

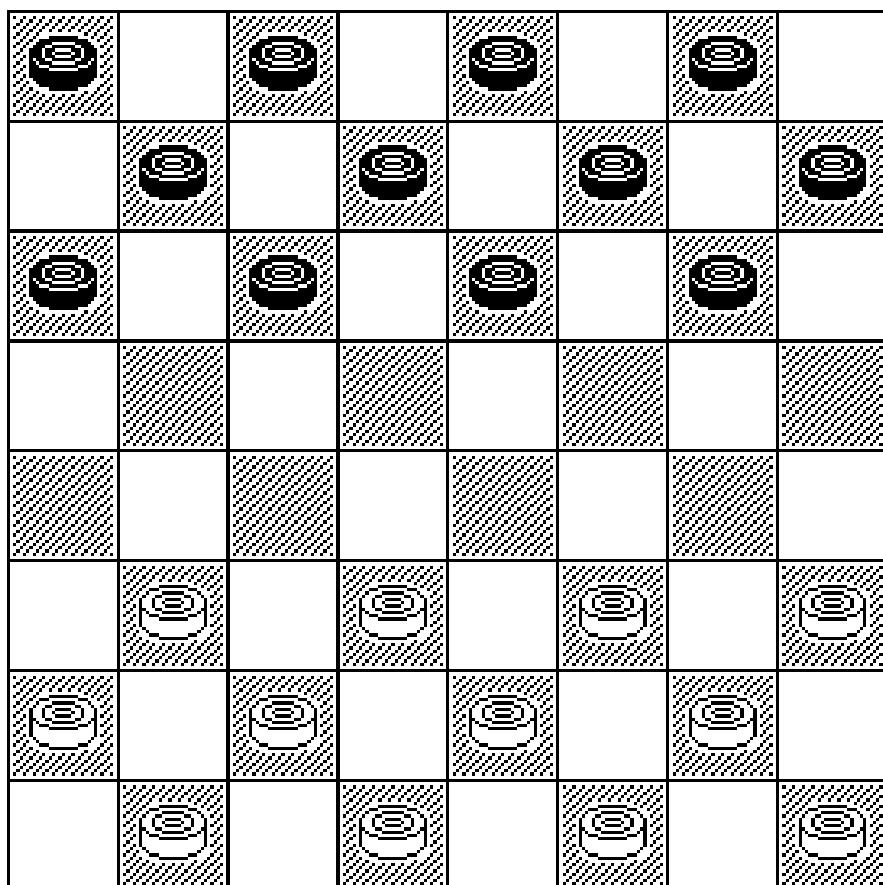
How to Play Draughts

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The game of Draughts is played on a standard Chess board 64 black and white chequered squares. Each player has 12 pieces normally in the form of fat round counters. The real shades of the pieces and the board do not necessarily need to be black and white but they are normally referred to as black and white, regardless. The board is placed between the two opponents so that the near right-hand corner square is white for both players (in the same way as for Chess).

Each player's pieces are placed on the 12 black squares nearest to that player. The white squares are not used at all in the game - the pieces only move diagonally and so stay on the black squares throughout.

The objective of the game is to take all of the opponent's pieces or to produce a position such that the opponent is unable to move.



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Black always plays first. A coin is tossed to decide which player will be black. Players take turns to move a piece of their own colour. Any piece that reaches the far edge of the board is immediately crowned and is thereafter known as a "King". The act of crowning is a physical one - another piece of the same shade is placed on top of the piece in order to distinguish it from an ordinary piece.

Until a piece is "crowned", it can only move and capture in a diagonally forwards direction. Kings are allowed to move and capture diagonally forwards and backwards and are consequently more powerful and valuable than ordinary pieces. However, ordinary pieces can capture Kings.

Whenever a piece has an opponent's piece adjacent to it and the square immediately beyond the opponent's piece is vacant, the opponent's piece can be captured. If the player has the opportunity to capture one or more of the opponent's pieces, then the player must do so. A piece is taken by simply hopping over it into the vacant square beyond and removing it from the board. Unlike an ordinary move, a capturing move can consist of several such hops - if a piece takes an opponent's piece and the new position allows it to take another piece, then it must do so straight away. The move finishes only when the position of the capturing piece no longer allows it to take any more pieces or when an uncrowned piece arrives at the far edge of the board and is crowned.

If more than one piece can capture, then the player is entirely free to choose which of those pieces to move. Likewise, if a capturing piece is able to capture in more than one direction, the player is free to choose which direction to move in. i.e. it is not compulsory to move the piece or take the route that will result in the maximum number of captures.

If no capturing moves are available, then an ordinary move is made by moving a piece one square diagonally.

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The game is won by the player who first manages to take all his opponent's pieces or renders them unable to move. A draw occurs by agreement at any point during the game. If a player refuses the offer of a draw, that player is required to force a win or show a decided advantage within 40 of that player's own moves from that point. Draws are fairly common in the game of draughts - especially at the top level of the game.

Other Forms of Checkers

Several alternate sets of rules for Checkers were used in different European countries. In each case, the board was reversed (achievable by changing its orientation by 90 degrees) from that of the chessboard.

In Russian Checkers, kings can make jumps to any square along a diagonal which contains only one opposing piece which is captured, so the opposing piece does not need to be adjacent to the king, and the ending square of the move does not need to be adjacent to the piece captured. A man cannot capture a king. Men can capture backwards as well as forwards, although they can only move forwards without capturing. A capturing move that causes a man to reach the last row results in the man promoting to a king immediately, and then continuing its move as a king.

In Italian Checkers, a player not only must capture when possible, but must take as many pieces as possible, and furthermore, must take kings rather than men when there is a choice of different captures of equal number of pieces. However, a man cannot capture a king.

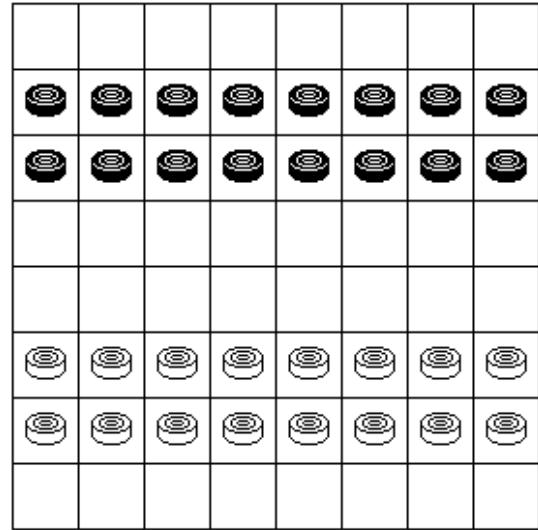
Spanish Checkers is played as Italian Checkers, but adds the rule that kings can make jumps to any square along a diagonal which contains only one opposing piece which is captured, so the opposing piece does not need to be adjacent to the king, and the ending square of the move does not need to be adjacent to the piece captured.

German Checkers is played as Spanish Checkers, but while men can still only move forwards, they can jump backwards as well as forwards, and

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they do not promote if they reach the last row of the board during a capturing move if that move can, and therefore must, continue with further jumps away from the last row. Unless, of course, they reach the last row again in that same move with no continuation away.

In Turkish Checkers, the pieces move and jump orthogonally, and not diagonally; because the move is orthogonal, men may move forwards or sideways, thus having three directions of motion. Kings move as Rooks do in Chess as well as making captures by the long jump; after each step in a multiple jump, the piece captured is immediately removed from the board. A player that has at least one king wins if the other player is left with only a single man, in addition to the normal victory conditions for Checkers of eliminating or immobilizing the other side.



An unusual variant of Checkers not found in the standard books on games is known as Armenian Checkers, which is identical to Turkish Checkers except that pieces can also move, *but not capture*, diagonally, men diagonally forwards, and kings in any diagonal direction.