

Chile: Corre, Corre la Guaraca

The fun-to-say game name translates to "Run, Run, *la Guaraca*." Chilean kids typically speak Spanish, but *Guaraca* is actually a nonsense word.

Players: Five or more, ages 5 and up

What You'll Need: A handkerchief.

How to Play: Players sit in a circle while a runner jogs around the outer rim with a handkerchief. The seated kids are not allowed to watch. They sing "*Corre, Corre, la Guaraca* who looks back will be bopped on his head!" Trying not to be felt, the runner drops the handkerchief on a child's back and runs. If he makes it around the circle before the player realizes that it's on her back, the seated player is out. If the seated player catches on, she must tag the runner. If she succeeds, the runner is out. If she fails to tag him, they play again, but this time player 2 is the runner.

Greece: Statues

American children may not be familiar with the classic *Discus Thrower*, but Greek children have access to some amazing marble statues that date to ancient times. After a trip to the museum, it's only natural that they would incorporate some of these awe-inspiring characters into an imaginative game.

Players: Four or more; ages 4 and up

How to Play: Choose one player to be "It" and have her stand, eyes covered, in the center of a large, open playing field. She starts to

count, at least to 10, but she can go higher. The point is that there's no set ending number; only "It" knows when she'll stop and open her eyes. While "It" is counting, the others scatter around, never sure when she'll yell "*Agalmata!*" (That's "statue" in Greek. Tell kids to yell it to be authentic, or to just say "statue" if that's easier.) On this cue, players freeze, taking on poses that mimic famous statues. They can pull from any statue they've ever seen a photo of—a javelin thrower, *The Thinker*, even the Statue of Liberty. Kids are allowed to use found items, such as sticks, a ball, or a Frisbee, to add a touch of realism. "It" tags any statues that are moving (they're out), then tries to make the steady ones laugh or move. The last player remaining composed is the winner and becomes the new "It." This game is great for practicing balance.

Pakistan: Ounch Neech

Many cities in Pakistan are bustling places, full of vivid colors and lots of people. Given the chance to break out of the crowd, Pakistani children love to laugh and shout their way through a rousing game of tag.

Players: Four or more; ages 5 and up

What You'll Need: An outdoor space with lots of obstacles like tree stumps, a slide, a swing, rocks, or sturdy benches.

How to Play: The game begins with one child as "It." He chooses either *ouch* (up) or *neech* (down). If he chooses *neech*, then the ground is not safe; runners can be tagged out unless they are *ouch*, up on something like a stump or a rock. The opposite is true as well: If "It" chooses *ouch*, then the ground is safe so everyone remains on terra firma. Of course, children quickly realize that it's boring to stay only in the safe zones. The first person tagged becomes "It" for the

next round of the game. This popular kids game is great fun, great exercise, and a great way to burn energy!

Ghana: Pilolo

In rural parts of Ghana, in West Africa, children's choice of toys is quite limited, but they find plenty of ways to have fun.

Players: Six; ages 4 and up

What You'll Need: Sticks and stones—or if that would be confusing for kids when playing in a backyard packed with them, you can use one penny for each player.

How to Play: Designate a leader and a timekeeper, and determine a finish line. The leader secretly hides the pennies while the other players have their back turned. The timekeeper waits at the finish line to judge which player is first. When the leader says "*Pilolo!*" (which means "time to search for") the timekeeper starts the watch and players race to be the first to find a penny and take it across the finish line. The winner is awarded one point. To play again, gather the pennies and designate a new timekeeper and leader. The game is repeated as many times as energy allows; the player with the most points wins.

Republic of Korea: Kongki Noli

Korea is a modern nation today, but with its history dating back more than 5,000 years, the country also retains a great deal of traditional culture. Korean children celebrate many festivals throughout the year, with colorful costumes and special foods.

Players: Two or more; ages 5 and up

What You'll Need: Five small stones.

How to Play: This traditional and popular kids game is similar to the American "jacks." Player 1 scatters five small stones on the ground. He then picks one up and tosses it in the air and quickly tries to pick up another stone in time to catch the one he just threw. Now he has two in his hand; he throws one of the stones up in the air, and picks up a third. This goes on until he has all the stones in his hand. In the second round, the player picks up two stones every time he throws one up. In the third round, he picks up three; four in the fourth, and the fifth time he picks them all up. For the game's last step, the player tosses all the stones in the air and tries to catch them on the back of his hand. Then he tosses them up again and tries to catch them in his palm. The number he catches is that player's score. If he fails to catch them all, it's the next person's turn.

United Kingdom: Pass the Parcel

A popular party game in the United Kingdom, Pass the Parcel may have been played during the medieval era. During that time, a special gift would have been wrapped in cloth and pretty ribbons. Today, a package covered in layers of colorful paper is passed from child to child to the sound of music.

Players: Five or more; ages 4 and up

What You'll Need: A white elephant "surprise gift." Wrapping paper (or newspaper) and tape. Music.

How to Play: Before the game begins, Mom or Dad will need to make the parcel by wrapping something fun or silly they have around the house in layer upon layer of paper. Using a different pattern or color for each layer will make it easier for kids to tell them apart. To play, ask the kids to sit or stand in a circle, then turn on the music. Players

pass the parcel around until an adult stops the music. The player who is holding the gift removes one layer of wrapping paper. Start up the music again and continue playing until the final layer of paper is removed. The child who "wins" the prize can keep it or not. This is also a fun game for children to play at birthday parties, but an adult ensures that the child celebrating opens a nice present.

Sumatra: Semut, Orang, Gajah

The large Indonesian island is home to the Sumatran elephant, which has made its way into this popular kids game, similar to the American "Rock, Paper, Scissors." Children play *Semut, Orang, Gajah* to determine the first player in a game or simply for fun.

Players: Two; ages 3 and up

How to Play: Players pump their fist up and down to the count of three. On four, they straighten their arm and give one of three signs: Pinky out is "ant" (*semut*), pointer finger out is "man" (*orang*), and thumb out is "elephant" (*gajah*). The elephant beats man because it is stronger; man defeats the ant because he can step on it and squash it. And the ant? It can crawl into the elephant's ear, bite him, and drive him crazy, so the ant beats the elephant. If players make the same signs, they go again. Two out of three wins.

Australia: Skippyroo Kangaroo

Australia is both a country and a continent. It's a vast, mysterious, and diverse land filled with wonderfully wacky wildlife like the kangaroo, which gives this popular kids game its name.

Players: As many as 25 or as few as six; ages 3 and up

How to Play: This game is played in many Australian preschools and kindergartens to help teach children their classmates' names as well

as good listening skills. Kids sit in a circle and an adult asks one child to go into the middle—she is the first Skippyroo, the kangaroo.

Skippyroo crouches forward on the floor with her eyes closed while the kids in the circle chant: "Skippyroo, kangaroo, dozing in the midday sun, comes a hunter, run, run, run." At this stage an adult points to a child sitting in the circle, who then touches Skippyroo's shoulder and says, "Guess who's caught you just for fun?" and waits. Skippyroo tries to name the owner of the voice and if she guesses correctly, swaps places. The game begins again and continues until all the kids have had a chance to be Skippyroo.

Israel: Go-Go-Im

During midsummer, when fresh apricots are in season, Israeli kids play games with the small, smooth pits known as *go-gos*, which are plentiful and perfect for tossing. They tote customized boxes and challenge friends to toss pits for points.

Players: Two or more; ages 5 and up

What You'll Need: 100 (or fewer, but at least 20) apricot pits per each player. If these aren't available use acorns or small stones. A shoe box for each player.

How to Play: With a grown-up's help, players must first prepare their boxes by cutting six holes of varying sizes along the lid's top. The smallest hole should be just slightly bigger than the *go-go*, the others incrementally larger. Each hole is given a point value, usually 1 (for the largest opening), 2, 5, 10, 50, and 100 (for the most challenging hole). The game begins like this: Standing about five feet away (or closer if that's too difficult), a player tries to throw one of his pits into another player's box. If he makes it, the point value of the hole determines how many *go-gos* that player must give him. If he misses

the box entirely, he loses his one *go-go*. So kids don't have to lug around buckets of pits or stones (on the chance someone gets one in the toughest hole, he'd have to pony up 100!), feel free to lower the point values on the smaller holes. Kids can also personalize their shoe box by decorating it if desired.

Armenia: Egg Jousting

For American kids, egg hunts are a big part of the [Easter celebration](#). Armenian children have a different tradition that pits hard-boiled egg against egg in a silly jousting competition.

Players: Two; ages 3 and up

What You'll Need: A colored hard-boiled egg for each player.

How to Play: Facing each other, the two players gently tap the small end of their eggs together until the end of one egg cracks. Next, they joust with the large end of their eggs. Hard-boiled eggs can withstand three to four "hits" before cracking, and maybe more depending on the tapping force. Mom testers say the two eggs do not crack at the same time; in all cases, only one of the eggs was destroyed. The cracked egg is given to the winner as a trophy, then you can [make egg salad sandwiches for lunch!](#)