BALDWIN PARK LIVING

AUGUST 2026





Photos courtesy of Michael Lynch

Tile and Error

Baldwin Park Mahjong is Central Florida's home for Traditional Chinese Mahjong and has brought together players of all backgrounds and skill levels since 2019.

MICHAEL LYNCH
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Joining one of Baldwin Park's numerous social gaming clubs is a great opportunity to expand one's social circle, make new friends and have fun. In some cases, gaming clubs, especially those involving strategy, sustained attention, memory recall, complex pattern recognition and quick decision-making, also can be a powerful tool for maintaining and boosting cognitive health.

Proverbs 27:17 states, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another," highlighting that through challenging cognitive interaction, friends and companions can help one another improve, grow and become better, much like how striking iron against iron refines and sharpens both pieces.

Nationwide interest in Mahjong clubs has skyrocketed by thousands of percent over the last year, evolving from a "grandmother's game" into a trendy social ritual. Undeniably, the centuries-old tile game is enjoying a massive modern resurgence. As the founder of Baldwin Park Mahjong, Baldwin Park resident Christopher Chung has a deep passion for Hong Kong-style mahjong and the culture surrounding the game. He created Baldwin Park Mahjong to bring players of all skill levels together in a welcoming, friendly environment.

"Back in 2018, I decided to buy a mahjong set and didn't have anyone to play with and looked online," Chung says. "There were no regular meetups for traditional Chinese mahjong. So I made a post online, and that was the start of the club."

Baldwin Park Mahjong is Central Florida's home for Traditional Chinese Mahjong and has brought together players of all backgrounds and skill levels since 2019. The club is rooted in the rich tradition of Hong Kong-style mahjong and deeply committed to sharing Asian culture through the beauty of this ancient game.

"Growing up, I remember watching my Gung Gung (grandfather) and all the elders play at family functions such as Christmas parties and Lunar New Year celebrations," Chung says. "The game has allowed me to reconnect with my heritage

BALDWIN PARK MAHJONG

Baldwin Park Mahjong meets at 7:15 p.m. Thursdays Enders Clubhouse. For more information, contact info@bjmahjong.com or visit bpmahjong.com.



and ancestors. It has given me a deeper appreciation for my roots, and I enjoy sharing this tradition with others."

Mahjong is a traditional Chinese game played by four players with a set of 144 beautifully decorated tiles. It's a game of skill, strategy and a touch of luck — where players draw and discard tiles to build winning hands.

With a rich history spanning centuries and fascinating regional variations across Asia, mahjong is more than a game. It's a living cultural tradition. The 144-tile strategy game is seeing a major cultural revival, transforming from a traditional pastime into a full-blown lifestyle trend.

"What amazes me is seeing people from different generations, backgrounds and cultures sit down together and become friends through this game," Chung says. "As someone who grew up around traditional Chinese mahjong, it makes me proud to see so many people embracing and enjoying a tradition that has been passed down through generations."

Mahjong is often described as a game that is "easy to learn but hard to master." Learning the basics of Mahjong takes just a few hours, but mastering the strategy can take years.

"We take complete beginners who have never touched a tile in their life before, and within 30 minutes, they are winning their first hand of mahjong," Chung says proudly. "People think mahjong is complicated until they sit down and try it."

Mahjong clubs provide critical mental, social and emotional advantages. The game can serve as a powerful "brain workout" that fights cognitive decline while establishing a consistent antidote to social isolation. Club play forces you to put away your phone, providing a sensory, mindful "flow state" that relieves daily stress. By gathering regularly in a club setting, players of all generations and skill levels gain access to a structured routine, tactile mindfulness, and community bonding that solitary games simply cannot replicate.

"Our club gives people a place to connect, relieve stress and be part of something meaningful," Chung says. "It's a weekly reset — good for your mind, your heart and your soul. The friendships and support that grow here are truly special. People tell me every week how much they look forward to coming."

Both the Millennials and Gen Z generations are embracing mahjong. Driven by a desire to unplug from technology and build face-to-face community, younger adults are joining clubs, hosting events and treating the centuries-old tile game as a vibrant, screen-free social hobby. Mahjong has become an incredibly popular alternative to standard happy hours and club hopping.

"Millennials and Gen Z love that mahjong is screen-free, social and genuinely fun," Chung says. "It is a meaningful way to unplug, connect face-to-face and build real friendships."

Baldwin Park Mahjong is supported by a team of experienced tutors who help players learn and improve. Together, they're dedicated to creating a welcoming and engaging environment for everyone who loves mahjong. The club welcomes newcomers and watching players grow in confidence and skill.

"What makes me happiest is not how many people attend, but watching people grow their mahjong skills," Chung says. "We have beginners who had never touched a mahjong tile before and are now confidently playing, scoring and teaching newer players. None of that would be possible without our dedicated team of tutors and volunteers. Together, we've built a welcoming community where people can learn, connect, unwind and look forward to seeing (one another)."