piecepack Fan Tan

A piecepack port of the ancient gambling game of 'Fan Tan'.

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Requirements:

Players: 2 to 4
Time: 2 minutes per round
Materials: One piecepack, paper and pencil, dice cup.

Introduction:

Fan Tan is believed to have been invented by Kwan Chung, a renowned statesmen of antiquity who died in 645BC. There is a likelihood that the game was invented for soldiers as a way for them to pass the time in camp. The name means 'spreading out', as the real-life version involves spreading out coins or buttons in groups of four until there is a remainder of none to three.

San Francisco's large Chinatown was also home to dozens of 'Fan Tan Houses' in the 19th century. The city's former police commissioner Jesse B. Cook wrote that in 1889 Chinatown had 50 fan-tan games, and that "in the 50 fan tan gambling houses the tables numbered from one to 24, according to the size of the room."

Fan tan is still played at Macau casinos, where play goes on day and night, every day of the week, and bets can be made from 5 cents to 500 dollars.

Setup:

Place four tiles (null to 3) of the same suit, face up in a square [reading clockwise from the top left corner 0-1-3-2] (as per 'Diagram 1').

Each player receives 6 coins of matching suit, and places one coin suit up in front of them. The other five are used for betting in each round.

Players choose a banker or one can be decided by rolling the highest. The banker controls the dice, pawn and payouts.

Place all four dice into the cup.

Draw up a scoring table on the pad to record each players' current total at the end of each round. A scorer can be chosen if desired.

Players start with $50 recorded on the scoring table- 'Diagram 2'.
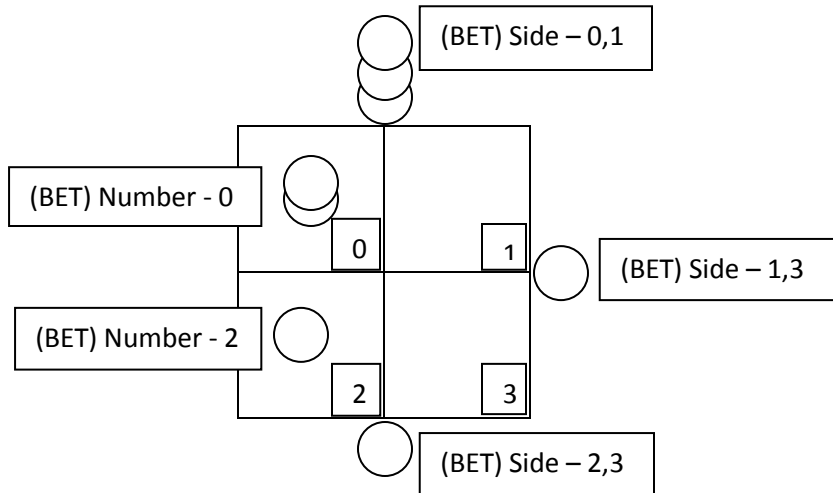
Diagram 1 - Setup and Betting Positions

(BET) Side – 0,1

(BET) Number - 0

0

1

(BET) Side – 1,3

(BET) Number - 2

2

3

(BET) Side – 2,3

Diagram 2 – Example Scoring Table

Suns	Moons	Arms	Crowns
Colin	Steve	Dean	Graeme
$50	$50	$50	$50

Play:

The banker shakes the dice in cup, and upturns the cup onto table, leaving the cup covering the dice.

Players then bet up to $5 (5 suit up coins) per round. Bets can range from $1 to $5 (meaning players can place a maximum of five individual bets per round). Bets are placed as per 'Diagram 1'.

To place a bet on a single number, place a coin suit up in the centre of the selected number tile.

To place a bet on adjacent numbers, place a coin suit up alongside the joining edge of the two numbers.

Where another player wants to make an identical bet, they place the suit up coin on top of, or alongside the first bet.

The banker declares 'No more Bets', and removes the cup to reveal the dice, and announces the total. The banker then divides the total by four, and the remainder (0 through 3) is then declared 'open' and becomes the winning number. The banker places a pawn on the 'open' number tile. [E.g.: Total 8, null is open; Total 19, 3 is open]

All winning bets are then announced, and payouts are according to 'Payout Table 1'. These payouts do not include the players original wager, so if a player bet $1 on an individual winning number, he wins $3 and keeps his $1 bet. The new player totals (both wins and losses) are recorded on the scoring table by the banker, crossing out old totals and writing the new totals underneath. Players don't actually receive their winnings, they are just written down.

Players take back their coins, the pawn is returned to the banker, and all players prepare for the next round.

Payout (per $Bet) Table 1

Bet Type	$Payout
Number	$3
Side	$1

Winner/Game End:

As in most gambling games, there is no specific winner as all players gamble individually. There is also no specific game ending.

Players decide on the game ending, when:

1. An agreed number of rounds completed,

2. A particular time is reached,

3. The first player is bankrupted,

4. The second last player is bankrupted,

5. The banker/house is bankrupted (if see variants),

6. The house is raided by the police.

Variants:

1. *For Cash (Fan Tan House)*: Players use actual money instead of piecepack coins for betting (Warning: Gambling may be illegal where you live, can cause arguments, and can make you poor!). Banker does not rotate, as he controls the house bank as per agreement.

2. *For Cash (Banker wins)*: Players use actual money instead of piecepack coins for betting (Warning: Gambling may be illegal where you live, can cause arguments, and can make you

poor!). Banker rotates as per agreed number of rounds. Banker keeps player losses, but must pay out winnings!

3. *Corners:* Additional (Corner) bets are allowed. See Diagram 3, and Payout Table 2.
4. *Diagonals*: Additional (Diagonal) bet types are allowed. See Diagram 3, and Payout Table 2.
5. *Strong Bets*: Additional (Strong Side, Strong Diagonal, Strong Corner) bet types are allowed. See Diagram 3, and Payout Table 2. If the 'open' number matches the 'strong' part of the bet then payout according to '$Strong Payout'. If the 'open' number doesn't match the 'strong' part of the bet but is still a winning bet, then payout according to '$Weak Payout'. ($MB – money back, no loss, no win)

Diagram 2 – Additional Betting Positions
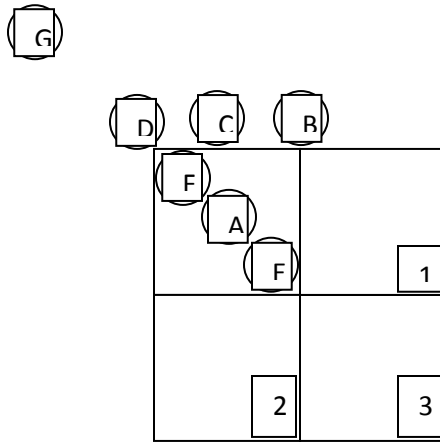
Coin	Bet Type	Wins On
A	Number	0
B	Side	0,1
C	Strong Side	0(strong),1(weak)
D	Corner	0,1,2
E	Strong Corner	0(strong), 1,2(weak)
F	Diagonal	0,3
G	Strong Diagonal	0(strong), 3(weak)

Payout (per $Bet) Table 2

Bet Type	$Strong Payout	$Weak Payout
Number	$3	N/A
Side	$1	N/A
Strong Side	$2	$MB
Corner	$0.33	N/A
Strong Corner	$1	$MB
Diagonal	$1	N/A
Strong Diagonal	$2	$MB

Version History:

[10-Mar-2009] v 1.0 First draft.
[12-Mar-2009] v1.1 Corrected betting imbalance.

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