on yours if you throw the same one away. Less common, but common enough that it is a good one to remember. The last perfectly safe option is simply based on discarding piles and not on furiten. If you see three of a reverence tile (a wind or a dragon) on the board, you can throw away nearly 100% the fourth safely. I almost say because someone can wait to win by Thirteen Orphans (kokushi musou, one of every reverence plus one more), a very rare yakuman hand. Through this, if you see four of another honor tile on the board or in your hand, no one will be able to get such a rare hand and it becomes a safe tile. However, you don't always have the option of perfectly safe tiles – sometimes you'll have your put down risky tiles, but there's still some strategy you can use. Remember the first line: You can't win on ron if one of your potential guards is in your throwaway hope (even if one of the other tiles comes up). The main idea behind the strategy I will cover here is one known as suji. Let's say the opponent you're looking at has a 6m in their discards. You look at your hand and you decide to fold, but you have no 6m (or any other tile in his discarded heap). You have a 3m instead and a 9m. Why did I brought it up? The rule states that you can't call ron on a tile if one of your guard is in your throwaway heap, even if it's not that tile that appears. If your opponent has a 6m in their discards, they can't wait on a 45m or a 78m side guard, or they'll be in furiten. This means that a 3m or 9m is safer to discard than most other tiles. It expands on the tiles you can discard to reduce risk when defending (and thus reduce point loss, meaning high postings and more rating over time). Of course, they can wait with 99m or 24m, but good players will tend to good tile efficiency so this wait will be a little less common. There's one situation where this suji tile is actually more dangerous to throw away than normal, and it's on the tile that used to throw away than riichi. If someone calls a 5m throwaway and riichi on it, it's often more dangerous to throw away a 2m or 8m. That's because it's not unusual for someone to have an almost ready hand, but has a 135m pattern or something. If they call Riichi with this pattern the only remaining group to complete, they can throw away the 5m to wait on a 2m to win. See how it makes what would normally be a safer tile exactly the opposite? It is known as a suji trap, and can sometimes bait people into discarding the tile they need. Of course, this is something you can use to set up your own traps. That's as far as I'll cover today. I put down a lot of words, but I also barely scratched the surface of mahjong strategy. If it gets any traction I can either proceed with a more in-depth guide to some aspects, or maybe put a dissent channel that people games can organize in and discuss the game. I still teach myself, so any corrections or changes to this guide (as well as any more advanced tactics from players better than me) are more than welcome. Hopefully, if you give the game a go and it's caught your interest, this short guide will help. On any other account, just have fun with it; it's a deep, interesting game that I enjoy, and I hope I can help others enjoy it as much as I do. And hopefully I'll see you at the table. Table.

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