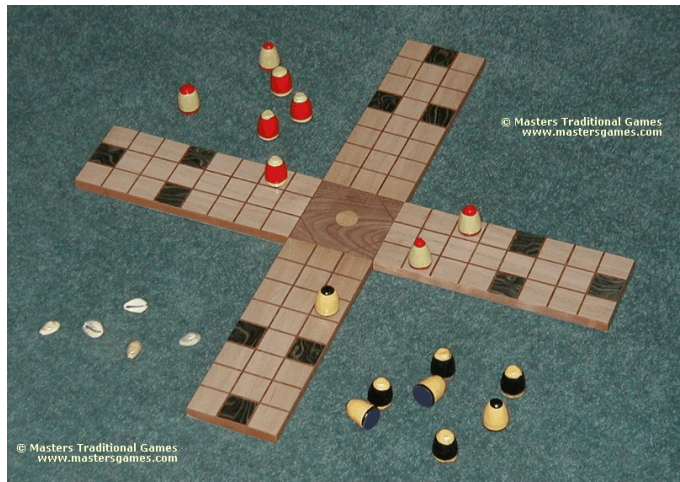


## History of Pachisi

The national board game of India is known as Pachisi, or the game of Twenty-Five. The name comes from the Indian word *pachis*, which means twenty-five, the highest score that can be earned in the game. It has been played for more than 1,200 years. Although the game of Parcheesi is related to Pachisi, Parcheesi is the U.S. version of the game, and is much simpler. Pachisi actually came from the older game called Chaupar, which is still played in India today.

It is said that the Indian Emperor Akbar I played Chaupar on courts of red and white marble squares that represented a pachisi board. His playing pieces were sixteen slaves from his harem, or collection of beautiful women. Akbar sat on his throne and threw some cowrie shells, which are used in the game to determine how many squares the playing pieces may move. Some of these life-size boards still remain in India today.

The traditional Pachisi board is a woven cross-shaped cloth marked by embroidered squares, but the modern version is often made of wood. Each arm of the cross has eight squares, and three squares of each arm are decorated in some way to indicate that they are “castles.” All four arms of the cross meet in the middle, which is called the “Charkoni.” The 16 traditional playing pieces are beehive-shaped, and come in four colors: black, green, red and yellow. Cowrie shells are thrown to show how many squares to move, although modern versions of the game often substitute dice. The game is played with four players who divide up as 2 sets of partners: Yellow and Black against Red and Green. The objective of the game is to move all 8 partner pieces around the board to be the first set of partners to reach the “Charkoni.” Two players can also play the game by playing two colors each.



# Rules of Pachisi

## Materials needed

- 1 cross-shaped board (cut out and tape together the game board pieces)
- 4 black stones or buttons
- 4 red stones or buttons
- 4 yellow stones or buttons
- 4 green stones or buttons
- 6 cowrie shells (available at craft or hobby stores in the bead/jewelry aisles)

## Setting up the game

1. Place all playing pieces in the Charkoni, or center of the board.
2. Yellow sits opposite Red, and Black sits opposite Green. (Yellow and Black are partners, and Red and Green are partners.)

## Object of the game

The first set of partners to travel around the board and re-enter the Charkoni wins!

## Playing the game

1. Throw the cowries to determine which set of partners goes first. Count the number of cowrie mouths that are “up.” Whichever set of partners has the most mouths that are up goes first. Choose one of these players, and then take turns, going around the board counter-clockwise.
2. Each player begins on the arm nearest him or her. Begin down the middle row, then go clockwise around the board, traveling on the **outside row of each arm**, and then back up the original middle row to re-enter the Charkoni. To signify the 2<sup>nd</sup> trip down the middle row, turn the playing piece upside down so the flat side is up.
3. The first piece for each player can leave the Charkoni with any throw of the cowries, but the remaining pieces can leave the Charkoni ONLY if a “grace” is thrown, or a score of 0, 1 or 6. In this case, the cowries are thrown again until a 2, 3, 4, or 5 shows up—and then the playing piece is moved out of the Charkoni that number of squares.

4. The number of squares you can move is determined by a throw of the cowries as follows:

2 cowries with mouths up = 2 squares

3 cowries with mouths up = 3 squares

4 cowries with mouths up = 4 squares

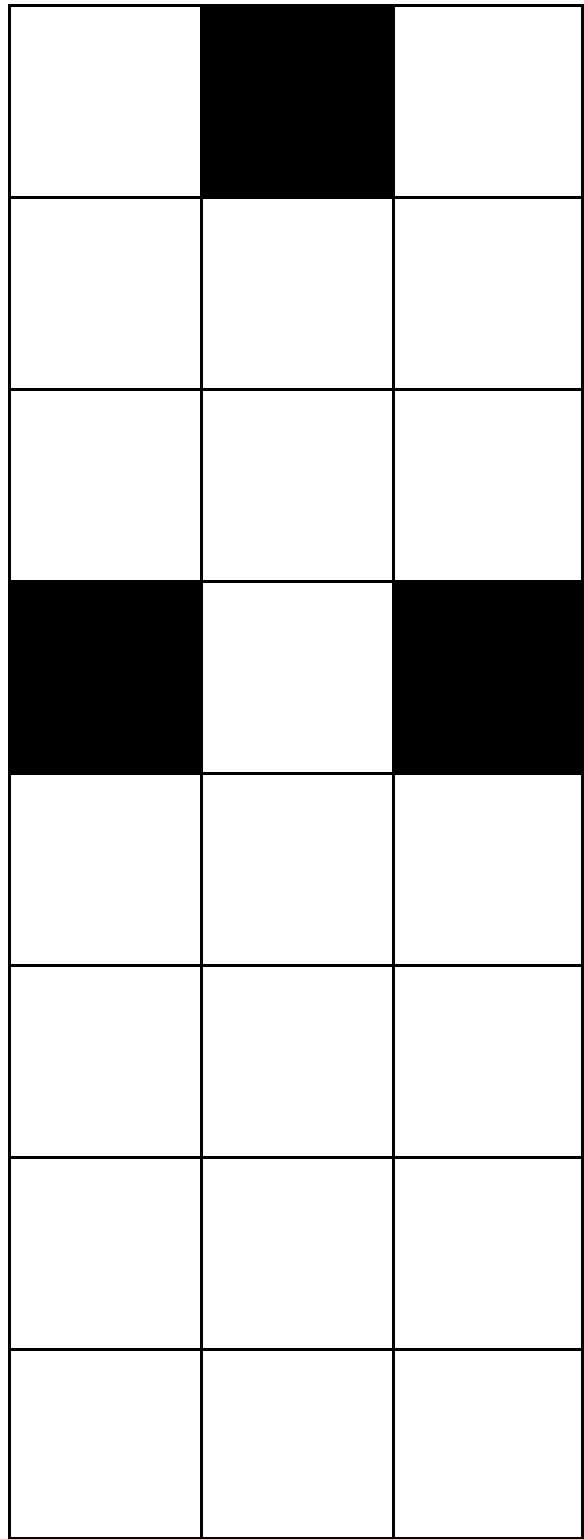
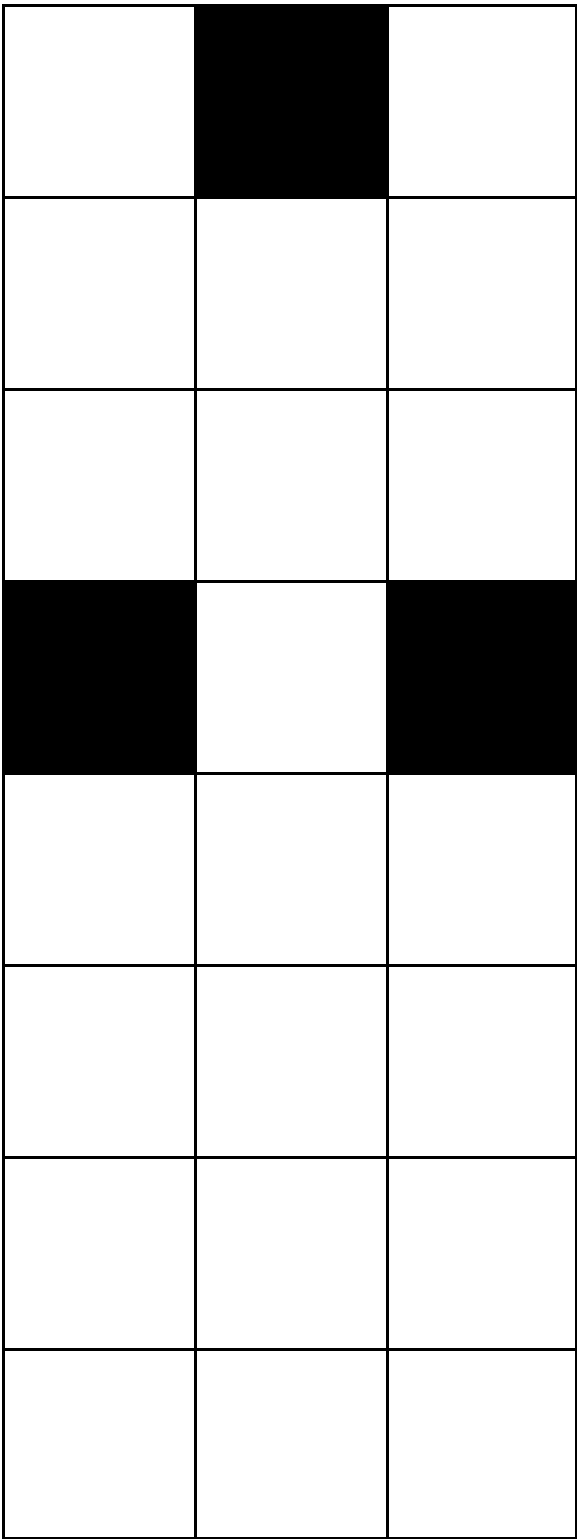
5 cowries with mouths up = 5 squares

6 cowries with mouths up = 6 squares + grace

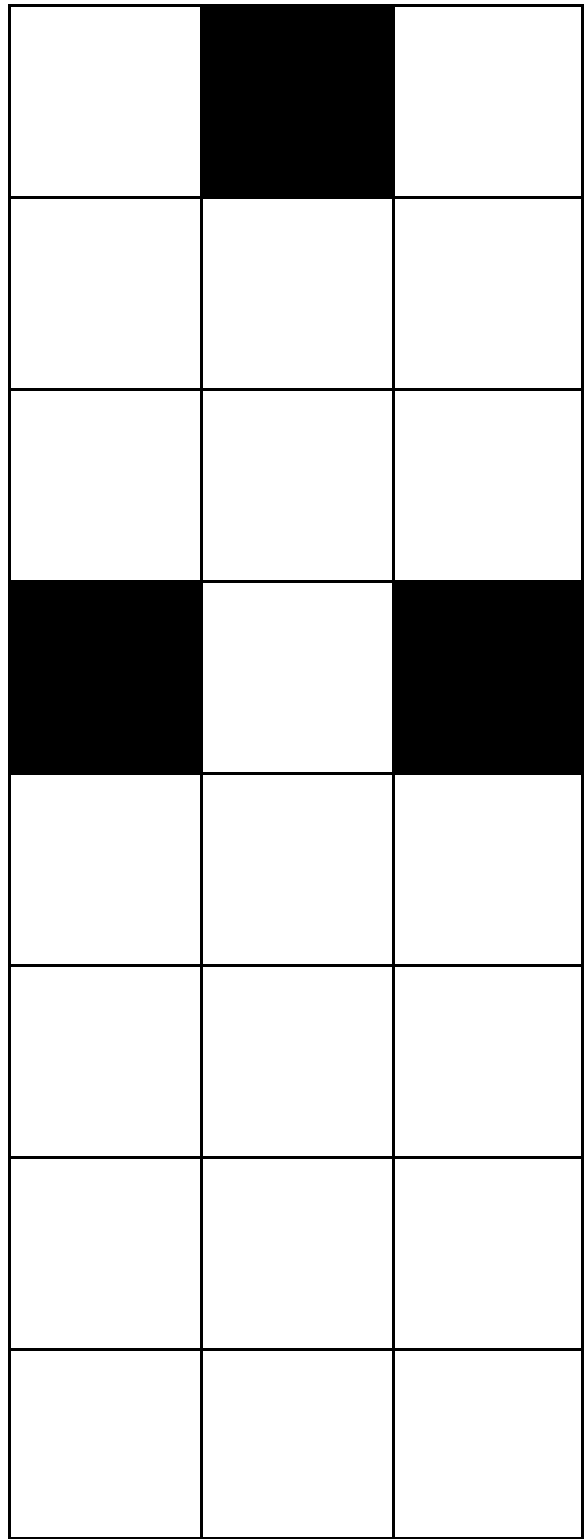
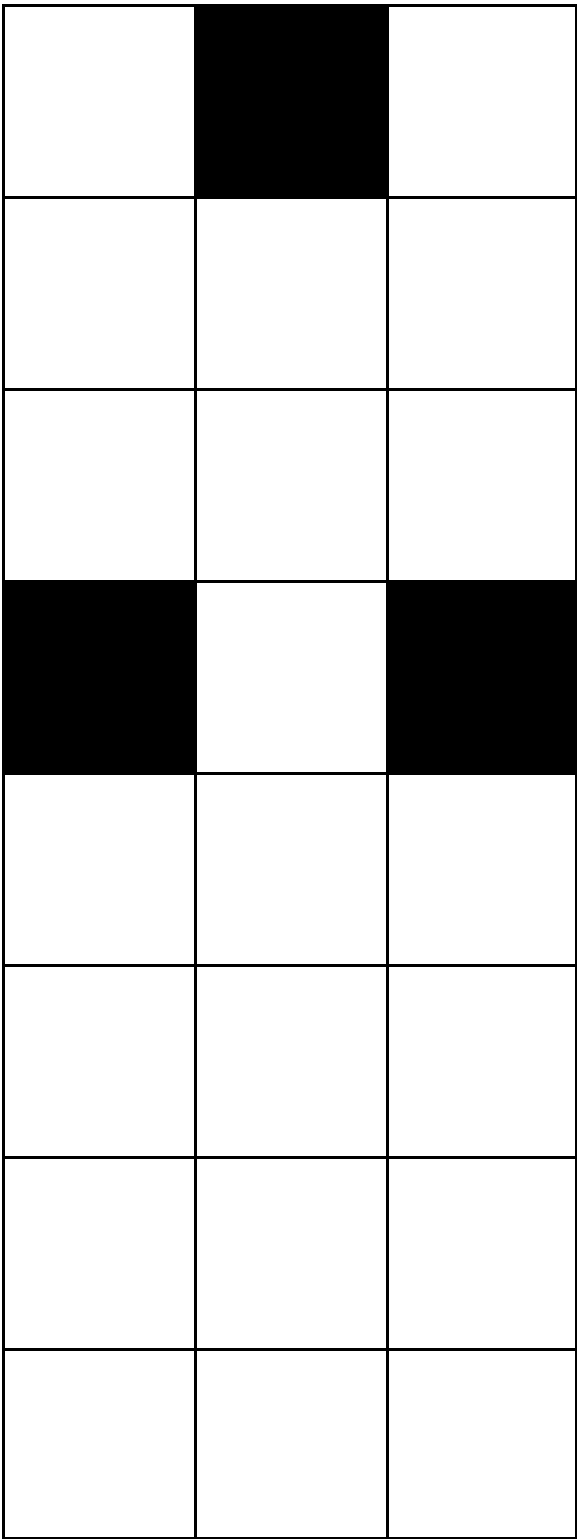
1 cowrie with mouth up = 10 squares + grace

0 cowries with mouths up = 25 squares + grace

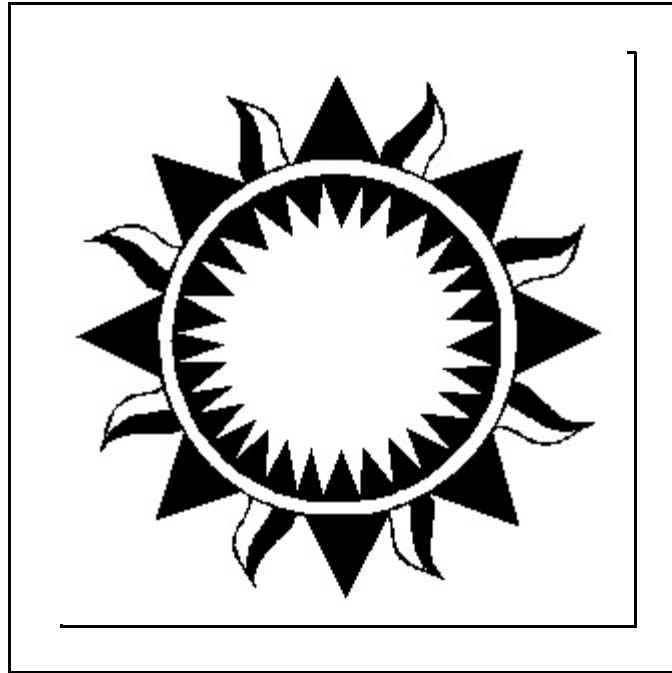
5. Two playing pieces from the same side can occupy one square, BUT a player can't land on the castle square (the decorated square) if the enemy is already there.
6. If a player lands on a non-castle square that is occupied by the enemy, then the enemy is captured and returned to the Charkoni, and the enemy has to re-start with a grace. The player making the capture then gets an extra throw of the cowries and moves immediately!
7. Players are NOT required to move their piece after they throw the cowries. If your playing piece is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> arm of the board, for example, and you are sitting on the castle square at the end of the arm, you may wish to wait there until you throw a 25, which would allow you to finish your journey without any risk.
8. If a playing piece has gone entirely around the board (but has NOT re-entered the Charkoni), it can go around the board a second time. Sometimes this is done to help a partner who is lagging behind.
10. You may enter the Charkoni ONLY by an exact throw of the cowries.
11. The game ends when all 8 pieces from a set of partners reach the Charkoni.



Cut out and tape the pieces together as illustrated on the first page.



Cut out and tape the pieces together as illustrated on the first page.



Cut out and tape the “arms” to this square as illustrated on the first page.  
The arms overlap the border of this square.