

MAKE & CREATE

# Merelles or 9 Men's Morris

## Did you know...

The name merelles comes from an old French word 'merel', meaning counter or token. The game's also known as Nine Men's Morris due to the 9 counters each player uses.

Evidence found by archaeologists suggests that people often used whatever they had lying around to make their games, including pieces of broken pottery or pebbles for counters and boards scratched into stone, wood, or the ground.

**Make a merelles board game set and use all your cunning to beat your opponent!**

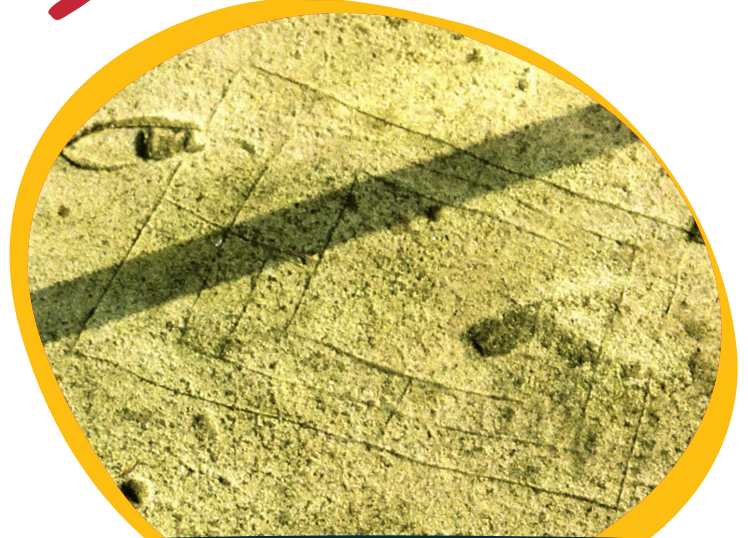
**This two-player game dates from at least the Roman times. We know merelles was played by monks in abbeys across Scotland more than 600 years ago.**



This homemade merelles set uses wood and different coloured pebbles.



This merelles board was found during excavations of Jedburgh Abbey in 1984.

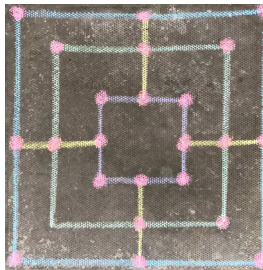
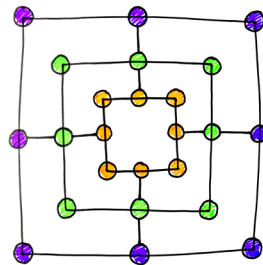


This merelles board was discovered carved into stone at Dryburgh Abbey.

## Step 1 Make your board

Draw out a merelles board (or you can print off the template).

Here are some examples we drew – one with pen on paper and one with chalk on the pavement. You don't need to use colours, but they can make your board look more fun!



## Step 2 Pick your counters

You will need 18 counters in total – two sets of 9 that look different.

In the past, people might have used pebbles or coins. You could get crafty and colour pebbles with permanent markers or nail varnish – or if you use something edible you can eat your opponent's counters if you win!



## How to play merelles

### Aim of the game:

To form “mills”, rows of three counters.

### Set up:

Each player starts with a set of nine counters that are different to their opponent's.

### When it's your turn:

Place a counter on one of the circles (junctions) on the board. Each player will spend their first 9 turns placing a counter onto the board.

### Once all the pieces are on the board:

You can now move one of your counters around the board during your go – into any empty neighbouring junction connected by a line.

### When you form a 'mill':

You can remove one of your opponent's counters as a reward for forming a mill (a row of three counters). Your opponent's individual counters (ones not in a mill) must be removed first; if there aren't any left to remove, you can remove a counter from your opponent's mill.

### How you win:

When your opponent has only two counters left, and therefore can't form a mill.

Merelles or  
9 Mens Morris  
Template

