

The State of American Mahjong 2026

Topline: American mahjong is in a boom. Bam Good Time aggregated 1,026 unique clubs across 51 states and territories — the first published cross-source census of the U.S. mahjong community. The per-capita leader isn't where most coverage expects.

Five findings worth a story

- **Texas leads raw count (97 clubs), New Jersey leads per-capita (5.92/M).** The top five states account for 34% of all known clubs.
- **The American mahjong belt runs through the Deep South.** Alabama, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Tennessee all exceed 5 clubs per million residents. The region is under-covered in national reporting but disproportionately active.
- **Wednesday is "mahjong day" in America.** Of clubs that name a meeting day, Wednesday appears in 60 descriptions — 20% more than any other day. Afternoon is the dominant time slot.
- **Small-town hotspots.** Canton, GA (pop. 35,000) has 4 clubs. Edmond, OK (96,000) has 4. These are real communities, not statistical noise.
- **American (NMJL) variant dominates.** Of clubs naming a variant, 98% play American. Riichi and Hong Kong mahjong exist but cluster around university towns and cultural community centers.

What's driving the boom

- **Pandemic-era cohort.** Thousands of players learned mahjong 2020–21 and came looking for in-person clubs when gatherings resumed.
- **Aesthetic overhaul.** A new generation of tile set designers has made the game Instagrammable. Modern sets reach younger players.
- **Organizer tooling.** Platforms like Bam Good Time handle RSVPs, waitlists, and payments — more volunteers stay organizers.
- **65-and-over population growth.** Active-adult communities compete on mahjong programming; retirement-heavy states punch above their weight.

By the numbers

1,026

Unique clubs across the United States

51

States and territories with at least one listed club

5.92/M

Per-capita leader (New Jersey)

Wednesday

Most common meeting day

Methodology

We aggregated four public data sources — AMJA, Modern Mahjong, Sloperama's legacy index, and Meetup — and combined them with 173 first-party listings from the Bam Good Time public directory. We filtered to active listings, deduped on lowercased (name, city, state) keys, and cross-referenced against U.S. Census 2023 state population and 2022 ACS city population estimates for per-capita figures. Raw data tables and a reproducible generator script are open on GitHub.

Available for interview

Sterling Cannon, founder of Bam Good Time. Sterling built the aggregator and has interviewed dozens of club organizers across the country. Available to discuss regional trends, methodology, outliers (Canton GA, Chattanooga, Vermont), or local angles for specific cities.

Contact & assets

- Email: hello@bamgoodtime.com (reply-to: mahjong@bamgoodtime.com)
- Full report: bamgoodtime.com/blog/state-of-american-mahjong-2026
- Charts (SVG): bamgoodtime.com/images/reports/som-2026/
- Raw data (JSON + CSV): github.com/egolytic/bam-good-time/tree/main/scripts/reports/state-of-mahjong-2026

Bam Good Time — mahjong club management built for the 2026 community. Directory, registration, leagues, payments, and league scoring in one place. bamgoodtime.com