Mahjong Mazaa

Brand Guidelines

"The bridge, not the claim"

Version 1.0 — January 2025

# Table of Contents

* Our Cultural Foundation
* Brand Positioning
* Visual Identity
* Logo System
* Color Palette
* Typography
* Brand Voice
* Messaging Framework
* Photography & Imagery
* Brand Applications
* Do's and Don'ts

# Our Cultural Foundation

Mahjong Mazaa exists because of history, not in spite of it. We acknowledge the complexity, the beauty, and the evolution of this game across cultures and centuries.

## The Journey

* **Mid-1800s:** Mahjong emerges in Southern China during the Qing Dynasty as a male-dominated gambling game
* **1920:** Joseph Babcock brings the game to America; it becomes a national fad among wealthy society, complicated by racism and 'Oriental exoticism'
* **1937:** Jewish women form the National Mah Jongg League, creating American Mahjong and building community
* **Today:** Beloved in Chinese and Jewish families; Mahjong Mazaa welcomes South Asian communities to the table

**Our Commitment:** We don't erase the problematic moments. We don't claim innocence from the patterns that came before us. We offer a path forward: honoring Chinese origins, respecting the Jewish-American evolution, and welcoming South Asian communities—not through exoticism or appropriation, but through genuine cultural exchange and hospitality.

# Brand Positioning

"The bridge, not the claim"

**What Mahjong Mazaa Is:**

* A cultural bridge between traditions
* A South Asian aesthetic that makes the game feel familiar
* An invitation to gather, not a claim of ownership
* Tiles designed with cultural resonance and hospitality

**What Mahjong Mazaa Is Not:**

* A reinvention or 'improvement' of mahjong
* Cultural appropriation disguised as appreciation
* A claim that mahjong is South Asian
* Erasure of the game's complex history

**Core Principle:** We honor Chinese origins. We respect Jewish-American evolution. We welcome South Asian communities through cultural resonance. The rules are the same. The strategy is the same. The joy of gathering is the same.

# Visual Identity

## Design Philosophy

Our visual identity balances elegance with warmth, tradition with accessibility. Every design choice reflects our position as a cultural bridge—sophisticated enough to honor the game's heritage, welcoming enough to invite new communities.

## Key Visual Principles

* **Warm over cold:** Cream, gold, and earth tones create invitation
* **Simple over busy:** Clean layouts let content and community shine
* **Authentic over exotic:** Real gatherings, not staged performances
* **Inclusive over exclusive:** Diverse communities, multigenerational tables

# Logo System

## Primary Logo

The Mahjong Mazaa logo features a circular badge design with a stylized MM mahjong tile at its center. Flowing wind-inspired decorative elements surround the tile, suggesting movement, gathering, and cultural exchange. The wordmark 'Mahjong Mazaa' appears below in an elegant serif typeface.

## Logo Usage Guidelines

* **Clear space:** Maintain clear space equal to the height of the 'M' on all sides
* **Minimum size:** 1 inch width for print, 120px for digital
* **Backgrounds:** Use on cream, white, or light tan backgrounds only
* **File formats:** PNG for digital, SVG for web, EPS for print

# Color Palette

## Primary Colors

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Mazaa Cream**  #E8E4DD | RGB: 232, 228, 221  *Primary background, warmth, main canvas* |
|  | **Chai Gold**  #C9A875 | RGB: 201, 168, 117  *Accents, premium feel, warmth and invitation* |
|  | **Mahjong Teal**  #2C5F6F | RGB: 44, 95, 111  *Logo detail, contrast, traditional tile colors* |
|  | **Rich Brown**  #4A3C2F | RGB: 74, 60, 47  *Typography, grounding, earth and wood* |

## Secondary Colors

Use sparingly for variety and emphasis. Primary colors should dominate (70%), with secondary colors for support (20%) and accents (10%).

* **Soft Terracotta:** #D4917B — Warmth, energy, terracotta pottery
* **Sage Green:** #A8B5A8 — Balance, nature, calm
* **Warm White:** #FAF8F5 — Backgrounds, breathing room
* **Deep Charcoal:** #3A3A3A — Text, emphasis

# Typography

## Font System

Our typography system balances heritage with accessibility, using classic serif fonts for headers and clean sans-serif for body text.

* **Headers: Georgia or Libre Baskerville** — Elegant, classic serif that honors tradition
* **Subheads: Montserrat SemiBold** — Modern, clean, provides structure
* **Body Text: Montserrat Regular or Arial** — Readable, approachable, accessible
* **Accents: Georgia Italic** — For quotes, emphasis, poetry

## Type Hierarchy

* **H1:** 48-72pt, Georgia Bold, Rich Brown (#4A3C2F)
* **H2:** 32-42pt, Georgia Bold, Mahjong Teal (#2C5F6F)
* **H3:** 24-28pt, Montserrat SemiBold, Rich Brown
* **Body:** 14-18pt, Montserrat Regular, Deep Charcoal (#3A3A3A)
* **Captions:** 12-14pt, Montserrat Regular, Medium Gray

# Brand Voice

## Core Voice Principles

* **Warm but not cutesy:** Welcoming without diminishing cultural weight
* **Honest about history:** We name complexity, don't hide it
* **Confident in hospitality:** Invitation, not appropriation
* **Sophisticated yet accessible:** Educated audience, clear language

## Language Guidelines

**We say:**

* "We honor" not "we own"
* "The bridge, not the claim"
* "A ritual that gathers. A table that welcomes."
* "Welcome to the table" not "our game"
* "Hosting mahjong" not "owning mahjong"

**Tone Check:** Does this honor the history? Does this feel welcoming? Does this maintain cultural humility? If yes to all three, you're on brand.

# Messaging Framework

## Core Messages

**Origin Story:**

"Mahjong emerged in China, evolved in America, now welcomed to South Asian tables."

**Value Proposition:**

"Tiles that feel familiar. Traditions that feel welcoming."

**Cultural Positioning:**

"Honoring origins. Respecting evolution. Welcoming new communities."

**Product Promise:**

"Same game. New aesthetic. Your table."

**Brand Tagline:**

"A ritual that gathers. A table that welcomes."

# Photography & Imagery

## Photography Style

* **Focus:** Hands, gathering, intergenerational connection
* **Lighting:** Warm, natural (golden hour, soft window light)
* **Moments:** Authentic, not staged perfection
* **Subjects:** Diverse South Asian communities, mixed cultural tables
* **Context:** Home settings with chai/coffee, textiles, family

## Imagery Guidelines

Photography should feel like you're looking at your own family gathering—natural, warm, real. We show the game in context of community and hospitality, not as exotic object or cultural costume.

**Show:**

* Multiple generations playing together
* Close-ups of hands arranging tiles
* Chai or coffee being poured, snacks on the table
* Laughter, conversation, authentic connection
* Comfortable home spaces, not formal settings

# Brand Applications

## Social Media

* **Instagram:** Warm photography, educational carousels, community stories
* **Facebook:** Longer storytelling, event promotion, group building
* **TikTok:** Behind-the-scenes, how-to-play, cultural education
* **Pinterest:** Lifestyle inspiration, gathering aesthetics, product beauty

## Website

The website is our most complete brand expression. Key sections include:

* **Hero:** "A ritual that gathers. A table that welcomes."
* **Our Story:** Cultural positioning and historical acknowledgment
* **The History:** Educational timeline from China to America to today
* **The Product:** Tile showcase, South Asian aesthetic details
* **Community:** Stories, gatherings, how to play

## Packaging

* **Box:** Cream with gold accents, MM logo prominent, premium feel
* **Inside lid:** Brief history and cultural acknowledgment statement
* **Tiles:** Traditional symbols with South Asian aesthetic touches
* **Booklet:** Full cultural context and gameplay rules

# Do's and Don'ts

## Brand Integrity Checklist

**DO:**

* Always acknowledge cultural origins in any historical reference
* Use warm, inviting language that centers community
* Maintain color palette and typography standards
* Show diverse, authentic gatherings in imagery
* Lead with "bridge, not claim" positioning
* Prioritize education alongside promotion

**DON'T:**

* Never use Orientalist stereotypes or 'exotic' framing
* Avoid claiming mahjong as South Asian or erasing origins
* Don't use costume-like imagery or cultural mashups
* Never minimize the complicated racial history
* Avoid overly casual language about cultural exchange
* Don't position as "modern version" or "improvement"

**When in doubt:** Does this honor the history? Does this feel welcoming? Does this maintain cultural humility? If yes to all three, you're on brand.

# The Vision

"Tables that welcome. Traditions that gather."

Mahjong Mazaa exists to gather communities. We make space for new stories at ancient tables. Every tile set is an invitation to connect.

From Chinese grandmothers to Jewish living rooms to South Asian homes—the game continues its journey, and we're honored to host it.

The brand is successful when tables are full and laughter is loud.

⁂

**Contact & Resources**

brand@mahjongmazaa.com

Last Updated: January 2025