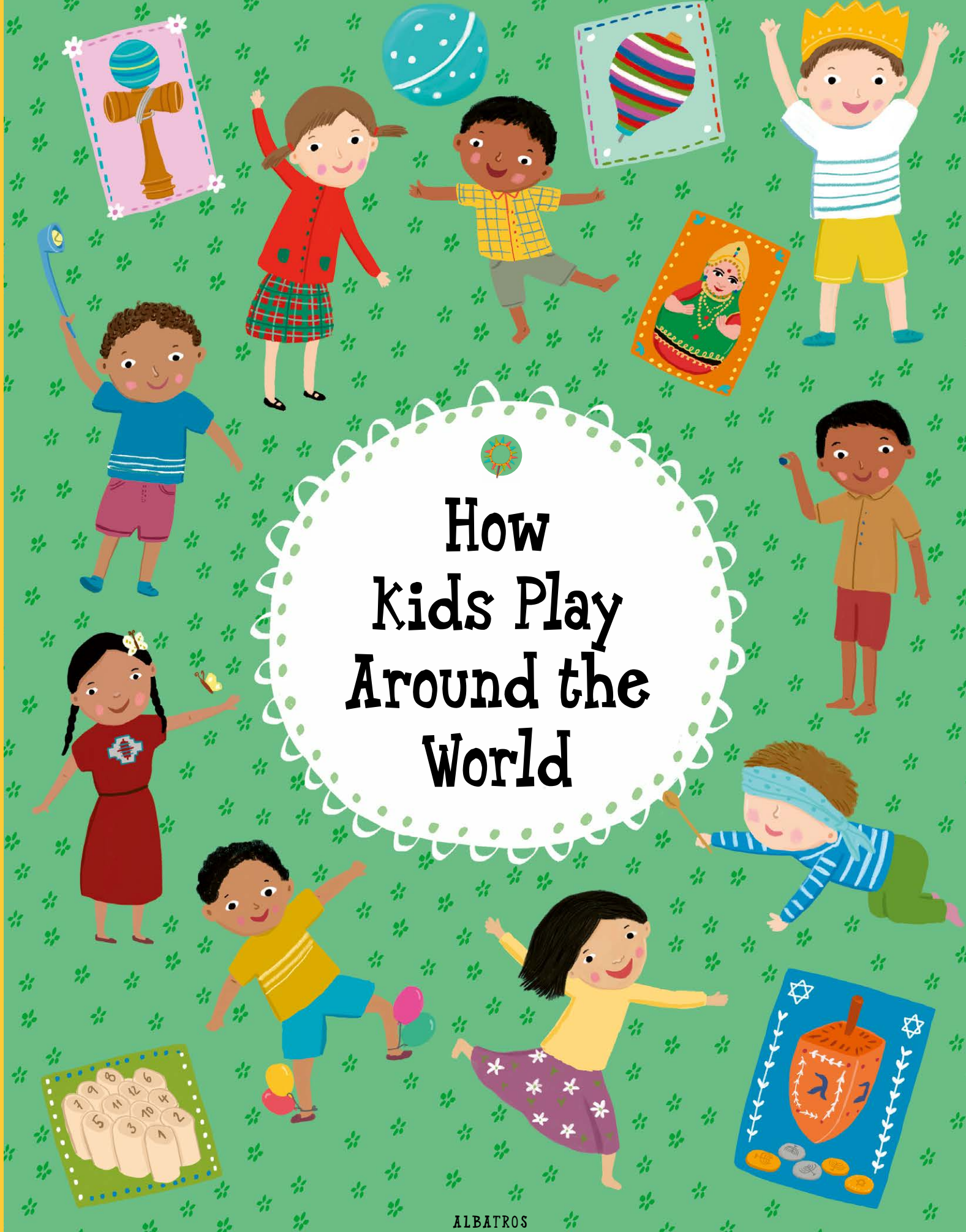




ŠTĚPÁNKA SEKANINOVÁ • MICHAELA BERGMANNOVÁ

How Kids Play Around the World

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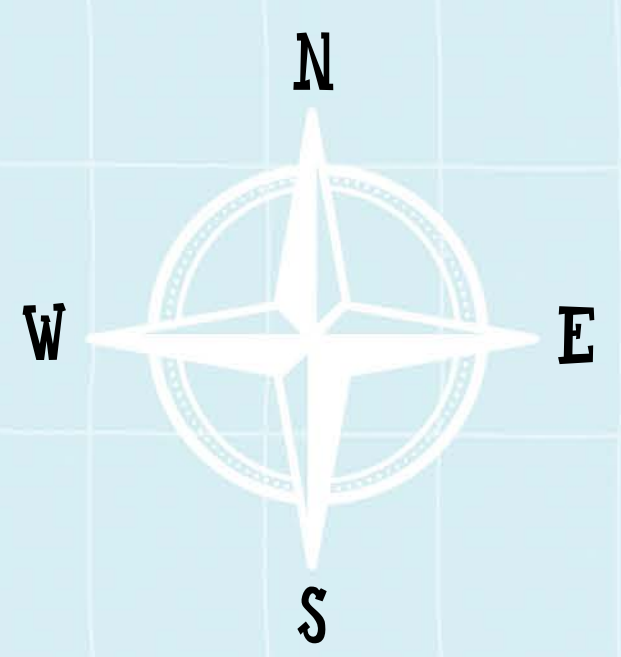
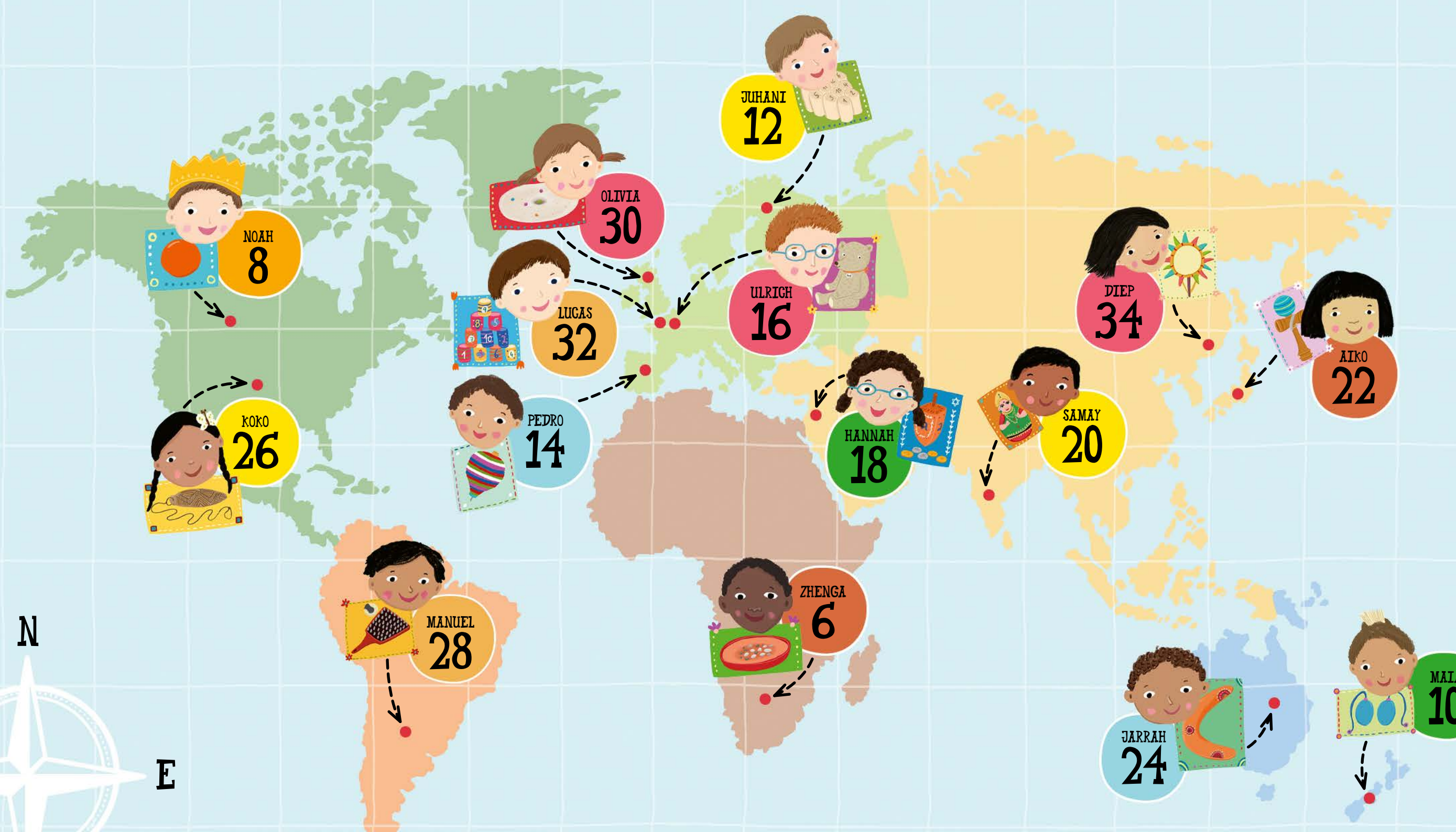
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How Kids Play Around the World



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Fun and play go hand in hand with childhood

How many kids do you know who don't like to play? None, right? I would venture to say that enjoying playing—with toys, as well as games with friends—comes naturally to all kids. This can be said of ancient times, the recent past, and the present day. Archeological excavation and historical sources have proven beyond a doubt that people have played since the dawn of time. Quite simply, playing is in our blood.



Hooray! I'm the winner!



Playing is fun!

Games from all over the world

Kids all over the world have their games. Some games and activities—such as skipping rope, shooting marbles, and spinning wooden tops—occur practically everywhere. Others are common only in some areas. In places where an ability to hunt was really important, for instance, it makes sense that kid's games focused on improving fitness, accuracy, and attention, thus making good hunters of them. Elsewhere, games were connected with religious ritual, tradition, and the beliefs and mythology of our ancestors. The world of child's play is incredibly diverse. Join us—won't you?—as we scoot around the world to take a look at it.

I can crawl just like a crab!



Learning through play

You may be surprised to learn that play is more than just fun: it is also extremely important. Indeed, it has been proven that playing is essential to a kid's development. Play teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. Games help us solve all kinds of problems that will crop up in our lives. So, carry on playing! You will be learning without realizing it. That's right—when you are being silly and enjoying yourself, you are actually developing. Great, isn't it?

Can you catch me?



Look what I can do!



I'll be the one who jumps there first!



I'm looking for chocolate!



African Games

HI! MY NAME'S **ZHENGA**, AND I COME FROM SUNNY **AFRICA**, A CONTINENT OF GREAT NATURAL BEAUTY AND MANY MAGNIFICENT ANIMALS. I LOVE ANIMALS. WHEN I GROW UP, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE CARE OF THEM. LIKE EVERY CHILD, I ENJOY PLAYING WITH MY FRIENDS. OUR TRADITIONAL GAMES ARE GREAT. COME ALONG AND SEE FOR YOURSELF.

1 Ampe

One of my favorite games is Ampe. Two kids, one of them the leader, face each other. As they jump up together, they clap and thrust one foot forward. If the leader and their opponent have the same foot forward, the leader wins the point. If the feet are different, the opponent becomes the leader.

2 Spectators of Ampe

The ancient entertainment of Ampe originated in the West African country of Ghana. In the distant past, it was played mainly by adults. Spectators from neighboring villages would gather to watch Ampe tournaments lasting several days. Successful competitors were regarded as stars in their locales.

3 Kutoda

A game called Kudoda, from Zimbabwe, demands speed, quick reflexes, and deft fingers. A group of friends sit around a bowl filled with marbles (or pebbles). The first player takes a marble and tosses it into the air. Before it drops, they try to collect as many marbles as they can, using only one hand.



10 Skipping rope has a long history

From drawings found in tombs from Ancient Egypt, we know that skipping rope has been popular entertainment for many centuries. At first, only men enjoyed this pastime, but women and girls soon joined in.

9 Tinko tinko

Tinko Tinko is a great Nigerian game that requires a partner, not an opponent. The players sing "Tinko Tinko" as they clap and touch palms. As the game goes on, the clapping and palm-touching speeds up. The game ends when one of the players mixes up the actions.

8 Skipping rope

Skipping rope is one of our favorite games, even though it makes us sweat. The best skipping is when two friends face each other, each turning one end of the rope as they wait for the right moment to jump over it. Sometimes we compete—the winner is the one who makes the most jumps.



7 Military exercises

Tug of War was popular in Ancient Egypt, Cambodia, India, Greece, and China too. I even heard about a Chinese emperor who used this game to train his soldiers.

6 Tug of War

Tug of War, another of our traditional games, strengthens the muscles. Two teams, each with a leader, tug on opposite ends of a rope. The team that succeeds in pulling the opponent toward them is named the winner.



4 Nyama, Nyama

One of my favorite games is Nyama, from Kenya. It needs at least three players. The player appointed as the leader shouts the name of an animal. If this animal is a carnivore, the other players jump up. If it's a herbivore, the players stay grounded. They soon may become so confused that they wrongly jump up to greet the herbivorous antelope.

5 Soccer - what a game!

Everyone, boys and girls alike, loves playing soccer. Tell me something I don't know, you say. We make our own soccer balls, using fabrics, old stockings, string, and various packing materials. A ball like this is more fun than one from the store, believe me.



North American Games

HI! MY NAME'S **NOAH**. I WAS BORN HERE IN THE **USA**. JUST LIKE MY PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AND EVEN GREAT-GRANDPARENTS. ALTHOUGH I LIVE IN THE MODERN WORLD, TO TELL THE TRUTH I'M HAPPIEST WHEN MY FRIENDS AND I PUT DOWN OUR CELLPHONES, FORGET ABOUT COMPUTERS, AND THROW OURSELVES INTO OUTDOOR GAMES. THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN REAL-WORLD FUN!

1 King of the Hill

I *never* get tired of this game. Want to try it? Just find an elevated place, like a hill or a pile, and stand on it, along with three other players. A fourth will try to push you from the hill and take your place up there. I'm unbeatable at this game—no one has ever pushed me from the hill. I'm the King of the Hill!



HEY, I'M
NOAH

10 Marco Polo

Many of our games take place in swimming pools. Marco Polo, named after the famous medieval explorer, is a fun water game. One player closes their eyes and calls out, "Marco." The others all reply, "Polo," and try to stay out of the way as the caller swims towards their voices to catch one of them.

9 The Floor is Lava

Quite simply, we pretend that the floor is made of lava, causing us to move from one point to the next without touching the ground. *Help, I'm falling!* When I fall, I'm out of the game.



8 Duck, Duck, Goose

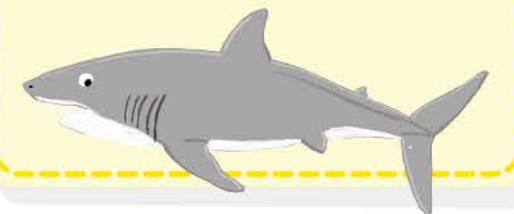
This game is from our preschool years. Everyone sits in a circle while the picker walks around, tapping each of us on the shoulder and calling us "duck"—until finally they call one of us "goose." The goose now chases the picker around the circle, trying to reach the vacant space before the picker does.

7 Capture the Flag

I love this game! It is played by two teams divided into two territories. Each flag is planted in the opponent's territory, and each team must try to get their flag and return it to their own base without getting caught.

6 Sharks and Minnows

This is a classic pool chase. By its name, it should be clear who chases who. Pursued by the shark, the minnows try to get from one end of the pool to the other. The minnow who gets caught becomes the shark. Thanks to this game, I've learned to swim like a fish!



2 Hula-Hooping

Twirling a hoop around your waist is fun for girls and boys alike. The best at this game can twirl the hoop from waist to neck—unbelievable, right?! Hula-hooping came to us from Hawaii.



3 Dodgeball

Here in America, we love ball games. One of our favorites is dodgeball. The rules are simple. Two teams face each other. The players of one team throw small balls at the other team. If a player is struck by a ball, they are knocked out. This game depends on speed, especially speedy reflexes. It is super fun!

4 Hot Potato

This game also requires a ball. Players stand in a circle, sing a song, and toss a ball around. The player who receives the ball must pass it to another player as quickly as possible. Whoever is holding the ball when the song ends is out.



5 Handball

As I said, we Americans love ball games. Another one is called Handball. All you need for it is a ball, a wall, and a marked area (or court) into which the ball can land. You bounce the ball on the ground so that it rebounds onto the wall. When it bounces off the wall, the other player must strike it back against the wall using the flat of the hand. The ball can't leave the court.

New Zealand Games

HI! MY NAME'S **MAIA**, AND I LIVE IN **NEW ZEALAND**, AN ISLAND NATION IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN. THE ORIGINAL PEOPLE OF NEW ZEALAND ARE THE MĀORI. MANY OF OUR COUNTRY'S TRADITIONAL GAMES ARE MĀORI IN ORIGIN.

10 Time for fun and games

Most Māori games were played during times of rest, when the harvest was over. Although games served to teach a variety of skills, people enjoyed them. And they still do today.

9 Hipitoitoi

For this game, there are four positions: Both thumbs up. Both thumbs down. Left thumb up and right thumb down. Right thumb up and left thumb down. The defender flashes one of the hand positions and says, "Hipitoitoi," while the challenger flashes a different one. If they do the same position, the defender gets a point.



8 Ruru

If you get tired of twirling the poi, try another Māori game with it that, like Tititorea, is hundreds of years old. As you chant a Māori rhyme, you throw the poi into the air and catch it before it hits the ground. If you have to grab it by the string, the task is even harder! Each round starts where the poi was last caught.

1 Tititorea

Tititorea is one of these traditional games. Two players kneel on the ground, with a short stick in each hand, which they pass to each other in trained movements in time to accompanying chants. Slow at first, the movements speed up until the players are throwing the sticks to each other.

2 Sharpness and quick reactions

Tititorea is hundreds of years old. It was originally about more than just having fun. The Māori used it to train their sharpness and quick reactions.

3 Poi

If you believe that twirling a ball connected to a string is a piece of cake, you will soon change your mind if you try Poi, another traditional Māori game. Can you twirl a ball clockwise with one hand and counterclockwise with the other? I can't—and that's just a beginner's trick! The real art is to master tracing complex geometric shapes.



4 Supple wrists

Poi helped Māori hunters develop shoulder strength and improve coordination. Māori women used this game to make their wrists more flexible.

5 The power of the warrior

You have surely noticed that the aim of most of these traditional Māori games was to improve indigenous warriors' dexterity, speed of reaction or thought, and physical prowess.

6 Poi Rākau

Poi Rākau is another game once played by Māori warriors for training purposes. Players form a circle, with the player known as the Commander at the center. Every player in the circle holds a long stick. After the Commander cries "Left!" the players in the circle release their stick, move one position to the left, and grab the stick released by the player to their left. Throughout, none of the sticks may touch the ground. It's hard work and requires intense concentration.

7 Kite

The Māori game of Kite is really good fun. Two players are blindfold, and each holds a rattle known as a Ki Paua. The rattle makes a sound with every step the players take, indicating where they are. The winner is the first to find their opponent and touch them.



HELLO, I AM
MAIA

Finnish Games

HI! MY NAME'S **JUHANI**, AND I'M A **FINN**. PEOPLE TALK OF FINLAND AS A LAND OF A THOUSAND LAKES; IN FACT, WE HAVE OVER 150,000 OF THEM. WE FINNS HAVE PLAYED AND COMPETED SINCE ANCIENT TIMES. BUT ENOUGH TALK: I'M OFF TO THE PLAYING FIELD. WANT TO JOIN ME?

HELLO, I AM
JUHANI

1 Crab Ball Tag

The traditional game of Crab Ball Tag is popular with preschool kids, us older kids, and even grown-ups. We have a lot of fun with it! We assume the basic pose of a crab, with our weight resting on our hands and feet and our bellies pushed up. Only like this are we allowed to move.

2 The rules of Crab Ball Tag

Crab Ball Tag is played by at least five people. Only one of these is not a crab: the crab-hunter. The hunter's task is to catch a crab by hitting it with a rubber ball between the neck and the waist—as gently as possible, of course! A caught crab becomes the hunter, and the hunter becomes a crab.



3 How can a crab defend itself?

Crabs aren't helpless against the hunter's attacks. When the hunter chooses you as the target, you should try to kick or head-butt the ball away. We kids improve the game by playing it with two balls and two hunters. Ouch! I got hit! I guess I wasn't paying attention.

9 Ketju

The game of Ketju (meaning "chain") is hilarious! All players but one (the challenger) form a circle and weave themselves together in various ways while holding hands. Then the challenger tries to unweave them. It sounds simple, but a clever weave will give the challenger no chance, trust me.

8 How to play Molkky?

To play Molkky, we set up numbered pins in the shape of a triangle. We then try to knock these pins over with the throwing pin. If you knock over one pin, you score the number of points marked on that pin. If you knock over more than one, your score is the number of pins you have knocked over.



7 Molkky

Further evidence of we Finns' fondness for skittles is found in Molkky, another game featuring wooden pins. From the south of Finland, it harkens back to the distant times of the Vikings.

6 Gravel or ice?

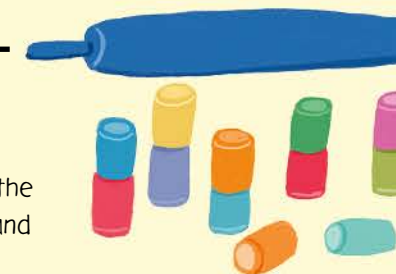
Finnish skittles is best played on a flat surface covered with gravel. In winter, however, we play it on a snowy field or a frozen lake, sometimes finding time to build a snowman in the process.

5 Away with the skittles!

The aim of Kyykkä is to clear the playing area of skittles as quickly as possible by throwing a rounded, wooden, handled bat at them. The more skittles the player hits, the more successful they are.

4 Kyykkä

Kyykkä—also called Finnish skittles—is a centuries-old game once played in remote villages, involving wooden pins called skittles. It was rediscovered in the late 19th century by a Finnish writer and photographer.



Vietnamese Games

HI, AND WELCOME TO **VIETNAM!** MY NAME'S **DIEP**. I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU OUR BEST-KNOWN KID'S GAMES. MAYBE YOU'LL LEARN THAT THEY ARE SIMILAR TO SOME OF YOURS. AS THE CASE MAY BE, YOU ARE SURE TO FIND THEM FUN!

1 The game of Dragon Snake

In this game, I'll play a doctor. A group of kids standing in a line, each holding the kid in front by the waist, will play a dragon. I, the doctor, must try to catch the kid who represents the Dragon Snake's tail. The others will try to prevent me from doing this.

HELLO, I AM
DIEP

2 The importance of cooperation

It's far from easy to catch the Dragon's tail, because all the children follow the movements of the first in an attempt to connect the head with the tail, thus forming a circle.

3 Nu Na Nu Nong

For this simple game, we all sing—and I love singing! We sit in a row with our legs stretched out in front of us. A fellow player (the leader) stands in front of us. As we sing our song, she pats our legs and feet. At the moment the song ends, the player she patted last must tuck in the leg in question. We play on until all legs are tucked in.

10 Nhay Day

My friends and I love jumping over a length of rubber stretched between two children (the "posts"). The aim of the game is to jump over this line from both sides, as high as possible. When the game begins, the rubber line extends between the ankles of one of the posts to the ankles of the other. The best of us can jump over a line at waist level.

9 Dragons

Kites have been flown in Asia for thousands of years. Our ancestors believed that dragons, which kites represent, gave protection against evil and ill-fortune. For this reason, the names of diseases were written on kites' wings. It was believed that when the kite was released to the heavens, the dangers posed by these diseases were carried far away.

8 Kite parade

Children's kites tend to be quite simple paper ones. Adult kites are much more intricate. Many are not only covered with fabric but also fitted with windpipes of various sizes, which when in flight make a pleasing sound. You can sometimes imagine that a kite is singing!



7 Flying kites

We Vietnamese—kids and grown-ups alike—love flying kites, and we do so all year round, although it is best in summertime. One of us holds the string attached to the paper kite while a second runs with it against the wind... and moments later, the kite is soaring into the air.

6 Balls, not fruit

When we play Nem Con today, we throw special balls we make at home from fabric stuffed with rice and cotton seeds. To make balls heavier, we tie colorful tassels to them.



4 Nem Con

The throwing of a ball through a ring hanging from a tall bamboo tree is a ritual said to drive away sadness and suffering and to bring happiness. Don't worry if you don't manage to throw the ball through the ring at the first attempt—you can have as many tries as you want!



5 Legendary happiness

The Nem Con game emerged from a legend about Pia, a poor, troubled orphan. The story goes that Pia once went to the forest, where in his deep sorrow he threw a piece of fruit so hard and high that a fairy caught it in heaven. The fairy fell in love with Pia, before marrying him and bringing him happiness.





How Kids Play Around the World

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How Kids Play Around the World

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ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAELA BERGHANNOVÁ

If you were asked to find a kid who doesn't like playing, you'd probably struggle to find a single one. Kids love to play, sometimes alone but ideally with friends. But how and what they play varies from place to place. Do you want to know about games played in Australia, Africa, New Zealand, and other parts of the world? If so, this is the book for you. As you read about fun and games for kids across countries and continents, you will learn that some games are much the same wherever they are played. Others, however, will be entirely new to you. What's more, this book will introduce you to new friends who just love to play!

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