

# Dish Game

## Other Names:

*Game of Dish, Peach Stone Game, Peach Pit Game, Plum Pit Game, Pit Game, Seed Game*



## Materials:

- A shallow dish or basket
- 5-7 seeds, flattened plum pits, small flat stones, or similar item
- Counters such as sticks, seeds, or similar token for scoring.

## Origins:

This game was played by longhouse dwelling peoples such as the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations), Wendat, and Tionontati (Petun). Jesuit missionaries witnessed gameplay and documented a brief description of the game.

Jesuit Jean de Brebeuf wrote in 1636: “This game is purely one of chance: they play it with six plum-stones, white on one side and black on the other, in a dish that they strike very roughly against the ground, so that the plum-stones leap up and fall, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other. The game consists in throwing all white or all black; they usually play Village against Village.”

This game was played during celebrations, parties, feasts, and healing rituals. While it may seem like a simple game of chance, it seems to have spiritual meaning and significance for the people who played it historically. At the very least, it brought communities together for fun and games.

Today, it is a good game for teaching children how to count and add.

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## Historical Gameplay

Historically, there were likely slight regional differences to gameplay or different ways of playing and rules that were agreed upon prior to a match. It seems it was common to play with 5-7 plum pits in a dish, each coloured white on one side and black on the other. The goal was to toss the pits and have them land all on one colour and score a point. Games likely took place in several rounds with players taking turns. Score may have been kept using seeds or sticks as counters.

## Gameplay Adaptations

You can experiment with different ways of playing the game, but here are a few options:

1. Before play, decide how many turns you will take and who will go first. Place all game pieces unmarked (white) side up. One player holds the sides of the basket and carefully tosses the pieces, trying to flip over all the pieces and have them land on the marked (black) side. The player counts up the number of overturned pieces and records their total. If any of the pieces fall out of the dish, the player loses that turn and gets no score. After both players have taken the number of turns agreed upon, they add up their scores. The player with the highest score wins.
2. Players decide who will go first, how many rounds they will play, and how many game pieces they will use (5, 6, or 7). Players take turns tossing the game pieces. A player's turn ends when they tap the dish down on the ground or table. If pieces fall out during their turn, the player loses their turn and scores no points. Otherwise, the player looks at the combination of pieces and records their score. Play continues for the agreed number of rounds. Scores are then totaled and the player with the highest score wins. Scoring suggestion on next page.



# Dish Game

## Scoring (5 Piece Game):

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| Lose or drop pieces | = 0 points |
| 2 black and 3 white | = 1 point  |
| 3 black and 2 white | = 1 point  |
| 1 black and 4 white | = 2 points |
| 4 black and 1 white | = 2 points |
| All one colour      | = 5 points |

## Scoring (7 Piece Game):

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| Lose or drop pieces | = 0 points |
| 3 black and 3 white | = 1 point  |
| 2 black and 4 white | = 2 points |
| 4 black and 2 white | = 2 points |
| 1 black and 5 white | = 3 points |
| 5 black and 1 white | = 3 points |
| All one colour      | = 5 points |

## Scoring (6 Piece Game):

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| Lose or drop pieces | = 0 points |
| 3 black and 4 white | = 1 point  |
| 4 black and 3 white | = 1 point  |
| 2 black and 5 white | = 2 points |
| 5 black and 2 white | = 2 points |
| 1 black and 6 white | = 3 points |
| 6 white and 1 black | = 3 points |
| All one colour      | = 5 points |

