

Claude Chess

User Guide

Welcome to Claude Chess

Claude Chess is a powerful, feature-rich chess application for iPhone and iPad that combines beautiful design with serious functionality. Whether you're learning the game or preparing for tournament play, Claude Chess provides the tools you need to study, practice, and improve your chess skills.

What Makes Claude Chess Special

- **Play Anywhere, Anytime** – Built-in Stockfish 17 engine means you can practice offline without an internet connection
- **Tournament-Strength AI** – Face one of the world's strongest chess engines with 21 adjustable skill levels
- **Professional Analysis** – Real-time position evaluation and move hints help you understand the game
- **Study Tools** – Set up any position to practice specific scenarios, openings, or endgames
- **Time Controls** – Practice with realistic tournament time settings including increment support
- **Coming Soon** – Chess.com and Lichess integration for online play (future updates)

Getting Started

Starting your first game in Claude Chess is simple. Here's how to begin:

1. **Choose Your Opponent** – Tap the hamburger menu (≡) and select Settings > Opponent. Choose Stockfish to play against the computer.
2. **Set the Difficulty** – In Stockfish Settings, choose a skill level from 0 (beginner) to 20 (grandmaster strength). Level 5 is a good starting point for intermediate players.
3. **Pick Your Color** – Select whether you want to play as White or Black. The board will automatically flip to show your perspective.
4. **Start the Game** – Tap the lightning bolt icon (⚡) to open Quick Menu, then tap 'Start Game' to begin playing.
5. **Make Your Move** – Tap a piece to select it, then tap your destination square. You can also drag and drop pieces directly.

Understanding the Board

The chess board displays several helpful visual indicators:

- **Green circles** show legal moves when you select a piece
- **Corner triangles** highlight the last move played (can be toggled in Settings)
- **Red border** appears around a king when it's in check
- **Captured pieces** appear at the top and bottom of the screen

Playing Games

Making Moves

Claude Chess supports two methods for moving pieces:

Tap to Move

6. Tap the piece you want to move
7. Legal moves appear as green circles
8. Tap the destination square to complete your move

Drag and Drop

9. Touch and hold a piece
10. Drag it to the destination square
11. Release to complete the move

Special Moves

Claude Chess fully supports all standard chess rules and special moves:

- **Castling** – Move your king two squares toward the rook to castle
- **En Passant** – Automatically detected and available when legal
- **Pawn Promotion** – Choose your promotion piece (Queen, Rook, Bishop, or Knight) when a pawn reaches the final rank
- **Draw Detection** – The app automatically detects stalemate, insufficient material, and the 50-move rule

Quick Menu Features

Tap the lightning bolt icon (⚡) to access in-game actions:

- **Start Game** – Begins the game and starts the timer
- **Flip Board** – Rotate the board to view from the opposite side
- **Offer Draw** – Propose a draw to Stockfish (the AI evaluates the position and decides)
- **Resign Game** – Concede the game
- **Undo Move** – Take back your last move (note: time controls are disabled after using undo)
- **Show FEN** – Display the position in Forsyth-Edwards Notation (copy to clipboard)
- **Show PGN** – View the game in Portable Game Notation format (copy to clipboard)

Features Guide

Stockfish AI Engine

Claude Chess includes Stockfish 17, one of the world's strongest chess engines. The AI runs directly on your device, so you can play anywhere without an internet connection.

Skill Levels

Choose from 21 skill levels (0-20) to match your playing strength:

- **Levels 0-5:** Beginner to casual player (will make occasional mistakes)
- **Levels 6-12:** Club player to advanced (solid tactical play)
- **Levels 13-20:** Expert to grandmaster strength (nearly perfect play)

Playing as Black

In Stockfish Settings, you can choose to play as Black. This is particularly useful for practicing specific openings from Black's perspective. The board automatically flips to show your side, and time controls swap so you always get the time allocation you set for yourself.

Position Analysis

Access the hamburger menu (≡) and tap Score to view real-time position evaluation from Stockfish. The evaluation shows who has the advantage and by how much.

Understanding the Score

- **Positive numbers:** White has the advantage
- **Negative numbers:** Black has the advantage
- **Near zero:** The position is roughly equal
- **Win Probability:** Shows the likelihood of winning from the current position

***Tip:** You can choose between three display formats: Centipawns (raw engine output), Scaled (-9 to +9), or Win Probability percentage.*

Move Hints

When you're stuck or want to learn, tap Hint in the Quick Menu to see Stockfish's recommended move. The hint shows the move in standard notation (e.g., 'e2 → e4'). Use hints sparingly to maximize learning – try to think through the position yourself first.

Setup Board

The Setup Board feature lets you create any chess position for study or practice. This is invaluable for:

- Practicing specific openings
- Working on endgame technique

- Analyzing positions from your games
- Testing tactical ideas

To use Setup Board:

12. Open the hamburger menu (≡) and select 'Setup Board'
13. Enter a FEN (Forsyth-Edwards Notation) string for the position
14. The board updates to show your position
15. Tap 'Start Game' in Quick Menu to begin playing from that position

Time Controls

Practice with tournament-style time controls. Access Time Controls from Settings to configure:

- **Time per player:** Set initial time for White and Black (0-60 minutes)
- **Increment:** Add seconds per move (0-60 seconds)
- **Quick Presets:** Blitz (5+0), Rapid (10+0), Classical (30+0), or custom

Note: *Time controls must be set before starting the game. If you use the Undo feature during a game, time controls are automatically disabled for the remainder of that game.*

Settings & Customization

Board Appearance

Customize the look of your chess board in Settings > Board > Color Theme:

- **Classic** – Traditional tan and brown
- **Modern** – Contemporary light gray and steel blue
- **Wood** – Warm wooden tones
- **Ocean** – Calming blue and teal
- **Forest** – Natural green shades
- **Tournament** – High-contrast black and white
- **Custom** – Create your own color combination with a live preview

Game Options

- **Show Possible Moves:** Toggle the green circles that indicate legal moves
- **Highlight Last Move:** Show or hide the corner triangles on the previous move
- **Haptic Feedback:** Enable or disable vibration feedback (iPhone and iPad only)

Opponent Settings

Choose your opponent and configure their settings:

- **Human:** Play against another person on the same device
- **Stockfish:** Play against the AI (configure skill level and color)
- **Chess.com:** Coming in a future update
- **Lichess:** Coming in a future update

Tips & Tricks

Improving Your Game

- **Start at an appropriate level.** If you're winning too easily, increase the skill level. If you're losing every game, lower it. The right level should give you competitive games where you win roughly 50% of the time.
- **Use hints sparingly.** Try to calculate moves yourself before checking the hint. Overusing hints prevents you from developing your calculation skills.
- **Practice with time controls.** Start with longer time controls and gradually work toward faster games as your chess improves.
- **Study your losses.** Use the PGN feature to save games where you lost. Analyze them to understand your mistakes.
- **Practice specific positions.** Use Setup Board to drill difficult endgames or tactical positions repeatedly until they become second nature.

Using Setup Board Effectively

- **Practice openings from both sides.** Set up your favorite opening position and practice playing both colors to understand it deeply.
- **Work on endgame fundamentals.** Set up basic endgames (King + Rook vs King, King + Queen vs King, etc.) and practice them until you can execute them perfectly.
- **Recreate interesting positions.** If you see an interesting position in a book or video, set it up in Claude Chess to explore it hands-on.

Advanced Features

- **FEN strings** are a compact way to describe any chess position. Copy the FEN from Show FEN to share positions with friends or chess tools.
- **PGN format** is the standard for recording chess games. Export your games as PGN to analyze them in other chess software or share them online.
- **Flip the board** to see the position from your opponent's perspective. This helps develop your ability to evaluate positions from both sides.

Troubleshooting & FAQ

Common Questions

Why can't I move any pieces?

Make sure you've tapped 'Start Game' in the Quick Menu. The board is locked until the game officially begins.

Why did my time stop counting?

If you use the Undo feature, time controls are automatically disabled for the rest of that game. Start a new game to re-enable time controls.

Can I play online against other people?

Chess.com and Lichess integration are coming in future updates. For now, you can play against Stockfish or pass-and-play with a friend on the same device.

How do I save my games?

Use 'Show PGN' in the Quick Menu to view the game notation. Tap 'Copy' to save it to your clipboard, then paste it into Notes or another app for safekeeping.

Is there a way to analyze my games afterward?

Export your game using PGN and import it into analysis software like lichess.org/analysis or chess.com's analysis board.

Why does Stockfish play differently at the same skill level?

Stockfish's skill levels introduce deliberate randomness to make it play more human-like. This means the AI won't play the same way every time, making practice more realistic.

Performance Tips

- For the smoothest experience, close other apps running in the background
- Stockfish runs on your device, so older devices may take a few extra seconds to calculate moves at higher skill levels
- Position evaluation and hints require a few seconds to compute – this is normal

About Claude Chess

Claude Chess is a native iOS chess application built with SwiftUI. It combines beautiful design with powerful chess analysis tools to create the perfect practice environment for players of all levels.

Credits

Design & Development: Jeff Rosengarden

Chess Engine: Stockfish 17 (stockfishchess.org)

Chess Pieces: Cburnett Chess Set ([Wikimedia Commons](#), CC-BY-SA 3.0)

Built with: SwiftUI and assistance from Claude Code

Version Information

Version: 1.0.0

Released: 2025

Platform: iOS 17.0+, iPadOS 17.0+

License Information

Claude Chess incorporates the following open-source software:

Stockfish – Licensed under GPLv3. Copyright © 2004-2024 The Stockfish developers.

ChessKitEngine – Licensed under MIT License. Copyright © 2024 The ChessKit Authors.

Cburnett Chess Pieces – Licensed under CC-BY-SA 3.0. Created by User:Cburnett ([Wikimedia Commons](#)).

Thank you for choosing Claude Chess!

We hope you enjoy the app and improve your chess skills.