



Dara is a traditional game from West Africa that was passed down through oral tradition and played by the Dakarkari people of Nigeria.

Dara is a game of planning and foresight, and its essence lies in its deceptive simplicity. While its exact beginnings remain elusive, historians suggest it holds ties to other ancient positional games like Nine Men's Morris.

As we play this game, we imagine two local tribe leaders summoning animal spirits to gain blessings for their families.

If you are a fan of Nine Men's Morris, we think you'll love Dara! For us, the stricter "Summoning" phase and the special board layout make this more strategic than other, more widely known positional games.

Krisztina & Tamas, Lemery Games

Under a vibrant twilight sky stretches the parched savanna. Two tribes gather—their fates bound to a grid etched into the earth. They summon the spirits of lion and elephant. As they summon lines of three, the powers of the spirits grow, granting blessings for the summoning tribe and disrupting the fortunes of their rivals.

Which family will harness these mighty spirits and secure their tribe's future? The game of Dara will decide!

- Narrative based on the imagination of Lemery Games -

Dara is a traditional 2-player positional game from Nigeria. Each player controls a set of 12 matching animal spirits.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

Capture at least 10 of your opponent's pieces by forming lines of 3 of your own animal spirits.

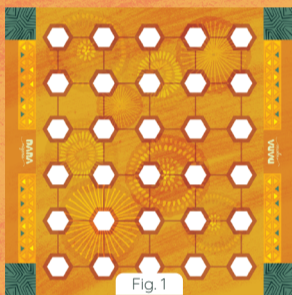
GAME CONTENTS

- 1 travel bag
- 1 game mat
- 12 yellow Lion pieces
- 12 green Elephant pieces
- 1 rulebook



SETUP

1. Lay out the game mat with the 5x6 side up (Fig. 1).
2. Give each player 12 matching pieces.

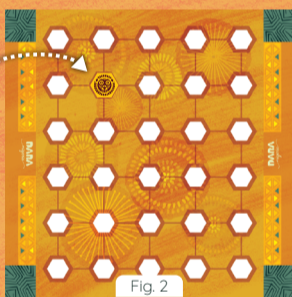


HOW TO PLAY

Dara is played over 2 phases, described below.

I. Summoning Phase

The Lion player goes first, placing 1 Lion onto an available space on the board (Fig. 2). Then players alternate turns placing their own pieces.*



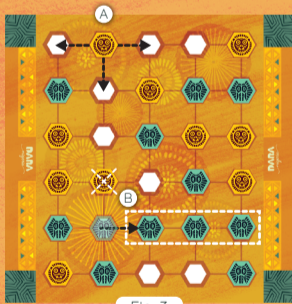
II. Movement Phase

Once all 24 pieces have been placed, the Movement Phase begins. On your turn, you now have the choice to EITHER:

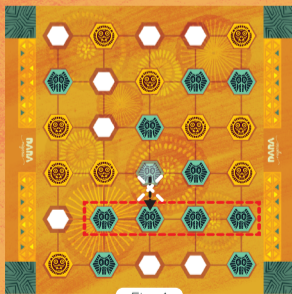
- **Move** 1 of your pieces orthogonally (vertically or horizontally) to an adjacent empty space (Fig. 3A).

OR

- **Capture** an opponent's piece by moving to an available space where your own pieces form an orthogonal line of 3* (without any gaps). If you succeed, capture any 1 opponent piece that is not already part of a three-in-a-line (Fig. 3B). Place that piece in front of you. If you create more than 1 three-in-a-line combinations in 1 move, you may still only capture 1 piece.



*A three-in-a-line formation does not entitle you to capture in the Summoning Phase. Also, at no point in the game can lines of more than 3 pieces be created (including both the Summoning and Movement Phases). See Fig. 4.



GAME END

There are 2 ways for the game to end:

1. If you have captured 10 or more pieces, you immediately win the game (as the other player is no longer able to create a three-in-a-line).
2. If you trap all of your opponent's pieces (i.e., the other player is unable to move any pieces on their turn), you immediately win the game.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- 💡 In the Summoning Phase, try to place your pieces in a way that will allow you to create three-in-a-line formations in 1 move after the Movement Phase begins.
- 💡 Avoid trapping your pieces against the edges or in corners, where their movement is limited.
- 💡 Keep your pieces close to each other, so you have more options to create three-in-a-line formations.

GAME VARIANTS

Dala

The Dala variant is particularly popular among the Baggara tribes of Sudan. Traditionally, Dala was played on a raised platform of soft earth, with lines etched into it and marked by holes known as "Nugar." Each player utilized 12 sharpened sticks, inserted into these holes during the game. To distinguish their sets, one player's sticks had the bark removed.

You can play Dala using the same rules as Dara, with these modifications:

1. Lay out the game mat with the 6x6 board side up (Fig. 4).
2. During the Summoning Phase, the four central squares must be filled first.
3. Three-in-a-line formations created in the Summoning Phase DO, immediately, entitle players to capture.
4. A three-in-a-line formation allows the active player to capture an enemy piece from ANYWHERE on the board. (Even from a three-in-a-line formation.)
5. Creating rows of 4 or more pieces is allowed in both phases.
6. Leaving behind a three-in-a-line formation (by moving away from a row or column of 4 or more adjacent pieces of matching color) allows the active player to capture.

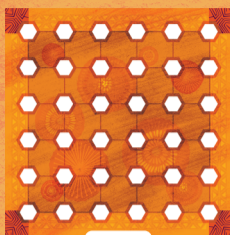


Fig. 4

MINI EXPANSIONS

Heroes of Africa

Coming soon..

Challenges of Africa

Coming soon..

The rules of Dara described in the LUDOS collection were inspired by the 1969 book Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations by R. C. Bell.

Publisher: Lemery Games
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