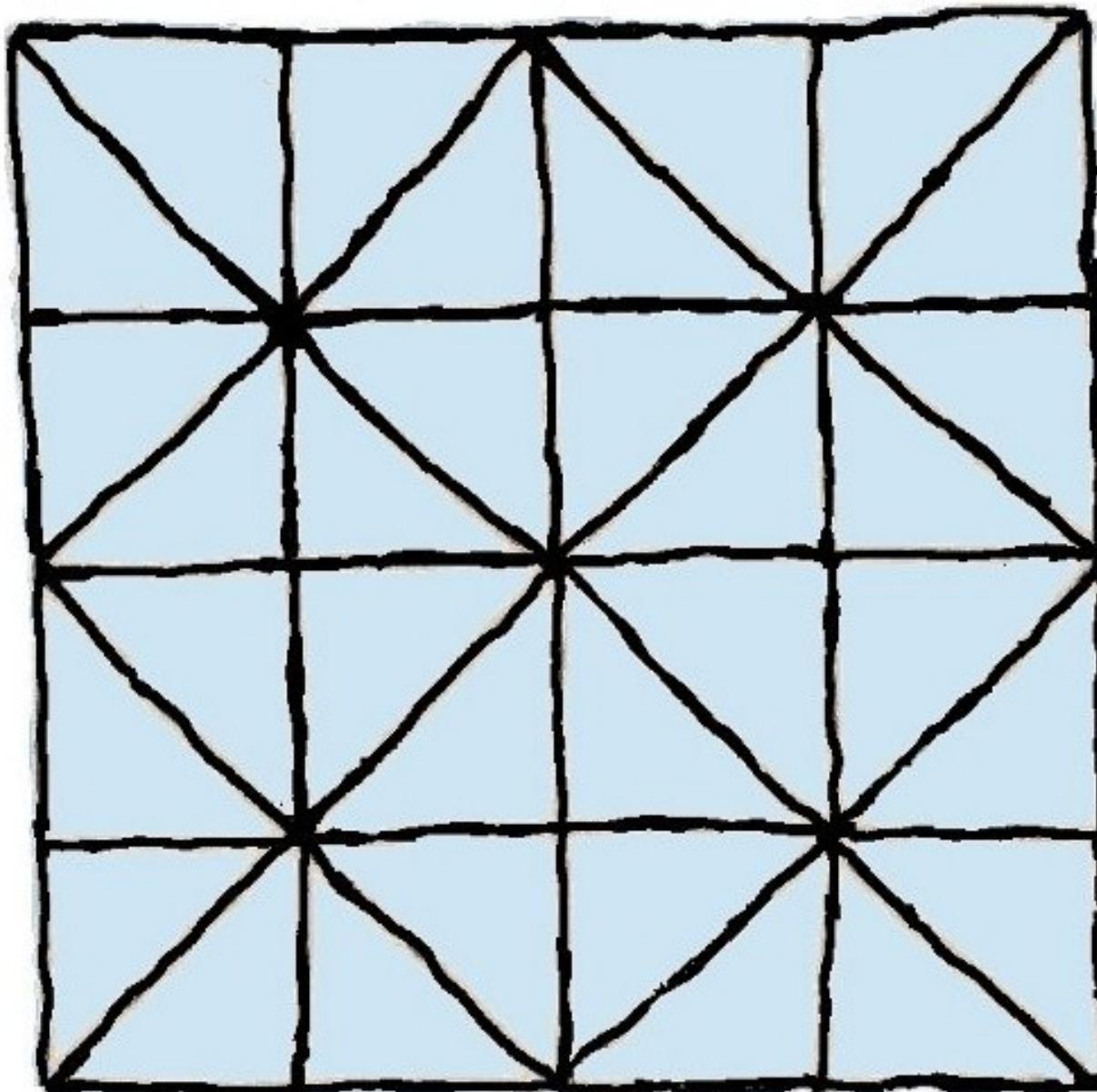


# The Historic Games Shop

## The Historic Games Club

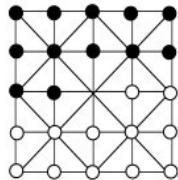
A GAME FOR TWO PLAYERS. PRINT OUT THE PAGE OR DRAW A COPY OF THE BOARD - TAKE A LOOK AT  
<https://www.thehistoricgamesshop.co.uk/the-historic-games-club.html> FOR IDEAS FOR MAKING OR FINDING YOUR OWN GAMES PIECES,  
AND HOW TO PLAY IF YOU HAVE NO OPPONENT. RULES ARE ON PAGE 2!

### No. 5. Alquerque



Our fifth Historic Games Club game comes from the Arabic world, and was probably brought to Europe, like much Arabic culture, via Spain. It was first mentioned (as El-Quirkat) by the Arabic historian Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani in the 10th century, and was then described in the Book of Games collected for King Alfonso X of Spain in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the Spanish name Alquerque (in English pronounced like Albuquerque). It was very popular all over medieval Europe.

The game is for two players, who each need 12 playing pieces. Start with the pieces in the position shown here:



The aim is to get as many of your pieces as possible to the other side of the board, past your opponent, while at the same time taking their pieces. Pieces move either to an adjacent (next door) position, forwards, sideways or diagonally forwards but not backwards; or, by jumping over an opposing piece, to an empty position beyond, again in any direction except backwards. Jumped pieces are captured and taken from the board. You can continue to jump over more pieces in the same turn as long as you jump one piece at a time into an empty space beyond and you don't jump backwards.

The first player has only one place to move to – the empty position in the centre, but a choice of 3 pieces to move. In the next few moves there are not many possible choices, and several pieces will be taken. It looks like you're both going to lose all your pieces very quickly! However, as the board becomes emptier there will be more choices for moving your pieces while keeping them safe. Sometimes it might be safer not to jump over one of your opponent's pieces, putting your own piece or pieces in danger. You can chose not to jump, but if you do so your opponent must remove the piece that could have jumped from the board before starting their next move. (This is called the “huffing” rule). The game is over when all the pieces belonging to each player have moved past each other towards the other side of the board, so that no more pieces can be taken. The winner is the player who has the most surviving pieces!

As you play the game you can try out different strategies – does the first piece moved, or the player who moves first, make a difference? Should you focus on taking as many pieces as possible, or getting your pieces to the other end of the board? Is it better to always take, or risk having a piece huffed? You might also like to try an alternative version of the game where backwards movement is allowed and the winner is the last piece standing!

You may recognise the jumping form of capture and the huffing rule – it's thought that late medieval people began to play Alquerque on a chess board, and during Tudor times this became the new game of checkers – which (at least in the UK) you might know as draughts!

HAPPY PLAYING!

Let us know how you get on at <https://www.thehistoricgamesshop.co.uk>