Alquerque

Players 2

Length 10–20 minutes

Equipment one standard piecepack

Version 1.0 (2020-11-24)

Description

Alquerque (aka Qirkat) is a traditional board game over a thousand years old[1] and considered to be an ancestor of checkers (aka draughts) and fox & geese.

Objective

A player wins if they capture all of the other player's coins or if the other player is unable to make another move.[2]

Setup

Make an 5×5 board with the backs of 4 tiles (using the lines/edges instead of the square cells). Give each player all the coins of two suits[3] and place them on the "points" (where lines/edges intersect) of the board as in Figure 1.

The points of an Alquerque board are connected to each other by the orthogonal lines/edges of the board. Additionally the central point of each tile is connected diagonally to the corner points of that tile (and vice versa).[4] See Figure 2 for the points and connections of the Alquerque board.

The Order Of Play

Decide by random selection which player will make the first move. In subsequent games alternate which player makes the first move. Within a game players alternate moves, during their move each player moves a single piece.

The Moves

Coins each have a non-capturing *simple move* and a capturing *jump* move. For the *simple move* slide to an adjacent empty point that is forward or sideways

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[1]It is mentioned in Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani's *Book of Songs* (10th century) and its rules are contained in Alfonso X's *Libro de los juegos* (1283)

[2]There are several variations of how to play Alquerque. This ruleset uses a modern variation that guarantees a winner. See Oliver Merkel's *Alquerque de doze* (https://boardgamegeek.com/filepage/84230/enhanced-alquerque-rules-some-sample-situations-di) for a list of known Alquerque rule variations.

[3]For example "astronomical" versus "power" suits or "dark" versus "light" suits.

[4]If you own a set of Piecepack Matchsticks (http://ludism.org/ppwiki/PiecepackMatchsticks) you may wish to mark these diagonal connections with the "2" sticks.
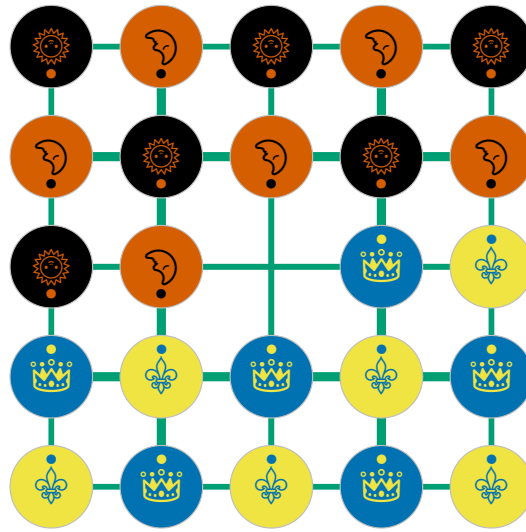
Figure 1: Alquerque starting diagram

(but not backwards), but a coin cannot undo its previous (simple) move. For the capturing *jump* move in a straight line diagonally or orthogonally two points over a point occupied by an opponent's coin onto an empty point Multiple jumps in a turn are possible, if after a jump a piece is in a position to make another jump (possibly in another direction) then they can (and in fact must) do so until they are no longer in a position to do so.

If possible a player must choose to do a jump instead of a simple move. After making a jump a piece must continue to jump until it can no longer do so. If multiple pieces can make a jump and/or a piece may jump in multiple directions then the player may choose which piece and which jumps to make—they need not maximize the number of possible jumps (but any jumping piece must continue to make jumps until it can no longer do so).

Additional Resources

- www.ludism.org/ppwiki/Alquerque

- boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/11464

- www.cyningstan.com/game/17

- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alquerque
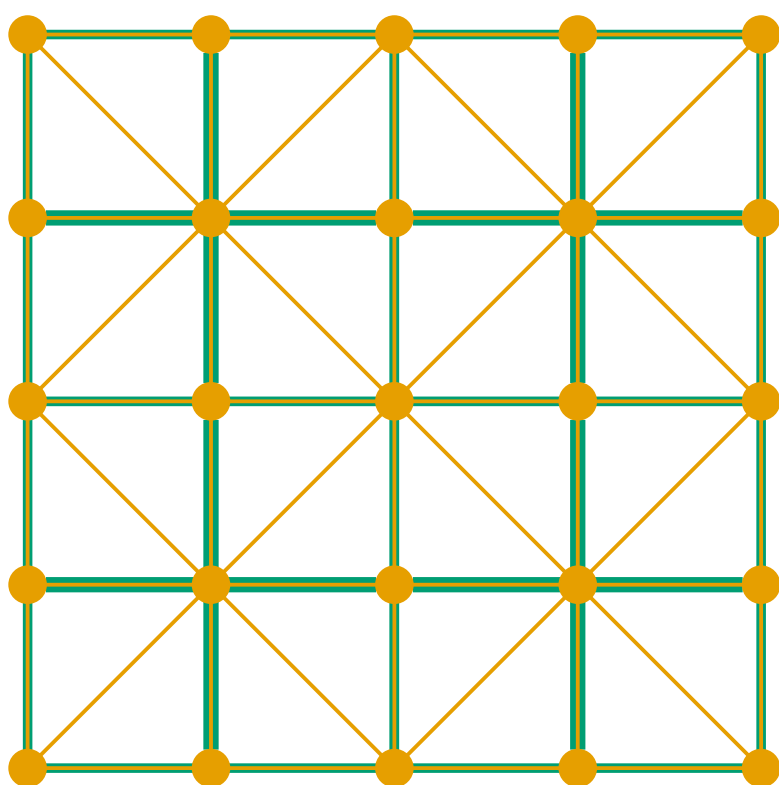
Credits

Game design: Traditional, adapted by Jessica Eccles and Trevor L. Davis

Figure 2: Alquerque network