

SAIGON SKYLINE CHESS

The familiar game. A city in every move.



ROUND RIVER × SQUARE GRID

Setup · first moves · complete rules · care

BEGIN HERE

Two skylines. One known game.

Every meaningful distinction is in the geometry. You never need color to set up or play.



RIVER

Round two-step plinth. This manual assigns River as White; River moves first.



GRID

Square two-step plinth. Grid plays Black and moves second.



CHECK THE INVENTORY

1 board — 8 × 8 relief grid, 208 mm square

32 pieces — 16 River + 16 Grid

Each side: 1 king · 1 queen · 2 rooks · 2 bishops · 2 knights · 8 pawns

Missing or damaged? Pause setup. Compare each landmark on the next page; do not play with a cracked piece that has a sharp edge.

PIECE ATLAS

Height carries rank.

Silhouette carries role. Both sides share these six building forms; only the plinth changes.



PAWN

Central Post Office



ROOK

Bến Thành Market



KNIGHT

Independence Palace



BISHOP

Notre-Dame Cathedral



QUEEN

Bitexco Financial Tower



KING

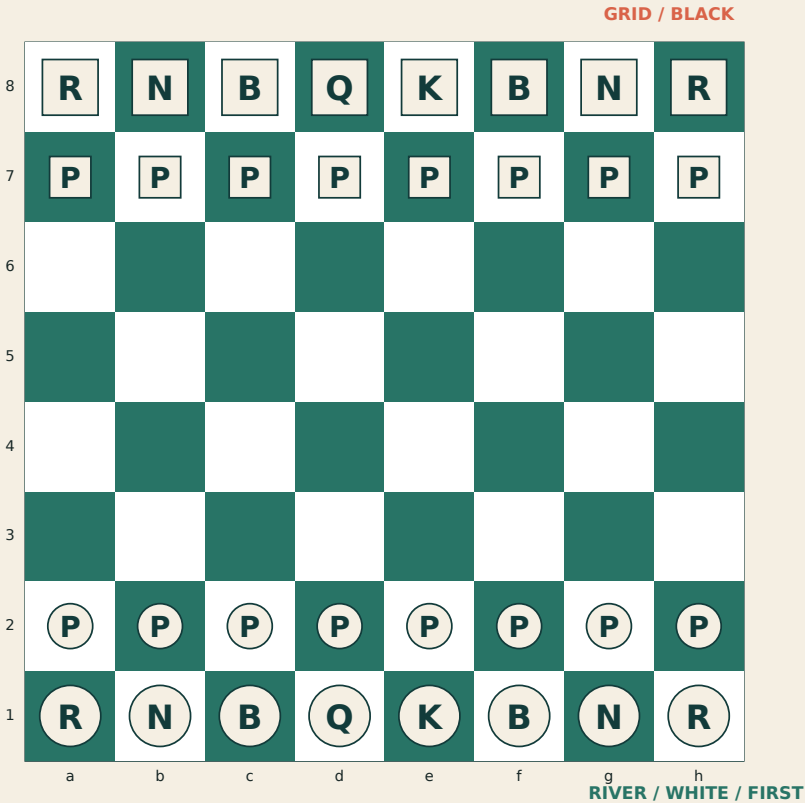
Landmark 81

Fast read: tallest spire = king · projecting sky deck = queen · twin spires = bishop · directional canopy = knight · clock tower = rook · smallest arched hall = pawn.

SETUP

Low relief on the right.

Sit opposite each other. River is at the bottom of this diagram and moves first.



Back rank: rook · knight · bishop · queen · king · bishop · knight · rook. Pawns fill the row immediately in front.

GUIDED START

Open a road through the city.

Use this short sequence once, then reset and choose your own moves.

1

River: e2 → e4

Move the king's pawn two squares. A pawn may advance two only from its starting row, through clear squares.

2

Grid: e7 → e5

Grid answers with the matching central pawn. Players always alternate one move at a time.

3

River: g1 → f3

Bring the king-side knight toward the centre. A knight is the only piece that may jump over others.

4

Grid: b8 → c6

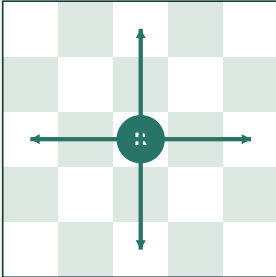
Develop the queen-side knight. Stop here: look at what each move now attacks.

Your turn. Reset to page 4. River chooses any legal first move. After every move ask: Is my king safe? What does this piece attack? What changed?

LONG STREETS

Rook, bishop, queen.

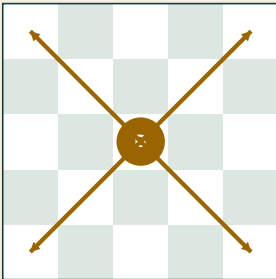
These pieces slide any number of open squares. They never jump over another piece.



ROOK

Bến Thành Market

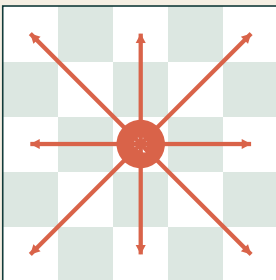
Ranks + files. Stop before a friendly piece. Land on an opponent to capture it and remove it.



BISHOP

Notre-Dame Cathedral

Diagonals. Stop before a friendly piece. Land on an opponent to capture it and remove it.



QUEEN

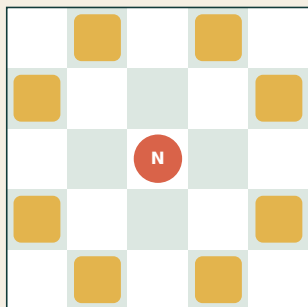
Bitexco Financial Tower

Rook + bishop lines. Stop before a friendly piece. Land on an opponent to capture it and remove it.

CORNERS AND CROSSINGS

Knight, king, pawn.

The three movement patterns that make chess feel like chess.



KNIGHT

Moves in an L: two squares in one direction, then one sideways. It may jump over pieces. It captures only on its landing square.

KING

One square in any direction. The king may never move onto an attacked square, remain in check, or move so another piece exposes it.

PAWN

Moves straight forward one empty square; from its start it may move two if both are clear. Captures one square diagonally forward. Never moves backward.

Capture: except for en passant, move onto an opponent's square and remove that piece. You may not land on your own piece. Every move must leave your own king safe.

KNOW THE EXCEPTIONS

Castle. En passant. Promote.

Each is legal only under the conditions below.

CASTLING

Move the king two squares toward its rook; move that rook to the square the king crossed. The path must be empty. Neither piece may have moved. The king may not be in check, cross an attacked square, or finish in check. An attacked rook does not itself forbid castling.

EN PASSANT

If an opposing pawn has just advanced two squares and stops beside your pawn, your pawn may capture it as though it moved only one square. Move diagonally behind it and remove it. This chance exists only on your very next move.

PROMOTION

When a pawn reaches the farthest row, replace it immediately with a queen, rook, bishop, or knight of the same side. The choice is not limited to captured pieces. If the chosen extra piece is unavailable, pause and use a clearly agreed marker.

Remember: a special move is still illegal if it leaves your king in check.

KING SAFETY

Check is a warning. Mate is the end.

Kings are never captured. A legal move may not expose or leave your own king under attack.

A king may never move next to the other king.

CHECK

Your king is attacked. On this move you must remove the threat by moving the king, capturing the attacker, or blocking the attack when a block is possible.

CHECKMATE

Your king is in check and no legal reply removes it. The checking player wins immediately.

STALEMATE

The player to move is not in check but has no legal move. The game is a draw—not a win.



WIN, DRAW, RESET.

No piece points decide the game.

Material values can guide choices, but only the result below scores.

WIN · 1-0 or 0-1

Checkmate, or the opponent resigns. A resignation is a draw if the other player could never checkmate by any legal sequence.

DRAW · $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Stalemate; a dead position where mate is impossible; or agreement between the players.

REPETITION & LONG QUIET PLAY

A player to move may correctly claim a draw when the same position—with the same player to move and the same legal possibilities—appears for the third time, or after 50 moves by each player with no pawn move and no capture. The draw is automatic after five appearances or 75 such moves by each player; checkmate on the final move takes precedence.

After the result: record 1-0, 0-1, or $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ if you are keeping a match score. Then return every role to the inventory count before starting again.

WHEN THE SKYLINE GETS TANGLED

Pause. Identify. Restore.

Most table mistakes are easier to fix before another move is made.

I cannot tell the sides apart.

Touch the plinth: River is round; Grid is square. Building shapes are intentionally shared.

I cannot identify a role.

Use page 3: compare height first, then the signature silhouette. Keep captured pieces grouped by plinth.

We made an illegal move.

For casual play, agree to restore the last known legal position, then make a legal move. In a formal event, ask the arbiter.

A position was disturbed.

Stop play. Reconstruct from the last position both players can verify. If uncertain, restart rather than inventing a square.

PACK-AWAY COUNT

Board $\times 1$ · River $\times 16$ · Grid $\times 16$. Wrap tall spires individually and place all pieces in a separate padded container; this edition does not include a storage case.

LEAVE THE CITY READY FOR TOMORROW.

Handle the base. Protect the skyline.

A little care preserves the fine towers and projecting deck.

LIFT LOW

Pick up pieces by the plinth or lower body—not by a spire, canopy, or sky deck.

KEEP DRY

Wipe with a soft, dry or barely damp cloth. Do not soak, machine-wash, or use solvents.

AVOID HEAT

Keep away from hot cars, radiators, flames, and prolonged direct sun. Heat may deform the board or pieces.

INSPECT

Stop using any cracked piece with a loose fragment or sharp edge. Keep every component away from pets.

WARNING — SMALL PARTS. Choking hazard. Not for children under 3 years. Young players should use the set with adult supervision.

ORTHODOX CHESS • RULES UNCHANGED

Rules reference: FIDE Laws of Chess, effective 1 January 2023. This booklet is self-contained for casual over-the-board play.