



ORIENTAL INSTITUTE
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



Make and Play Your Own Mancala Game!

Make an Egg-Carton Mancala Board

You will need:

- 1 egg carton
- 48 beans, coins, beads, stones, or other small items
- Marker
- Scissors
- Tape

Instructions:

1. Cut the lid off of the egg carton. The bottom of the carton will form the twelve small cups of the game.



2. To make the mancalas—the two “bowls” on either end of the board—cut off each end of the carton top and two pieces from the middle, as shown below.



3. Make the mancalas as shown below, and tape the pieces together.



4. Tape the mancalas to the ends of the carton. Place four counters in each cup, and you are ready to begin!



What is Mancala?

Mancala is an ancient game that originated in Nubia. The first recorded reference of Mancala comes from Egypt around AD 300.

“Mancala” is a generic term that refers to a type of game involving rows of holes. The version played here is specifically called Wari. Different forms of the game have been played across Africa, Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, South America, and the Caribbean and can be made in the form of game boards or carved into the ground, tree roots, or rock.

How to Play Mancala

Materials:

1 egg carton Mancala board, 48 counters.

Set Up:

Two players face one another with the Mancala board placed between them. The board is set up with a row of 6 cups (called Houses) for each player and a larger bowl to their right (called Mancala). Each player places 4 counters (called Stones) in each of their 6 Houses.

Goal:

The object of the game is to capture the most Stones in your Mancala. The game ends when one player has no remaining Stones in any of their 6 Houses.

How Players Move:

The active player picks up all the Stones in any of their 6 Houses. Moving counter-clockwise around the board, they place one Stone in each of the next Houses, including their own Mancala but skipping the Mancala of their opponent.

Game Play:

Extra turns: When the active player places their last Stone in their own Mancala, that player immediately gets another turn.

Capturing Stones: If the active player places their last Stone in one of *their own* empty Houses, they get all the Stones from the opponent's House directly across from the House where the active player placed the Stone. All captured Stones are placed in the active player's Mancala.

Changing turns: When the active player places their last Stone in one of *their opponents* empty Houses or places their last Stone in any House that already contains Stones, the active player's turn ends and it is now their opponent's turn to be the active player.

Players take turns until, after taking a move, all 6 of either player's Houses are empty. Any remaining Stones in a player's Houses go into their Mancala. When this happens, the game ends and the players count their Stones. The player with the most Stones in their Mancala is the winner!

