

MEXICAN TRAIN

Contents

91 domino tiles, 8 train markers, 1 centrepiece and rules.

Object of the game

Be the first to play all your dominoes, or at least as many high-point dominoes as possible, in each round. The lowest total score after all rounds wins.

Set up

Place the double-12 domino in the centre piece on the table. This is where the trains begin. The double-12 in the centrepiece is called the *engine*.

Turn the other dominoes face down and shuffle them. Each player draws tiles according to the chart below and arranges them so that the other players cannot see them. The remaining tiles are gathered into a *bone pile* that is used for draws during play. Each player chooses a coloured train marker.

Players	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Draw	16	16	15	14	12	10	9

Explanation of Different Trains

- **Personal train** – A line of end-matching dominoes starting from an empty slot in the centrepiece with a tile matching the engine. As long as you are able to place a tile on your turn, your personal train is only open for you.
- **Other players' trains** – You can only play tiles onto other players' trains if they have markers on them.
- **Mexican Train** – A line of end-matching dominoes starting with a tile matching the engine. All players are allowed to play tiles onto the Mexican Train, which starts and runs beside the personal trains (see picture).

How to Play

The oldest player starts. Thereafter, rotate the starter of each round in clockwise order.

The starting player either starts his *personal train* or the *Mexican Train* by matching a tile from his hand to the engine, after which the turn passes clockwise to the next player. Any player can start the Mexican Train on their turn if it hasn't been started yet.

With the exception of playing doubles (see *Double Dominoes*), you can play **one** tile during each turn, if possible. **If you have a playable tile, you must play.**

Unable to Play & the Marker

If you do not have a playable tile, draw a tile from the bone pile and play it if possible. If not, place your marker on your personal train (or where the train will begin, if it hasn't been started yet), after which the turn goes to the next player.

A marker on a train means that the train is open to the other players. While there is a marker on your train, you can still play on any available train on your turns. **You may remove the marker from your personal train after playing on it.**

Double Dominoes

A double tile is placed sideways on the train (see picture).

When you play a double, you must play an additional tile that is not a double (unless the double is your last domino, in which case the round ends). You can play the additional tile on the double or on any open train.

Because you are required to end your turn by playing a non-double, you must draw if you don't have one. If you still can't play, place your marker on your train.

Open Double: If the double is left open (not played on) when your turn ends, the next tile to be played has to be played on the open double, ie. the double must be *closed* before any other trains can be played on. If the subsequent players cannot close the double even after drawing, they must place a marker on their personal train.

If it is impossible to close a double because all 12 tiles that would match it have already been played, that open double does not restrict play.

Ending a Round

When there are no more tiles in the bone pile, a player must pass if he does not hold a playable tile, and place a marker on his train.

When a player has only one tile left, he should announce this by tapping it on the table.

A round ends when a player has "dominoed" (played his last tile), or when the bone pile is depleted and no one can play anymore.

Subsequent Rounds

Each new round begins with the double that is one number lower than the engine in the last round (12, then 11, etc.). The blank double is the engine in the last round.

Scoring & the Winner

At the end of each round, each player adds up the value of his unplayed tiles and gives the number to the scorekeeper (for example: 5-7 has a value of 12, 9-9 has a value of 18). The player with the lowest total score at the end of the final round wins.

Variations

- For a faster game with 2 to 4 players, remove all tiles that have at least 1 end with a value of 10 or more. Two players draw 15 tiles each; 3 players draw 13 each; 4 players draw 10 tiles each. In this case the double-9 domino is the engine.
- For a different kind of game experience, play with open tiles. The bone yard is face down, but all the players' tiles are visible to all players.

