

Games

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Xadrez

XADREZ

THE GREAT GAME OF THE KNOWN WORLD

Xadrez is the oldest game known to humanity in the Known World. No one is sure what the name means or what its origin might be.

The pieces each have a short name and a long name. Only history buffs, xadrez obsessives, and sages commonly use the long names. In the table below, the long part of each piece name is given in parentheses.

CHESS PIECE	XADREZ PIECE	XADREZ PIECE APPEARANCE
Pawn	The Wall [of Four Parts]	4x4 block walls
Knight	The Smith [of the Furnace]	A hammer held by a base that looks like a fist
Bishop	The Wizard [of Ways]	A twisted wand rising from a base
Rook	The Tower [of Stars]	A segmented tower, tapering upwards.
Queen	The [Forest] Queen	Figure, arms open wide
King	The [Fountain] King	Figure, arms reaching up

As with the playing cards of the Known World, there are local variants to the appearance of the pieces and the board. In Voors, the Wall is often depicted as a miner carrying a pickaxe. In Parashkanan, the King is a great eagle with outstretched wings. In Redpath, all the pieces are replaced by symbols, or runes, instead of figurative sculptures. Few know the origins of these variations.

Xadrez is played much like chess on Earth, on a similar board.

There are stereotypes about xadrez players and styles of play:

- The Voorish Attack: Aggressive, relying on memorized gambits and strategies.
- The Kirenar Riddle: Strategies rely on deception and trickery.
- The Parashi Defense: “stronghold” defense luring opponent to sacrifice pieces wastefully.
- Patient Parya: A delaying game, attempting to force opponents to burn up gambits in vain.
- The Graditeli Miner: A strategy focused on extracting the King without wasting time taking other pieces.
- Salainen Calculation: Predict the opponent’s play with complex mental math and pre-empt their moves.

Playing Cards

Playing cards are very popular throughout the Known World and are used for all the activities you might suspect: games, fortune-telling and divination, throwing at people, and so forth. Among the less common uses: some people use a personal deck of cards as an elaborate mnemonic device. In this usage, each card might stand for a certain category of things to remember: dates, names, passwords, formulae, etc. Some practitioners of this method scribble notes on the cards themselves as reminders; others have shuffled and shuffled the same deck so many times they need no prompting. The solitary game “[Elenath’s Castle](#)” combines the gaming and memory-aid functions of the cards: the act of playing the game is also a meditative technique for reciting the memory cues assigned to each card.

Playing cards in the Known World have six suits and three colors, as follows. The “notes” column indicates what each of the types of cards is typically used to remember when used as a mnemonic device.

Suit	Color	Notes
Moons	Blue	Quantities - e.g., in recipes, inventories, cargo manifests, shopping lists
Stars	Blue	Formulas, plans
Wands	Gold	Dates - birthdates, appointments, etc
Towers	Gold	Places - waypoints, destinations, favorite haunts
Trees	Green	People - names, faces, etc.
Founts	Green	Specific events - conversations, meals, fights

Each suit contains the following cards, in order from greatest to least value:

Dragon

King

Queen

Knight

7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2

For a total of 60 cards in each deck. Some decks also contain a “doom card”, which is sometimes a comet, sometimes a ship, and sometimes a shadowy figure; this card usually trumps all other cards in the deck or can be a “wild card”.

There are of course endless variations in the design of each suit and each card, but the fundamental suits and “faces” never varies. Some variations among the card designs:

People	Variant
Bellgard	The Dragon is often depicted as quaint and old, while the King and Queen are majestic.
Parashkanan	The Dragon looks more like a vast black and grey bird, breathing fire, and the Knights wield bows.
Callent	There are an even number of gold and silver dragons in each deck, vibrant and strong.
Voors	The Kings all appear holding great swords of white and black. The Knights all kneel.

Elenath's Castle