

# A Simple Guide to Mexican Train Dominoes

*While there are many variations to Mexican Train Dominoes, this is the easiest version to follow when you are learning to play. For 2 – 8 players.*

## Materials

- A double-12 domino set
- One marker for each player plus one for the Mexican train (use plastic trains, coins, etc.)
- Train station cut-out (optional)

## Game Set Up

Start by turning all dominoes facedown and shuffle. Determine who will go first and how many games you will play, then start drawing dominoes. Each player should stand their dominoes on edge so they are not visible to other players.

Draw dominoes as follows:

If 2, 3, or 4 players	Draw 15 dominoes each
If 5 or 6 players	Draw 12 dominoes each
If 7 or 8 players	Draw 11 dominoes each

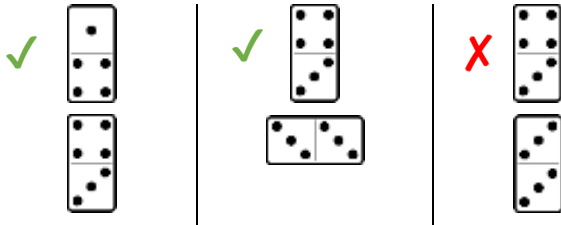
The remaining dominoes form the “boneyard”, which will be used during the game.

## Game Objective

To play all your dominoes before anyone else and achieve the lowest score.

## Placing the Dominoes

Non-double dominoes are played end-to-end. Double dominoes are placed crosswise.



## Starting the Game

The first player opens the train station by placing their highest double in the center to set the station number. For example, if the domino played is a double-12, the station number is set at 12.

If that player doesn't have a double, then play moves clockwise to the next player until someone can open the station. If no one has a double, go around again and draw in turn until one is found.

## The First Turn

Once a player opens the train station, they begin their own train, or line of dominoes, by playing a domino that matches the station number. Each player's train should depart towards themselves. On this first turn only, a player continues to play dominoes on their own train until they have no more plays.

If a player cannot start their train, they draw a domino from the boneyard. If they do not draw a domino that matches the station number, they place a marker where a domino should have been played.

Once a player's first turn is over, play moves clockwise to the next player and the same rules are followed until everyone has had their first chance to start their trains.

## Subsequent Play

In subsequent play, only one domino is played per player per turn, unless a double is played (see **Doubles Rule**). The game ends when a player runs out of dominoes. On your next turn, whether you have a marker or not, you can:

- Play on **your own train** (if there is a marker on your train, remove it once you play on it)
- Start or play on **the Mexican train**
- Play on **another player's marked train**

If you can't make a move, draw from the boneyard. If you have drawn but still can't play, place a marker on your train (or leave it there if your train is already marked).



*The **Mexican train** is started on an empty slot by playing a domino that matches the station number. It is open to everyone. There is only one Mexican train per game, and it can be started at any time after the first round of turns.*

## Doubles Rule

When you play a double at the end of a train, you must announce “Double” and play another domino on it immediately.

If you can't play on the double, draw from the boneyard. If you can play on it, do so and end your turn.

If you draw but still can't play on the double, play moves on to the next player. That player must play on the double. If they can't, then they draw from the boneyard. If they still can't play, they do NOT need to mark their train, but play moves on to the next person until the double is matched.

## Exceptions to Doubles Rule

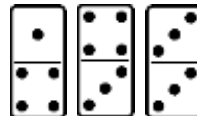
The Doubles Rule does not apply in any of the following scenarios:

- It is the last domino of its number.
- It is the last domino of the game.
- You played it to remove the marker from your own train.

## Scoring

Once a player has played their last domino, the game ends. All players report the sum of the pips of their remaining dominoes to the scorekeeper.

For example, if a player is left with the dominoes below, they would report a score of 18.



After a set number of rounds, the person with the lowest score wins.