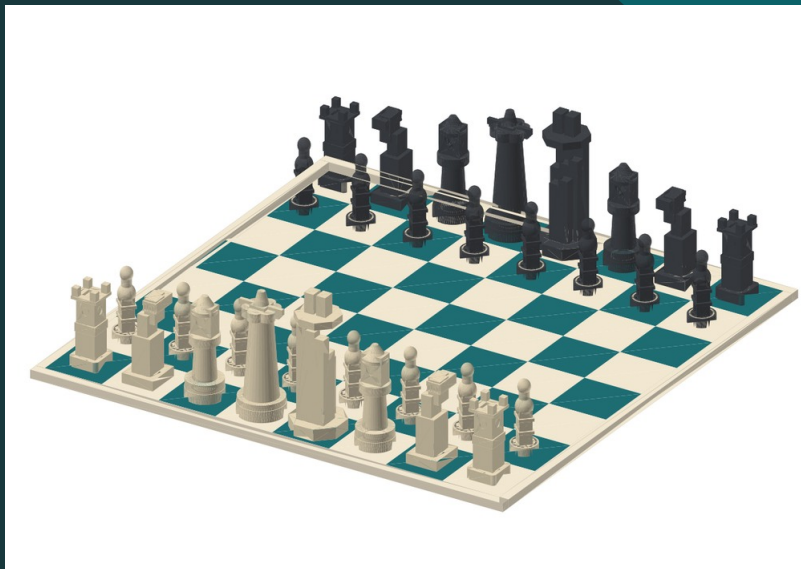


A CITY YOU CAN PLAY

RIVER & GRID

Ho Chi Minh City Chess



UNFOLD THE SKYLINE.

Set up. Learn the landmarks. Play orthodox chess.

Meet the two shores

WHAT ARRIVES

- 1 skyline lid + 1 box base
- 4 keyed board panels (64 squares assembled)
- 1 River tray + 1 Street tray
- River army: 1 king, 2 queens, 2 rooks, 2 bishops, 2 knights, 8 pawns
- Street army: the same 17-piece inventory
- This owner's manual

River side

Warm sandstone intent; raised current band and three raised registration dots. River sits at rank 1 / south and is the light army, so River moves first.

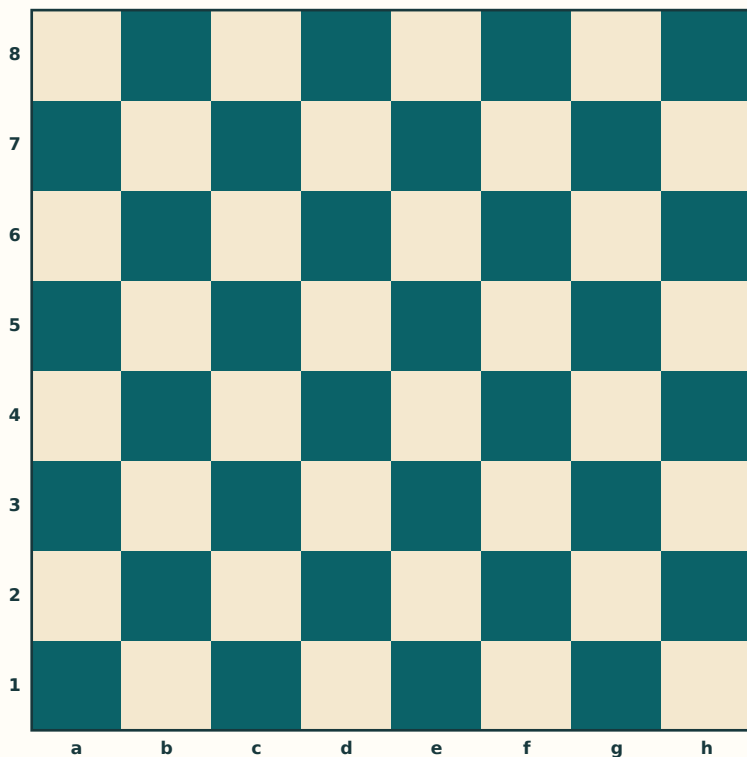
Street side

Charcoal intent; recessed orthogonal ring and three recessed slots. Street sits at rank 8 / north and moves second.

DO NOT RELY ON COLOR ALONE — USE THE BASE CUES.

Build the crossing

STREET / NORTH / RANK 8



RIVER / SOUTH / RANK 1

1

Place all four panels flat. Outer frames face away from the center seams.

2

Align each tongue with its matching slot. Slide straight along the board plane; support each panel with both hands.

3

Stop if a key binds. Pull apart straight, check for debris or damage, and reseal. Never twist or force a seam.

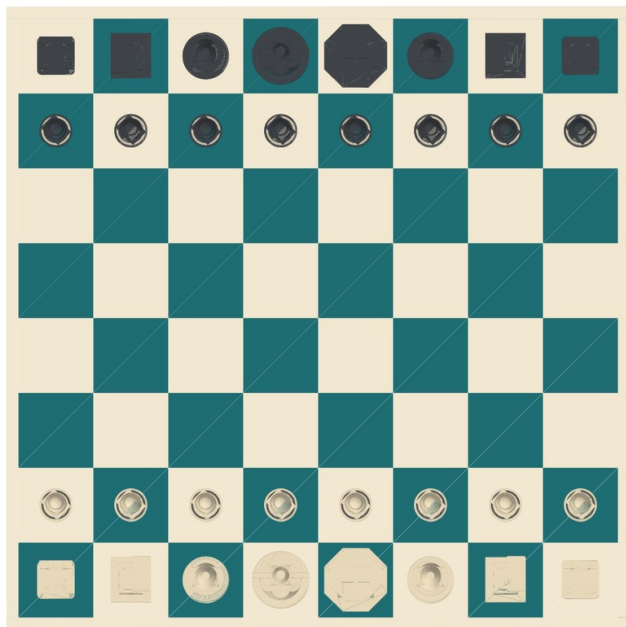
4

Orient River at the south edge and Street at the north edge. The near-right corner for each player is light; a1 is dark.

ORIENTATION TEST

a1 dark • h1 light • each queen begins on own color

Set the skyline



River / ranks 1-2

From a1 to h1: ROOK • KNIGHT • BISHOP • QUEEN • KING • BISHOP • KNIGHT • ROOK. Place all 8 River pawns on rank 2.

Street / ranks 8-7

The same back-rank order viewed by file: rooks on a/h, knights b/g, bishops c/f, queen d8, king e8. Place all 8 Street pawns on rank 7.

QUEEN ON HER OWN COLOR

River queen on light d1. Street queen on dark d8.

THE SECOND QUEEN STAYS OFF-BOARD

It is a display or damaged-piece replacement only. Every promotion uses the pawn's integral selector.

Walk the first avenue

River moves first. Use this short, legal sequence to feel turns, files, ranks, and the knight's jump.

1 River e2 → e4

A pawn may move two squares from its starting rank if both squares are clear.

2 River g1 → f3

The knight moves in an L and may jump over pieces.

3 River f1 → c4

A bishop slides diagonally after e2 moved away.

... Street e7 → e5

Street's pawns move toward rank 1; River's move toward rank 8.

... Street b8 → c6

Alternating turns continue: one move per side.

... Street g8 → f6

The position is ready for free play; no pieces have been captured.

Landmarks in motion I

K KING / LANDMARK 81

One square in any direction. A king may not move into check, remain in check, or capture a defended piece.

Q QUEEN / BITEXCO

Any number of clear squares along a rank, file, or diagonal. She may not jump over a piece.

R ROOK / BEN THANH

Any number of clear squares along a rank or file. The rook also participates in castling.

Sliding-piece rule

Queens, rooks, and bishops stop before a friendly piece. They may capture one opposing piece by landing on its square, but cannot continue through it.

Lift from the city base

Handle every landmark by its collar or base. Do not pull on towers, bridge projections, roof details, or other silhouette features.

Landmarks in motion II

B BISHOP / POST OFFICE

Any number of clear squares diagonally. A bishop stays on its starting square color for the whole game.

N KNIGHT / BA SON

Two squares in one direction, then one at a right angle. It is the only piece that jumps over others.

P PAWN / SHOPHOUSE

Forward one clear square; from its start, optionally two clear squares. Captures one square diagonally forward. Never moves backward.

Forward is fixed

River pawns advance toward rank 8. Street pawns advance toward rank 1. A pawn does not change its forward direction after moving or capturing.

Blocked pawns

A pawn cannot move forward into an occupied square and cannot capture straight ahead. Its initial two-square move is legal only when both squares are empty.

Pressure the king

TURN

River makes one legal move, then Street; continue alternating.

CHECK

A king is attacked. The checked side must move the king, capture the attacker, or block the line if possible.

STALEMATE

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

CAPTURE

Land on an opposing piece's square and remove that piece. Kings are never captured.

CHECKMATE

The king is in check and no legal response exists. The checking side wins immediately.

ILLEGAL

A move that leaves your own king in check is never allowed. Restore the position and choose a legal move.

Two exceptional crossings

CASTLING

Move the king two squares toward a rook, then place that rook on the square the king crossed.

ALL FIVE CONDITIONS MUST HOLD

- That king has never moved.
- That rook has never moved.
- All squares between them are empty.
- The king is not currently in check.
- The king does not cross or finish on an attacked square.

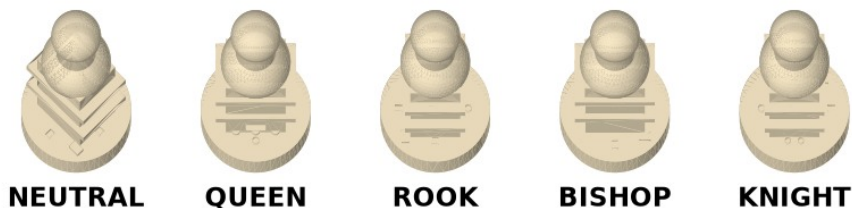
EN PASSANT

This capture exists only immediately after an opposing pawn advances two squares from its start and lands beside your pawn.

HOW TO TAKE IT

- Your pawn must stand beside the pawn that just advanced two squares.
- Move your pawn diagonally forward to the square the opposing pawn crossed.
- Remove the opposing pawn from the adjacent square.
- If you make any other move first, this en passant right expires.

Turn arrival into a new role



NEUTRAL TABLET • Q QUEEN • R ROOK • B BISHOP • N KNIGHT

RIVER FIXED HOME EDGE = SOUTH / RANK 1

Ordinary pawn: point the unique low raised tablet toward rank 1. On reaching rank 8, rotate the pawn so the chosen recessed Q, R, B, or N mark points toward rank 1. The new role acts immediately as that piece on later turns.

Keep the role through every turn



NEUTRAL • Q QUEEN • R ROOK • B BISHOP • N KNIGHT



ORDINARY PAWN + THREE INDEPENDENT QUEEN SELECTORS

STREET FIXED HOME EDGE = NORTH / RANK 8

Neutral points the raised tablet north. A promoted Street pawn points its recessed Q/R/B/N mark north. After every move, preserve that same north-facing active mark; River selectors likewise keep their active mark facing south.

SELECTOR REQUIRED FOR EVERY PROMOTION

Choose queen, rook, bishop, or knight—even when that role is already on the board. Every pawn is independent, so multiple promoted queens remain distinct. The spare queen never substitutes for the selector convention.

Know when the river rests

WIN

Checkmate wins. A player also wins if the opponent resigns. If a timed game is used, agree on clock rules before starting; no clock is included.

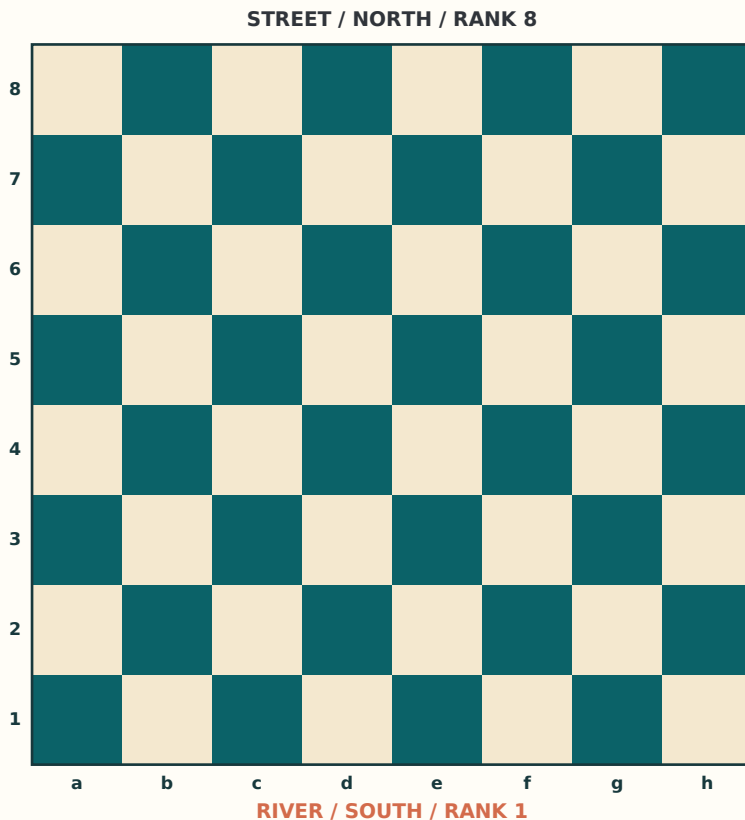
DRAW NOW

A draw occurs by stalemate, mutual agreement, or a dead position in which no possible legal sequence can produce checkmate.

REPETITION & MOVE COUNTS

A player may claim a draw when the same position—with the same player to move and the same castling and en passant rights—has occurred three times, or when each side has completed 50 moves without a pawn move or capture. Fivefold repetition or 75 moves by each side without pawn move/capture is an automatic draw, unless the final move checkmates.

Read the grid



NAME A SQUARE

Files a-h run left to right from River's seat.
Ranks 1-8 run from River toward Street.
Say the file first, then rank: e4, c6, h1.

SIMPLE GAME RECORD

For this set, record source and destination every time: g1-f3. Write captures as e4xd5; add + for check and # for checkmate.
Promotion: e7-e8=Q (or =R, =B, =N).
Castling: O-O or O-O-O. Source+destination keeps multiple promoted roles identifiable.

WHY RECORD?

A written record helps restore a disturbed selector or position. Both players should agree on the restored state before continuing.

If the city feels uncertain

A BOARD SEAM BINDS

Stop. Slide the panels apart in the board plane, clear debris, inspect for cracks or warping, and reseal straight. Never twist or hammer a key.

A ROLE IS UNCLEAR

Compare height and silhouette: king tallest, then queen, bishop, knight, rook, pawn. Pause play and agree before moving.

A TRAY OR LID BINDS

Lift evenly from supported edges. Do not pry against landmark tops. Remove debris and stop if a part is cracked, warped, or sharp.

A SIDE IS HARD TO TELL

Compare base grammar: River has a raised band and three raised dots; Street has a recessed ring and three recessed slots. Change lighting; do not rely on color.

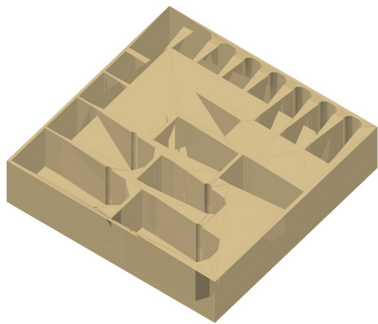
A SELECTOR MOVED

Use the written game record and current legal position to restore the agreed role, then point its mark to that pawn's fixed home edge.

A PIECE IS DAMAGED

Stop using it if sharp or unstable. The second queen may replace a damaged queen, but it does not change the promotion-selector rule.

Return the skyline home



PACK IN THIS ORDER

- Reset every pawn: neutral tablet toward its own home edge.
- Count 17 pieces per side; lay each horizontally in its matching silhouette well.
- Lower River tray into the box, then Street tray, then the four flat board panels.
- Lower the skyline lid vertically onto the rim. Stop if it resists.

CARE

Keep dry and away from heat or open flame. Wipe gently with a soft dry cloth. Do not soak, dishwash, sand, or use solvent. Inspect edges, keys, selectors, and towers before play.

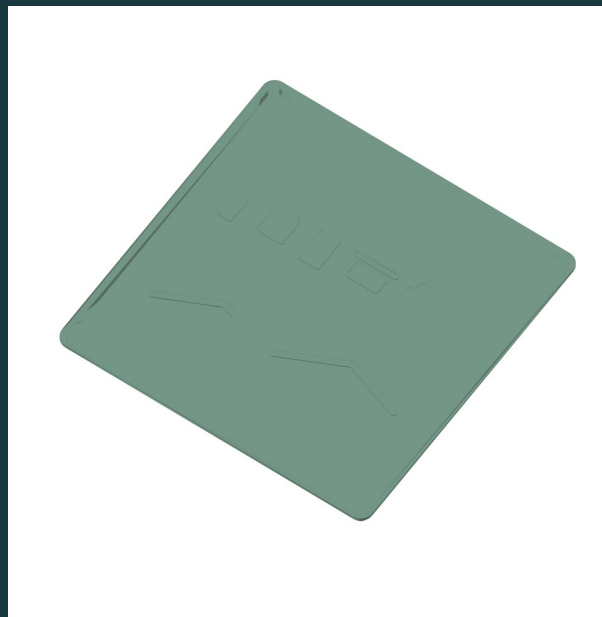
SAFETY

Small parts: choking hazard. Not for children under 3. Use on a stable tabletop with suitable supervision. Stop using any cracked, sharp, loose, or unstable part.

BEFORE EVERY GAME

THE CITY CHECK

- ☐ Board seams seated; a1 dark; near-right corner light
- ☐ River south / rank 1; Street north / rank 8
- ☐ Queens on own colors; River moves first
- ☐ All 16 starting pawns in neutral selector state
- ☐ Spare queens off-board
- ☐ No cracked, sharp, loose, or unstable parts



A KNOWN CLASSIC, HELD AS A LITTLE CITY.