

# Dim Sum Rush

*The Sunday lunch rush has hit the teahouse. Baskets come off your cart in the order they were stacked, and nobody leaves the floor until every cart in the section is empty. Clear yours before the other section clears theirs.*

## In this kit

**84 cards:** dishes numbered 1 to 12, seven of each. Dim Sum Rush can be made with **tiles or cards** and plays the same either way. This kit is the card version; with tiles, you draw from a cloth bag instead of dealing.

Print the card sheets **double-sided, flipping on the long edge**, so every card gets the back that matches its number, then cut along the crop marks. No duplex printer? Glue each backs sheet to the reverse of its fronts.

## The backs

A card's back shows how the dish is served, which tells everyone roughly how strong it is:

| BACK                                                                                                | NUMBERS |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
|  Bamboo steamer   | 1–3     |
|  Porcelain plate | 4–6     |
|  Clay bowl       | 7–9     |
|  Dessert tray    | 10–12   |

Backs face out while you hold your cards, so everyone sees the shape of every cart.

## Setup

The main rules are the **team game for 4 or 6 players**. For 2–6 players with no teams, see Every Server for Themselves on page 3.

- Split into two sections, **Jade** and **Lantern**: 2 servers each with 4 players, 3 each with 6. Sit so the sections alternate around the table.
- Build the deck: with 4 players, leave out all 10s, 11s and 12s; with 6 players, use all 84 cards. Shuffle it face down.
- Deal cards one at a time. Put each new card on the **right end** of your hand, without looking for a better spot, until everyone has **14** cards (4 players) or **13** (6 players).
- The cards in your hand, in the order you were dealt them, are your **cart**. You may never rearrange it. Hold it in a fan with the backs facing out.
- Everyone chooses one card from their cart and places it face down in front of them. Reveal them together. This is your spot on your section's **trolley**.
- The last person to eat dim sum leads the first trick.

## Your cart and the trolley

**Your cart** is your hand. Its order never changes, except when you take a card from the trolley and slide it into a spot of your choice (see Passing).

**Your section's trolley** is the face-up cards in front of you and your teammates. Each server has one trolley spot.

- On your turn you may add **any of your section's trolley cards** to your combination, in any position. A combination can even be made only of trolley cards.
- You may never use the other section's trolley cards.
- A trolley card that gets used is **not** replaced. Its spot stays empty until someone in your section fills it while passing.

## Combinations

| COMBINATION           | WHAT IT IS                                                        | EXAMPLE            |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Single</b>         | One card                                                          | 7                  |
| <b>Set</b>            | 2 or 3 cards of the same number                                   | 5 5                |
| <b>Run</b>            | 2 to 4 cards in a row of numbers                                  | 3 4 5              |
| <b>Chef's Special</b> | Four of a number, or a run of four, <b>all from your own cart</b> | 8 8 8 8<br>2 3 4 5 |

- Cards you play from your cart must sit **next to each other**. For a run they must also already be in rising or falling order: you can play 4 5 6 or 6 5 4 from your cart, but not 4 6 5.
- Trolley cards go **anywhere** in the combination, so they can fill a gap:



4 and 6 from your cart + the 5 from the trolley (dashed) = the run 4 5 6

- No combination is ever more than four cards.** Numbers don't wrap around: 12 is never followed by 1.
- Four of a number, or a run of four, that includes a trolley card is **not** a Chef's Special. It's an ordinary combination.

**Table talk:** don't show or describe your cards. You may say how many you hold.

## Playing a round

A game is **3 rounds**. Each round is a series of tricks, and it ends the moment every server in one section has an empty cart.

### Leading

The leader plays any combination to the middle of the table, using cards from their cart, their section's trolley, or both. The leader can't pass.

### Following

Going clockwise, each other player either plays a **stronger** combination or passes. A combination is stronger if it is:

- the **same kind and the same number of cards**, with an **equal or higher** number (runs compare by their highest card), or
- a **Chef's Special** played on anything that isn't a Chef's Special.



On 6 6 you may play 6 6, 7 7 or 9 9.

Not 6 6 6, and not 5 5.

On the run 3 4 5 you may play 3 4 5 or 6 7 8, but not 4 5 6 7: that's a different size. You may play over your own teammate.

## Chef's Specials

Four of the same number, or a run of four, played **entirely from your own cart**. Play one on your normal turn, or lead with one. It beats any combination that isn't a Chef's Special. To beat a Chef's Special, play a stronger one:

1. A **set of four beats a run of four**.
2. Same kind: an **equal or higher** number wins.

7 7 7 7 beats any pair or run of three. It is beaten by 7 7 7 7 or 9 9 9 9, but not by a run of four such as 2 3 4 5.

## Passing

If you don't play, you pass. **Once you pass, you're out of the trick** until the next one begins. When you pass you may do **one** of these:

- **Fill a spot.** Place one card from your cart face up on any **empty** spot of your section's trolley, including a teammate's.
- **Swap.** Take one card from any spot of your section's trolley and slide it into your cart wherever you like. Then place any one card from your cart face up in that spot.
- Or do nothing.

## Ending a trick

The trick ends when everyone else still in the round has passed. The player who made the last play wins it. Set the played cards aside face up.

The winner chooses who in their section **leads the next trick**: themselves, or any teammate who still has cards. Choose without discussing it. If the winner just played their last card, they still choose a teammate.

## Getting out

When your cart is empty you're out for the rest of the round. Filling a spot with your last card also puts you out. Your trolley spot stays on the table, and your teammates may still use it, swap with it, or fill it once it's empty.

## Round end and scoring

The round ends **immediately** when every server in one section has an empty cart, even in the middle of a trick.

The manager judges a section by its slowest server. The section that emptied its carts scores 0. The other section takes **penalty points equal to the number of cards in its fullest cart**. Trolley cards don't count.

Bao plays his last card, and his teammate Jun is already out, so Lantern has emptied every cart. On Jade, Mei holds 3 cards and Lin holds 5. **Jade takes 5 penalty points.**

### Next round

Record the penalty, shuffle all the cards for the deck back together, deal new carts and choose new trolley cards (Setup steps 2–5). The first lead passes to the left of the previous round's first leader.

## Game end

After the third round, the section with the **fewest** penalty points wins. If the sections are tied, they share the win.

## Clarifications

- **Your own spot:** you can use the card in your own trolley spot, just like a teammate's.
- **Trolley-only combinations** are allowed, but can never be a Chef's Special.
- **Empty spots:** you can't swap with an empty spot; fill it instead. Filling sheds a card and hands your section a tool; swapping fixes a gap in your cart.
- **Equal numbers:** an equal number beats an ordinary combination, and an equal Chef's Special beats a Chef's Special of the same kind and size.

## A sample trick

Four players sit in order Mei (Jade), Bao (Lantern), Lin (Jade), Jun (Lantern). The trolley shows Mei 2, Bao 7, Lin 6, Jun 3.

1. **Mei leads** a 4 and 5 that sit side by side in her cart, plus the 6 from Lin's spot: the run 4 5 6. Lin's spot is now empty.
2. **Bao plays** a 5 and 6 from his cart with the 7 from his own spot: the run 5 6 7. Its highest card, 7, beats Mei's 6.
3. **Lin passes.** She has no run of three that reaches 7. She fills her own empty spot with a 9 from her cart.
4. **Jun passes.** His teammate is on top. He swaps: takes the 3 from his own spot, slides it between a 2 and a 4 in his cart, and puts out an 8.
5. **Mei plays** 8 8 8 8, four cards side by side in her cart. It's a Chef's Special and beats Bao's run.
6. **Bao passes.** He has no stronger Chef's Special. He fills his empty spot with a 1.



Mei's Chef's Special

Lin and Jun already passed, so Mei wins the trick. Mei holds 6 cards and Lin holds 12, so Mei chooses Lin to lead next.

## At a glance

| PLAYERS | GAME         | NUMBERS | CARDS EACH | TROLLEY SPOTS YOU USE |
|---------|--------------|---------|------------|-----------------------|
| 2       | Every Server | 1–6     | 14         | Both                  |
| 3       | Every Server | 1–9     | 14         | All three             |
| 4       | Teams of 2   | 1–9     | 14         | Your section's 2      |
| 4       | Every Server | 1–9     | 14         | Yours + neighbors'    |
| 5       | Every Server | 1–12    | 14         | Yours + neighbors'    |
| 6       | Teams of 3   | 1–12    | 13         | Your section's 3      |
| 6       | Every Server | 1–12    | 13         | Yours + neighbors'    |

## Every Server for Themselves

2 to 6 players, no teams.

Everyone plays alone. All the team rules apply, with these changes.

### Setup

Build the deck and deal as shown:

| PLAYERS | NUMBERS USED | CARDS EACH |
|---------|--------------|------------|
| 2       | 1–6          | 14         |
| 3 or 4  | 1–9          | 14         |
| 5       | 1–12         | 14         |
| 6       | 1–12         | 13         |

### Neighbors' trolley spots

You may use, fill and swap with only three trolley spots: **your own and those of the players directly on your left and right**. With 2 or 3 players, that's everyone's.

### Leading

The winner of a trick leads the next one.

### Round end

The round ends immediately when **any** player's cart is empty. Every other player takes penalty points equal to the number of cards in their own cart.

In a 3-player game, Ada plays her last card. Bea holds 4 cards and Cal holds 7. Ada takes 0, Bea 4 and Cal 7.

### Game end

After 3 rounds, the player with the fewest penalty points wins. Tied players share the win.

## Quick reference

**Your turn:** play a stronger combination, or pass. When you pass you may fill an empty trolley spot or swap with a trolley card. Once you pass, you're out of the trick.

**Stronger:** same kind and size with an equal or higher number, or any Chef's Special.

**Chef's Special:** four of a number or a run of four, all from your own cart. A set beats a run; then an equal or higher number.

**Never** more than four cards in a combination. **Never** rearrange your cart.

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