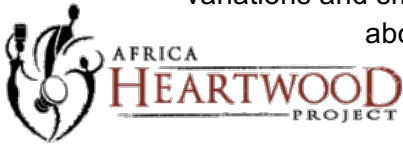


Mancala and Owari African Board Game

Your new mancala game was handcrafted by cultural artisans who are part of the Africa Heartwood Project non-profit network in Ghana, West Africa. Each piece is unique and is a work of art; kindly appreciate the variations and small imperfections that do and will exist in all hand made products. Learn more about how your purchase has made a difference for many people at



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~Andy Jones - Founder of Africa Heartwood Project

Basic Mancala Game

This is a single lap mancala game. You can begin by moving any of the seeds on your side of the board, but you can't start from your opponent's side of the board. Always pick up all the seeds in the pot you are moving from. Place one seed in each pot as you go around the board. Travel round the board to the right, i.e. anticlockwise. The board is placed between the two players. Each player controls the row closest to him and the store on the right, or in front of them.

To begin, fill each hole with three seeds except the stores. Take it in turns to sow the seeds around the board, including your own store but skipping your opponent's. If the last seed that you sow goes into either store you get another turn. If the last seed you sow ends in an empty pot on your side of the board you capture that seed and all the seeds in your opponent's pot opposite. Put all these seeds in your store. The game ends when one player clears all the pots on their side of the board. All the seeds left on the other side of the board are left uncounted. The player with the most seeds in his/her store wins.

Owari (from Ghana)

Four seeds are placed in each pot. The first player picks up all the seeds from any of their pots and sows them into the next four pots. No seeds are sown into the store. If the last seed is dropped into an opponent's pot that contains only one or two seeds (no more) the player captures these seeds and the one he has just placed in the pot and puts them in his own store. Counting the last seed sowed, the pot contains two or three seeds, so it is capture by twos and threes. Remember a player can only capture on the opponent's side and only if he is sowing his last seed in a pot that already holds either one seed or two. If there are three or more seeds no capture is made.

When a capture is made, the player also captures the seeds in the penultimate pot if it contains two or three seeds. If the pot before this one also contains two or three seeds the player can again make a capture. The player continues to capture in this way as long as the sequence is unbroken. The player may not capture on his own side of the board during this process. A player is not required to make a move that results in a capture, but if he does make such a move he must take the captured seeds and put them in his store. The number of seeds in each pot will vary dramatically as play proceeds. Enough seeds may accumulate in one pot to go round the board more than once. In this case the pot used for the beginning of the turn remains empty at the end of the turn (you skip over it). At any time, a player can count the seeds in any pot to help him plan a move. As the game draws to an end many pots will be empty.

The game can end when one side of the board is empty. If player 1's side is empty then player 2's seeds must be arranged in such a way that he cannot pass any seeds to the empty side of the board on his next move. The remaining seeds become the player 2's. It is also possible for the last seeds to circulate with no captures possible. The players may agree to end the game and each take half of the remaining seeds or they can be disregarded. The player with the most seeds in his store wins.

There are many other variations of this game from all over the world! Search the internet for Mancala, Oware, Owari, Ayoyo, and Giuthi for instructions and playing tips.