

Learn How To Play Chinese Chess

This page is designed for both native and non-native Chinese speakers. I have prepared an alternative set of Chinese Chess pieces that are represented by pictures instead of Chinese characters, so you don't have to understand Chinese characters in order to learn how to play this game.

The goal of this page is to help you get started in playing Chinese Chess. Once you are familiar with the basic moves and rules of the game, you might want to start learning deeper strategies and tactics for the game. To do that, I suggest you visit the tutorial section of a site called i.am/cchess.










Introduction

Chinese Chess is a traditional board game that has been around for thousands of years. Like Western Chess, it has a total of 32 pieces, it is played by 2 players, and the goal of the game is to capture your opponent's most important piece: the General or the King. Unlike Western Chess, Chinese Chess has 7 classes of pieces (*General, Advisor, Elephant, Horse, Chariot, Cannon, and Pawn*); whereas Western Chess has 6 classes of pieces (*King, Queen, Bishop, Knight, Rook, and Pawn*). Also, Chinese Chess is played on a larger board.

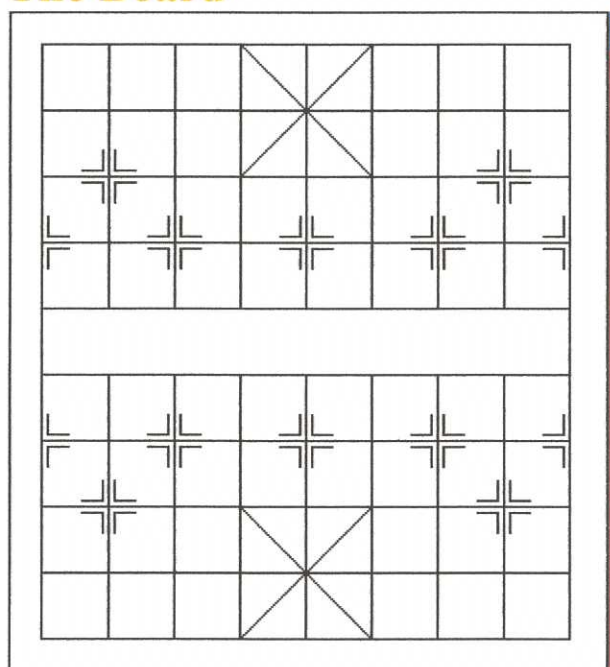
The Pieces

The pieces in Chinese Chess are represented by Chinese characters. Also, some pieces of the same class for both sides are sometimes represent by different characters. If you don't understand Chinese characters, I hope the picture set that I have prepared are easy to recognize and make sense.

 	General		Command HQ
 	Advisor		Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA)
 	Elephant		Surface-To-Air Missile (SAM)
 	Horse		Attack Helicopter (Gunship)

 	Chariot		Interceptor
 	Cannon		Bomber
 	Pawn		Transport Helicopter (Transport)

The Board



This is the Chinese Chess board. It is made up of 10x9 grid lines, and the pieces are placed on the intersections of the lines; this counts for 90 possible positions on the board.

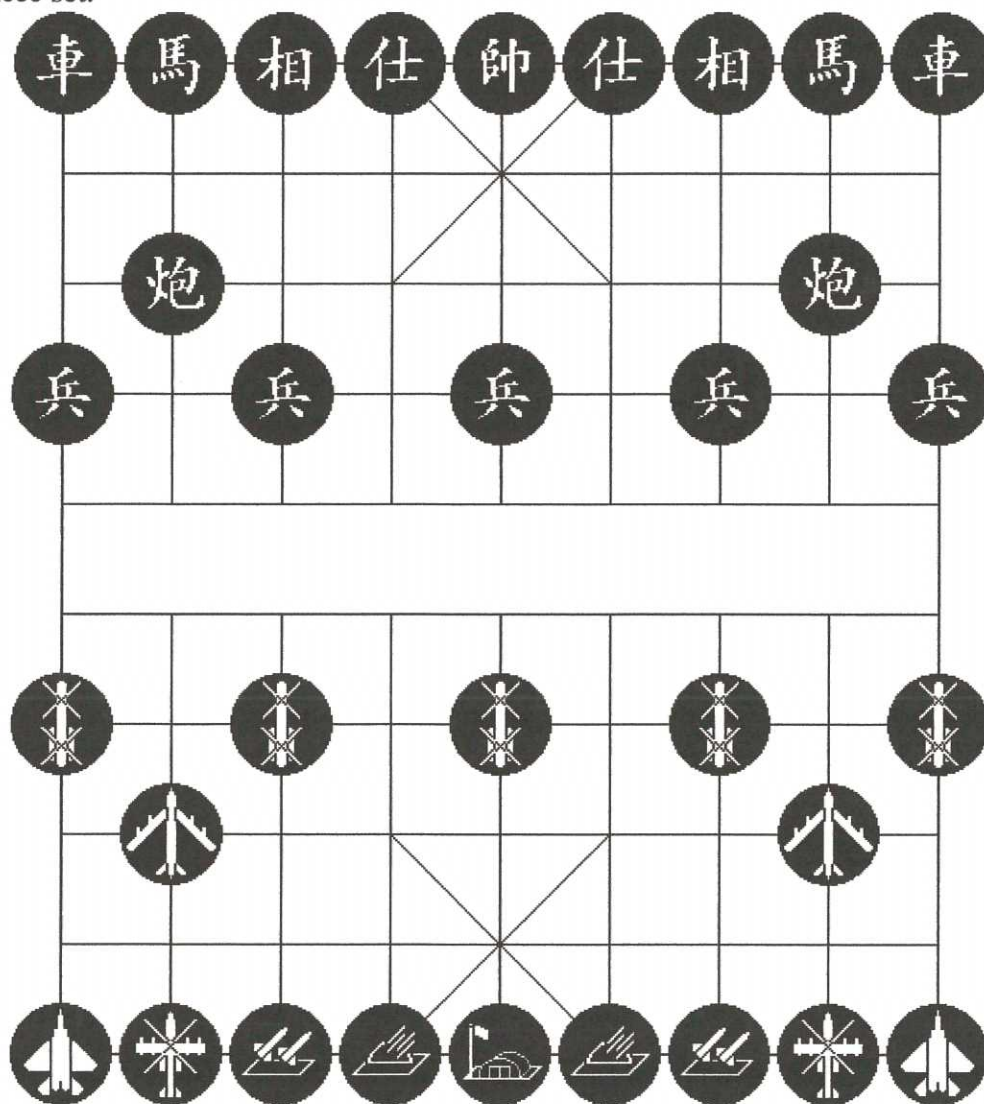
The board is divided into two zones. **Top half** of the board is your opponent's zone (**enemy zone**), and the **bottom half** of the board is your zone (**friendly zone**).

Some of the intersections are surrounded by wedges, which serve as indicators for the starting position of the **Cannon (Bomber)** and **Pawn (Transport)** pieces.

Notice at the baseline center of both zones there is a 3x3 grid linked by a cross, that is yours and your opponent's **palace (base)**.

Setting Up The Board

The following diagram shows the setup of the board at the beginning of a game. The top half of the board is setup using the character piece set, the bottom half of the board is setup using the picture piece set.



The Moves

Basic Movement

All piece can either move horizontally/vertically, diagonally, or a combination of the two.
No pieces can ever move through another piece except **Cannon (Bomber)**.

Capturing

You can capture and opponent's piece by moving one of your pieces into the position that is currently occupied by that opponent's piece.

Note: **Cannon (Bomber)** has special way of capturing pieces.

Blocking

Sometimes a piece may not complete a certain move because another piece (either friend or foe) is blocking its way.

Checking

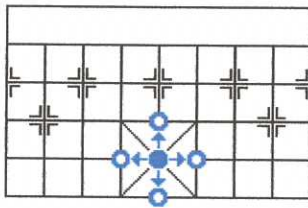
Checking occurs when the **General (Command HQ)** of one side is being threatened by the opposing side.

General (Command HQ) Face-off Restriction

You cannot make a move that will result in what's called a General Face-off situation.

This situation is true if you can draw a straight vertical line that intersects both sides'

General (Command HQ) and with no other pieces in-between the two **Generals (Command HQs)**.



General / Command HQ

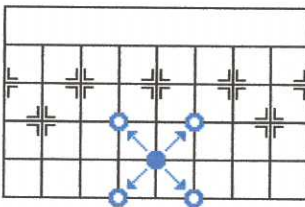


Description

This is the most important piece of the game. When you lose this piece, you lose the game.

Movement

Move horizontally or vertically one unit at a time. Also, it can never move out of the **palace (base)**.



Advisor / Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA)

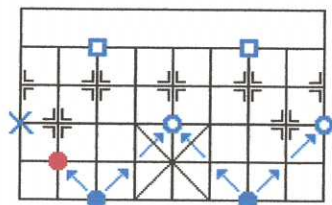


Description

This is a defensive unit. It provides close defensive support for the **General (Command HQ)**.

Movement

Move diagonally in any directions one unit at a time. Like the **General (Command HQ)**, it can never leave the **palace (base)**.



Elephant / Surface-To-Air Missile (SAM)



Description

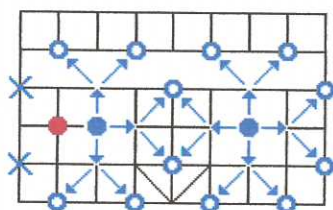
This is also a defensive unit. It provides defensive support for the General (Command HQ).

Movement

Move diagonally in any directions two units at a time. It can never move into your opponent's zone. The **Elephant (SAM)** can be blocked by a piece in-between its current position and its intended destination.

The diagram at the upper right corner illustrates that the **Elephant (SAM)** piece on the left could not make a move to its destination marked by **X** because it is blocked by another **piece**.

The **square** symbols in the diagram indicates the other two positions where the **Elephant (SAM)** could possibly move to.



Horse / Attack Helicopter (Gunship)



Description

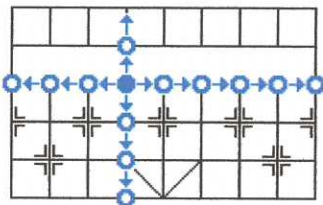
This piece is similar to the Knight in Western Chess.

Movement

Move horizontally or vertically in any directions by one unit, then immediately follow by a move diagonally one unit toward the direction away from its original position.

If there is a piece immediately adjacent to the **Horse (Gunship)**, then it cannot move toward that direction.

The diagram at the upper right corner illustrates that the **Horse (Gunship)** piece on the left could not make a move to either of its destinations marked by **X** because it is blocked by a **piece** immediately adjacent to it.



Chariot / Interceptor

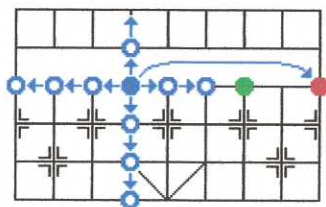


Description

This piece is similar to the Rook in Western Chess.

Movement

Move horizontally or vertically in any directions by any number of units, provided that it doesn't move through another piece.



Cannon / Bomber



Description

This is a unique piece that can be very interesting to play.

Movement

Special Capturing Rule

A diagram of a 2D lattice with four horizontal and four vertical lines. Blue particles (circles) are located at the intersections (2,1), (2,2), and (3,2), where (x,y) is the column and row from the bottom-left. Red particles (circles) are at (3,3), (4,3), and (4,4). Blue arrows point from (2,1) to (2,2) and from (2,2) to (3,2). Red arrows point from (3,3) to (4,3), from (4,3) to (4,4), and from (4,4) to (3,3).

They are slow, but don't ignore them.

Move forward one unit at a time. After a **Pawn (Transport)** crossed over into **enemy zone**, it can also move left or right one unit at a time. It can never move backward.

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