

W13648 Mancala for 4 – Instructions

Object and Terms – 2 to 4 players can play and the goal is to accumulate the most balls (usually called stones in Mancala) through a series of moves. The board has 4 sides with pockets (usually called pits in Mancala) along each edge. Six of the pockets are aligned perpendicular to an edge and one is aligned horizontally. A player's pockets are the 6 pockets that are aligned perpendicular to the side along which they start. They also have one larger triangular pocket, called a reservoir or scoring pit. A player's reservoir will be the one on the right of the two that are closest to them. During game play a player's reservoir will act or be counted as a player's last pocket, so when they drop pieces into their pockets they would drop one in the last pocket on their right and then their reservoir and then the first pocket on their players right. (see image #1)

Set-Up – Start with one player on each side of the board. Place 4 balls of any color into each of the 24 pockets (96 balls total) around the edge of the board (image #2). If less than 4 players are playing, leave those pockets empty at all times during the game. The game board can be placed on the floor or on two or three - 6'x2' tables that have been pulled together. Players will be standing (or kneeling) during the game, so they will even burn a few calories while playing!

Game Play

The youngest player goes first and picks up all their pieces from any one of their small pockets. Then, one piece is placed in each pocket to the right of where they picked up the pieces including their reservoir. Continue putting balls into pockets counterclockwise including into an opponent's pockets, but not an opponent's reservoir. During their turn, if a player's last piece is placed in their own reservoir, they get a free turn. For example, in image #3 the first player has picked up the 4 balls from their pocket that is 3rd from the left, dropped one ball in their next 3 pockets and the 4th ball in their reservoir to earn a free turn. In image #3, the empty circles represent the balls that were picked up and placed in a new pocket.

A possible move for the first player's free turn is shown in image #4. Here they have taken the 5 balls from the last pocket on their right, placed on in their reservoir and one in each of the next 4 pockets. This would complete their turn and it would now be the player on their rights turn.

During a player's turn, if their last ball is placed into an empty pit on their side of the board, a capture occurs. All the balls from the corresponding pockets around the board are played into the player's reservoir along with the capturing ball.

If a player does not have any balls left in their pockets, their turn is skipped until they have balls to move in their pockets. The game is over when all the balls on the board have been played. The player with the most pieces in their reservoir at the end wins the game.

Note: Like chess, on their turn once a player touches one of the balls in their pocket they must play the balls in that pocket.

Mancala for 4 Variations

(combine any of the rule options below to vary the length of the game and the strategy involved)

1. Faster Games

- Start with 3 balls in each pocket and play by the same rules as above.
- Start with any number of balls in the pockets, but end the game when the first player has cleared all their pockets of balls. Any balls in pockets on the board remain where they are and are not counted. The player with the most balls in their reservoir wins.

2. Longer Games

- Start with 5 balls in each pocket.
- No Captures – Eliminate the capture rule. When a player's last ball lands in one of their empty pockets their turn just ends.
- Captures, but no last ball – The capture rule is still in effect, so you capture all the balls from corresponding pockets and place them into your reservoir, but you don't place the ball that was dropped into your empty pocket into your reservoir.
- No free turns.

Image #1

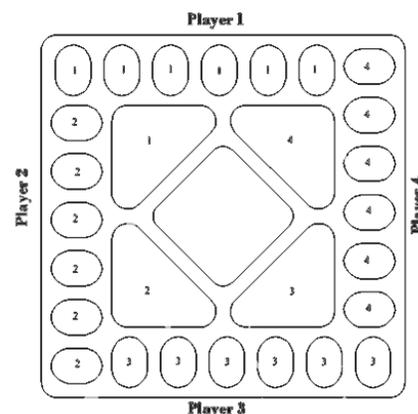


Image #2

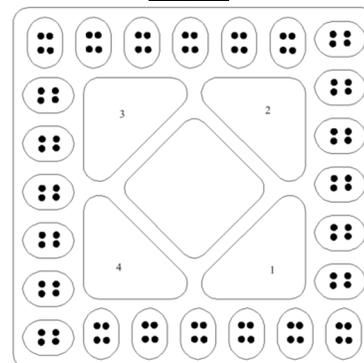
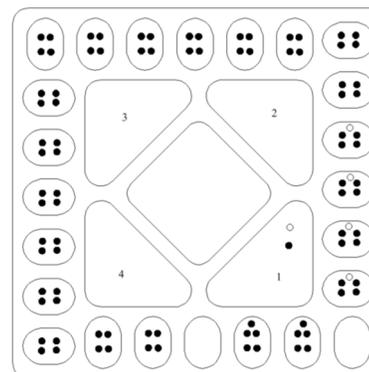
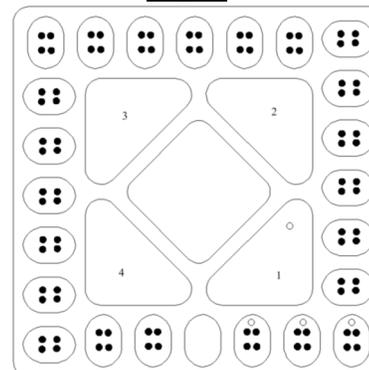


Image #3



Toss Games – You’ve got a great big game board, but don’t just use it for Mancala! Below are some suggestions for toss games.

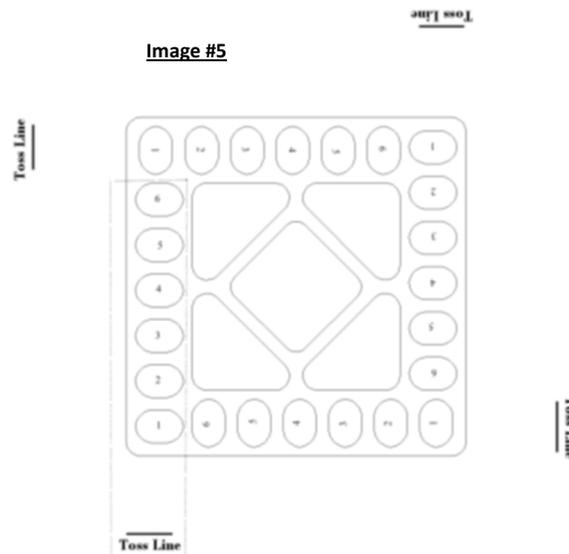
Opposites

1. Give each player an equal number of beanbags, hacky sacs or other objects to toss (not included). 4 to 6 objects per player are recommended. The balls that come with the game can be used, but tend to bounce out of the pockets fairly easily.
2. Place the Mancala board on the ground between the players. Each player or team will toss at the pockets on the far side of the board. For example, referring back to image #1, player #1 would toss at the 6 pockets closest to player #3.
3. The oldest player will toss first and then the players will rotate in a counterclockwise fashion. The goal of the game is to toss as many objects as possible into the pockets that are on the opposite side of the Mancala board.
4. Once all the objects have been tossed, player’s count-up how many points they have earned by counting all the objects in their target pockets. Players earn points no matter which player or team tossed the object into their pockets. The player with the most points wins.
5. Colors Variation – Assign each team a specific color (or colors) of objects. Players earn 3 points for their colored objects in their target pockets, 2 points for an opposing team’s objects in their pockets and 1 point for their colored objects in either of the reservoir pockets that are across from them. The player or team with the most points wins.

Ladder

1. Give each player 6 objects to toss.
2. Draw a toss line on the ground about 2 feet from each corner of the board about as shown in image #5.
3. The oldest player will toss first and will be trying to toss their objects into the pockets along the left side of the Mancala board. The player to their right will toss next. Players take turns tossing until all objects have been tossed.
4. Scoring – Players will earn points for any objects in their pockets regardless of who tossed them. A player earns 1 point for landing an object in the pocket closest to them, 2 points for the pocket that is 2nd closest, 3 points for the pocket that is 3rd closest to them, with point values increasing up to the furthest pocket that is worth 6 points. No points are earned for objects that land in any other areas of the board. Note that a player can only earn the points for a pocket once, thus if 3 objects are in their 1-point pocket, they still only earn 1 point for that pocket. Scoring for a round is done after each player has tossed all 6 of their objects. A 5-point bonus is earned if a player has filled all their pockets. Thus, a maximum of 26 points can be earned by a player per round (6+5+4+3+2+1+5 bonus points).
5. The player with the most points after 3 rounds wins the game. If the score is tied players toss a single object and the player with the higher point value wins.

Image #5



Ping Pong Pandemonium (equipment needed lots of ping pong balls – like W10306) and container to hold the balls per team

1. In this game players or teams will attempt to bounce ping pong balls off the floor and into their pockets. Like in the Mancala game a team’s pockets are the 6 pockets that are closest to them and that are aligned perpendicular to that edge.
2. All the players on all teams can bounce balls simultaneously. There is no restriction on how close or far away players are from the board, the only requirement is that the balls bounce at least once before they go into the target (tossing them directly into the target is not cool).
3. At a go signal play starts and the pandemonium ensues! Players can grab any balls that bounce out of the target and to them to try to bounce them into their pockets, but are not allowed to grab any misses from the larger reservoir pockets or the center area. After 30 seconds, stop the game and count up how many balls each team has in their pockets. The team with the most balls wins and get to strut their victory dance!

Variations

- Require a team to have at least one ball in each of their pockets or subtract 5 points from their point / ball total.
- Race to see which team can get at least one ball in each pocket first.
- Require players to stand up during this game.
- Add a line a foot or two away from the board and require players to stand behind that line when attempting to bounce their balls.