

Mahjong!

An American Obsession

Remember, Play, Connect:
Bringing a Century of Mahjong to Life
Opens Spring 2027

Remember, Play, Connect

A full century after first taking the nation by storm in the 1920s, mahjong is experiencing a massive cultural renaissance. In spring 2027, the Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum opens a major exhibition, ***Mahjong! An American Obsession***. This dynamic show explores how a 19th-century Chinese game evolved into a beloved cornerstone of American Jewish life and became an enduring source of connection for the wider community.

Going beyond the rules of the game, this exhibition uncovers a dynamic, multi-faceted history. The exhibition starts with Joseph P. Babcock, who learned of the game in Shanghai, China, in the 1920s, simplified the rules, and brought it to California. *Mahjong!* then travels through the 20th and 21st centuries, with a special focus on the living rooms and summer resorts, where Jewish women made the game their own.

The exhibition will explore themes of immigration, gender, leisure, ethnic and cultural difference, game design, and industrialization history. ***Mahjong!*** is about the way different histories collide with the *click, click, click* of a game tile. It unwinds the story within the history of games and the way they change, about how a century-old suit-matching contest connects new players to the past and experienced players to one another.

Through original research, community-collected artifacts, oral histories, and interactive gallery spaces featuring open table play, ***Mahjong! An American Obsession*** highlights how Jewish stories weave into the broader American fabric. It's both "only a game" and has come to be much more.



Mahjong players in the pool at the Wardman-Park Hotel in Washington, DC, June 1924. Courtesy of Library of Congress

Dragons— Exclusive Presenting Sponsor | \$100,000

- Exclusive presenting sponsor of *Mahjong! An American Obsession* and related programming.
- Prominent “*Mahjong! An American Obsession*, presented by [Sponsor]” attribution on the exhibition title wall, gallery entrances, exhibition website, marketing and promotional materials, press releases, digital communications, and media coverage.
- Opportunity to honor or memorialize a mahjong teacher, player, or group (a grandmother, mother, or group of dear friends) by naming a section for them.
- Featured sponsor profile in a CJM e-newsletter (distribution list of more than 14,000 emails), including a donor/sponsor quote, distributed prior to opening.
- Prominent recognition at the Opening Event and major exhibition programs.
- Opportunity to host an exclusive private evening reception for up to 125 guests.
- Opportunity to invite up to 25 guests for a private exhibition tour.
- Table for ten at an exclusive dinner at an Embassy in DC.
- Two tables of four at the Museum’s mahjong tournament.
- Invitations to special Museum events throughout the year.
- Recognition in the Museum’s annual Year In Review.

Flowers— Lead Exhibition Sponsor | \$50,000

- Lead sponsor recognition on the *Mahjong! An American Obsession* website and prominently across related marketing, signage, promotional materials, e-newsletters, and media.
- Prominent name placement above the supporting funder block on the exhibition website and related materials.
- Dedicated recognition of sponsor or a beloved mahjong teacher at a major gallery feature or exhibition activation, such as the Oral History Listening Area or Open Play Gallery.
- Public recognition in remarks at the Opening Event.
- Opportunity to invite up to 18 guests for a private exhibition tour.
- Two tables of four at the Museum’s mahjong tournament.
- Six seats at an exclusive dinner at an Embassy in DC.
- Invitations to special Museum events throughout the year.
- Recognition in the Museum’s annual publication, Year In Review.

Special Access to a Spring 2027 Mahjong Tournament

At the Bamboo level and above, sponsors receive seats at a Mahjong Tournament at the Museum, featuring spirited play, fabulous prizes, mahjong-themed snacks, and a sneak peek at the upcoming exhibition.



Dot | \$25,000

- Name recognition on exhibition signage and media while the exhibition is on view at the Capital Jewish Museum.
- Dedicated recognition of sponsor or a beloved mahjong teacher at a major gallery section.
- Name and/or logo recognition on exhibition materials, signage, digital promotional assets, website landing pages, and related communications.
- Recognition in exhibition-related e-newsletters or program communications.
- Public recognition in remarks at the Opening Event.
- Opportunity to invite up to 12 guests for a private exhibition tour.
- Four seats at an exclusive dinner at an Embassy in DC.
- One table of four at the Museum’s mahjong tournament.
- Invitations to special Museum events throughout the year.
- Recognition in the Museum’s annual publication, Year In Review.

Four Winds Special Group Sponsorship | \$12,500

Designed for joint contributions from synagogues, country clubs, mahjong groups, community organizations, and local playing circles.

- Group recognition on the main exhibition sponsor board for *Mahjong! An American Obsession*.
- Name recognition on exhibition materials, signage, and digital communications while the exhibition is on view.
- Recognition on the exhibition webpage and related digital communications.
- Complimentary table of four at the Museum's mahjong tournament.
- Opportunity to invite up to 10 participants for the private group experience.
- Recognition in the Museum's annual publication, Year In Review.
- Invitations to select Museum events throughout the year.



Bamboo | \$10,000

- Name recognition on exhibition signage and media while the exhibition is on view.
- Recognition in exhibition-related e-newsletters and program communications.
- Public recognition in remarks at the Opening Event.
- Opportunity to invite up to 5 guests for a private exhibition tour.
- Two seats at an exclusive dinner at an Embassy in DC.
- Complimentary table of four at the Museum's mahjong tournament.
- Invitations to special Museum events throughout the year.
- Recognition in the Museum's annual publication, Year In Review.

Chinese mahjong set
with polychrome decorated lacquered carrying case.
Capital Jewish Museum Collection

Crak/Character | \$5,000

- Name recognition on exhibition signage and media while the exhibition is on view at the Capital Jewish Museum.
- Public recognition in remarks at the Opening Event.
- Opportunity to invite up to 3 guests for a private exhibition tour.
- Two complimentary seats at the Museum's mahjong tournament.
- Invitations to special Museum events throughout the year.
- Recognition in the Museum's annual publication, Year In Review.



Honor Your Mahjong Teacher or Group

So many of us learned to play mahjong from a beloved teacher who shared not only the game, but also the joy, laughter, traditions, and connections that grew around the table. Others have found friendship, community, and a sense of belonging through the mahjong group they play with—a special circle whose time together has become part of their lives and memories. Sponsors at the Dragon, Flower, and Dot levels have the opportunity to honor or memorialize a cherished mahjong teacher, group, or circle of friends who has made the game part of their family or community story. By recognizing these meaningful connections, we celebrate the people who make mahjong so much more than a game. Your support will help carry these legacies forward, keeping the spirit of mahjong—and the bonds it creates—alive for generations to come.

Please contact Malki Karkowsky, Chief Advancement Officer, mkarkowsky@capitaljewishmuseum.org, 202.290.2593, with questions or for additional sponsorship information.