A HOUSE RULEBOOK · SETTLED

Checkers

The rules, written in our own words.

Checkers belongs to nobody, so these rules are ours to write. They are the standard American rules, also played in Britain as draughts. Written by Nine Fathoms for Settled, 2026. Free to print for your own table.

The board and the pieces

Checkers is played by two players on a board of sixty-four squares, eight by eight, in alternating light and dark. Only the dark squares are used. The board is turned so that each player has a dark square in the corner at their left hand.

Each player has twelve pieces of one colour, called men. One player has the dark pieces and the other has the light pieces.

Setting up

Each player places their twelve men on the dark squares of the three rows nearest to them. The two middle rows of the board start empty.

Taking turns

The player with the dark pieces moves first, and then the players take turns, one move each.

Moving

A man moves one square diagonally forward, toward the other player, onto an empty dark square. A man never moves backward.

Jumping

A piece captures by jumping. It jumps diagonally over an enemy piece on the next square onto the empty square just beyond it, and the jumped piece is taken off the board. A man jumps only forward.

After a jump, if the same piece can jump again from where it landed, it must keep jumping in the same turn. A turn of several jumps may change direction from one jump to the next. The turn ends only when that piece has no jump left to make.

Jumping is not optional

If a player can make a jump, they must make a jump on that turn instead of an ordinary move. When more than one jump is possible, the player may choose any of them, even one that captures fewer pieces than another would. Whichever jump is chosen, it must be carried on to the end.

A move that ignores an available jump is not a legal move. It is taken back, and the player makes a jump instead. There is no huffing in the modern rules: the other player does not remove the piece that failed to jump.

Kings

When a man reaches the row furthest from its owner, it becomes a king. The other player crowns it by placing a second piece of the same colour on top of it.

If a man reaches the far row by jumping, its turn ends there, even if it could jump again as a king. It may jump as a king from its next turn on.

A king moves one square diagonally in any direction, forward or backward. A king jumps forward or backward, and may change direction between jumps in the same turn. A king moves only one square at a time unless it is jumping.

Winning and drawing

A player wins when the other player has no pieces left on the board. A player also wins when it is the other player's turn and every piece they have is blocked, so they have no legal move.

A game is drawn when both players agree that neither of them can win.

> Some tables play that a piece which misses a jump is taken away, an old rule called huffing. If your table wants it, agree before you begin: it is not part of the rules above.