

Roman Games

Here's a selection of games which children played. Players use nuts to roll, throw and count or win nuts. Instead of nuts marbles, wooden balls, counters could be used. Here are some counters from the Roman Baths collection.



Delta Game

2 or more players

Mark out a large triangle on the ground, subdivide it into 10 fields, starting with a 1 at the bottom and a 10 at the top. (Use Roman numerals!) Draw a line 2-3 metres from the triangle and the competitors throw from this either nuts or small blocks (each player can have his/her own colour) into the triangle. Whoever has the most points is the winner. Note the points scored and play over several rounds.

Rolling walnuts

2 or more players

Each competitor has 10 walnuts, in turn they roll 1 nut down a slope. If one player's nut hits another it becomes his/hers. If a player has lost all nuts he/she is eliminated. The winner has the most nuts.

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Orca Game – Shark

2 or more players

Each competitor is given 5 nuts (hazelnuts preferably). In turn they try to throw their nuts into the ORCA from a distance of 2 metres. The winner has succeeded most often. Play over several rounds. There is no indication of the size of the orca so we will use a bucket!

Castellatae

2 or more players

At a distance of 2, 5 and 7 metres five small clusters of nuts are erected. (3 walnuts and 1 on top). Each player has 5 nuts and tries with five throws to disturb the nut clusters. The units he/she has managed to hit are kept. After that the clusters are reconstructed from a 'large' pot and the next player tries in turn. Whoever has the most nuts after 5 rounds is the winner.

Dux

The Romans played board games next to the Great Bath when they were relaxing after they had been swimming. One of them was called Dux. Here is how you played it. Enjoy the game! The Roman game of Dux is a little like Draughts. They used an 8 x 8 grid and 16 counters, 8 white, 8 black. Each player has one counter, the dux. Players take turns to put their tiles on the squares two at a time. The Dux, or the Leader is last one on the board. Players take turns to move one place forwards, backwards or sideways. If you sandwich your opponent's tile between two of your own their tile is captured and removed. You then get an extra go. The dux is captured in the same way the dux can jump over a tile on to an empty square.

If your opponent's tile is trapped between your dux and one of your tiles their tile is captured. During the game you must move your tile if it is possible to do so – even if it means being captured. The winner is the first to capture all the other player's counters and dux.

Dux Board

Use buttons or coins to make the counters! Then play.

