

Patolli

The rules below were devised by R. C. Bell in his 1960 book Board and Table Games, from early Spanish accounts. Where his sources failed him, Bell supplied additional rules often borrowed from other games.

1. Patolli is played on a cross-shaped board of sixty squares. Eight of those squares are reduced in size by wedge-shaped markings between them. Eight more at the ends of the cross are rounded.
2. When two play, each player has six pieces. When three play, there are five pieces each, and when four play, each has four pieces. The pieces for each player are distinguished by colour. The players begin the game with pieces in hand, the board being empty.
3. Five beans control the movement of the pieces. They are marked on one side and blank on the other. Coins or casting sticks can be used as substitutes or one can use the cutout ones provided with this pdf. The score of the beans when thrown is one point per marked side showing, or ten points if all five marked sides are shown. When no marked sides show, there is no score.
4. Each player puts an agreed stake into the pot. A penalty amount is also agreed at this stage, payed from one player to another upon certain pitfalls throughout the game.
5. The beans are thrown by each player at the start of the game. The player with the highest throw begins, throwing the beans again as in rule 6.
6. The player whose turn it is throws the beans. If there is no score, the turn is over.
7. On his first turn the player enters a new piece onto the board from the central square closest to him, moving around the track by the number of spaces according to his score. He decides the direction of movement for his own pieces, clockwise or anti-clockwise; he will maintain this direction throughout the game, but each player makes his own choice. Pieces may therefore run in the same or opposite directions during the game.
8. Once a player has one piece on the board, others may be entered only on a throw of 1. A throw of 1 does not necessitate the entry of a new piece, however; the player may opt to move a piece already on the board instead.
9. When a player has more than one piece in play, the player may choose to move any one piece in accordance with the throw.
10. A piece may not land on an occupied square. If it would do so, then it cannot be moved and another piece must be moved instead. It is possible that no piece can be moved by a particular throw.
11. If the player can move, then he must move, even if all available moves are detrimental.
12. If the player cannot move, then he must pay a penalty into the pool.

13. A player landing in one of the reduced squares beside the wedge markings must pay a penalty of double the agreed amount to his opponent(s).

14. A player landing in one of the rounded squares at the end of the cross receives another turn.

15. After having made a complete circuit of the board, a piece is borne off on reaching the last square (i.e. the one before the player's starting square) by an exact throw. On bearing off a piece, the player receives a penalty his opponents.

16. The player who has borne off the last of his pieces wins the game and the contents of the pot.

Bell suggests that a four player game might be played in partnerships. The players opposite one another form a team, and it is the team who first bears off all pieces that wins the game, not the individual.

If players do not wish to gamble, then the rules about the pot and forfeits can be ignored. Landing on a square next to a wedge shaped marking as in rule 13 would instead incur another penalty. The simplest suggestion is that the player should miss a turn. Another reflects the double penalty: the affected piece must move backwards on the following turn.

Since one cannot land on an occupied square, all pieces are safe from capture. However, this makes blocking an interesting tactic. Though it is usually impossible to block an opponent's progress entirely, a row of pieces on consecutive squares will hamper an opponent's progress. The penalty squares can help in blocking.

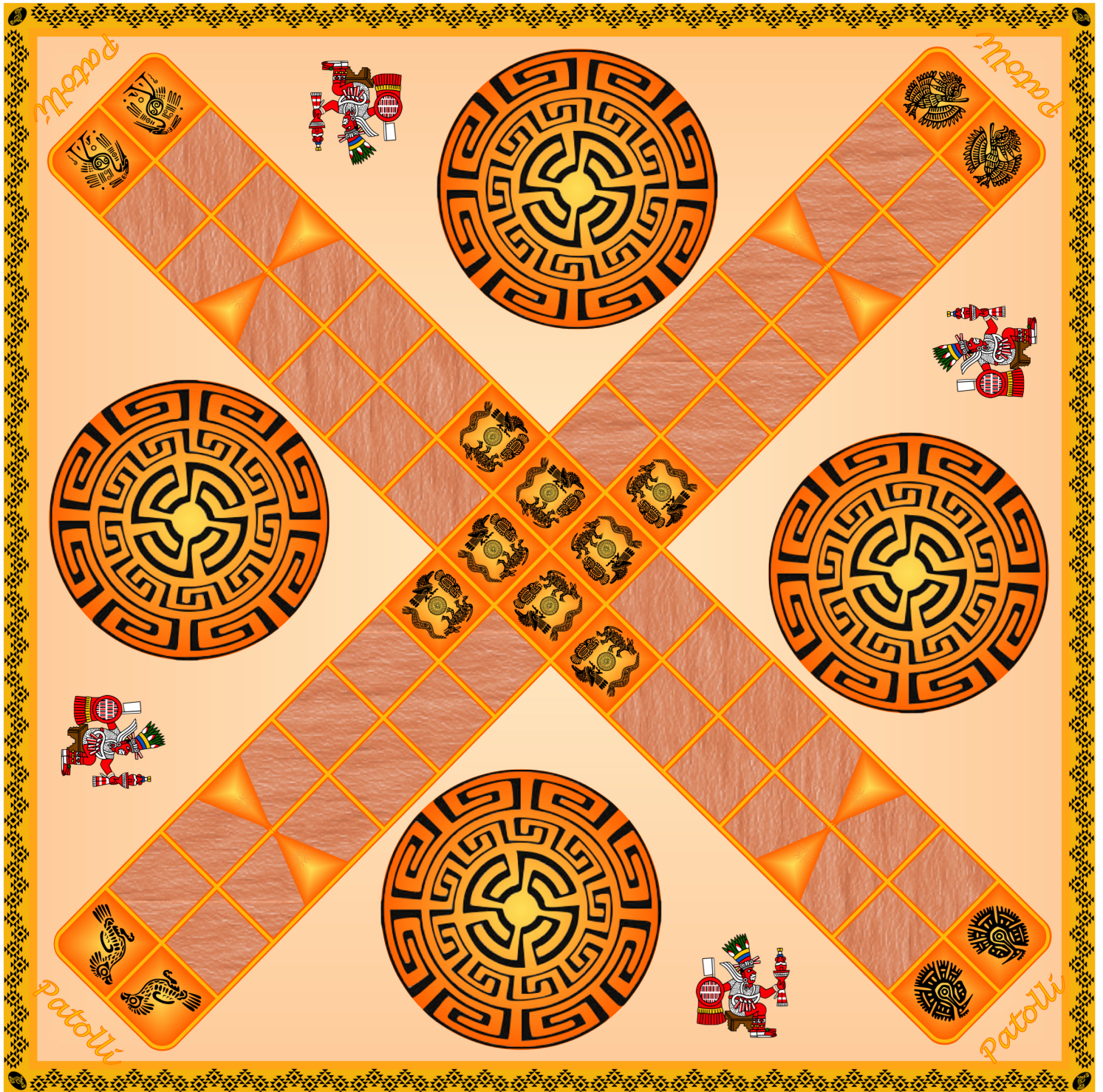
The most common throws are 2 and 3, each occurring in five throws out of every sixteen. 1 and 4 each occur half as often. 10 occurs in one throw out of every 32, as does the no score. These numbers should be taken into account when a player uses the blocking tactic, or when pieces approach the end of their journey.

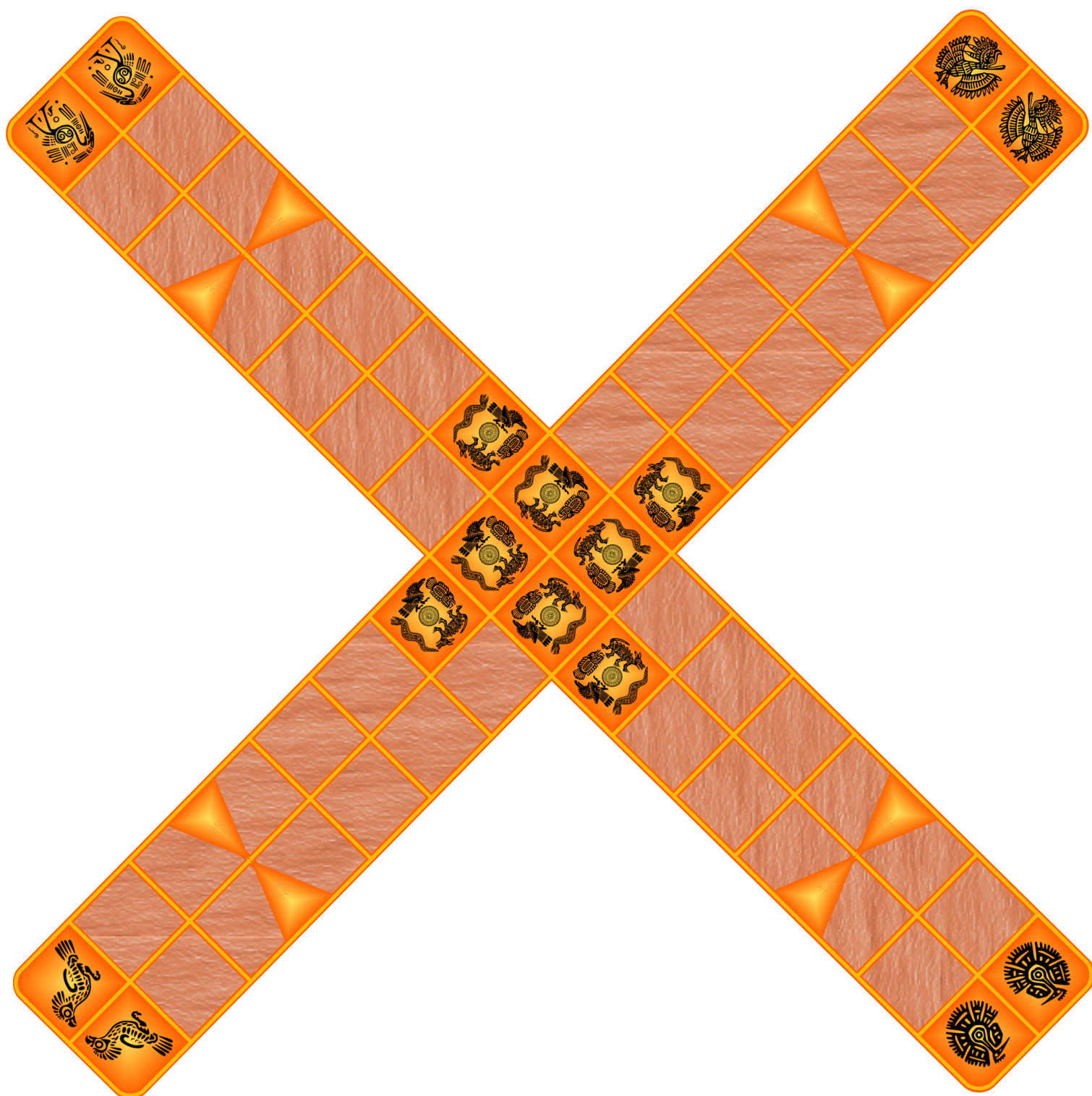
Page 3. Printable Patolli Board Square.

Page 4. Printable Patolli Board X.

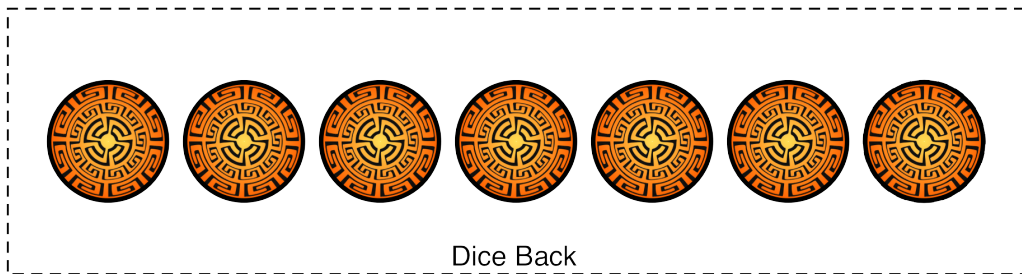
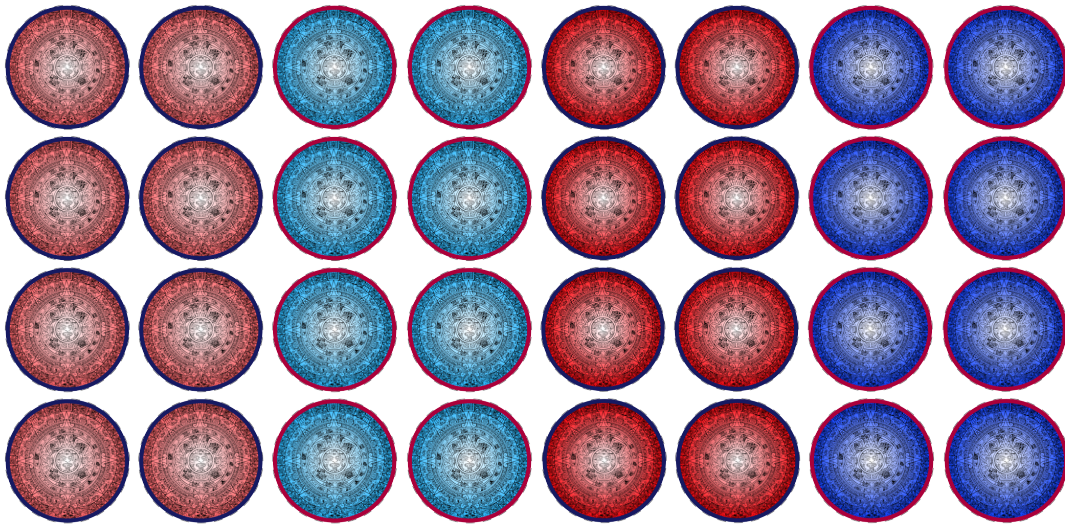
Page 5. Printable Counters, Disc Dice and Spinner Dice. Stick to card and cut out.

Page 6. Printable Casting Sticks back and front. Stick to card and cut out.

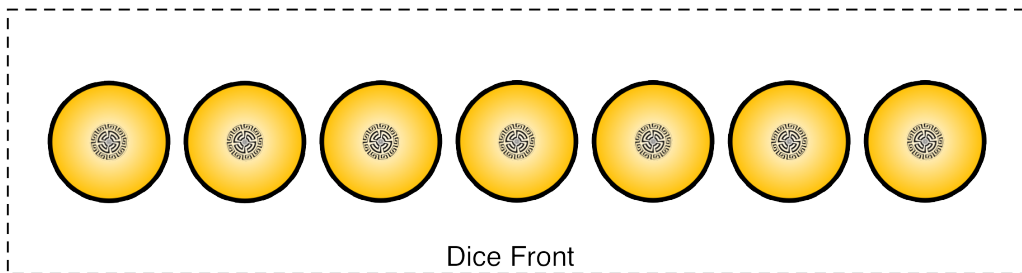




Printable Counters



Dice Back



Dice Front

Printable Spinner Dice



Casting Sticks Back



Casting Sticks Front

