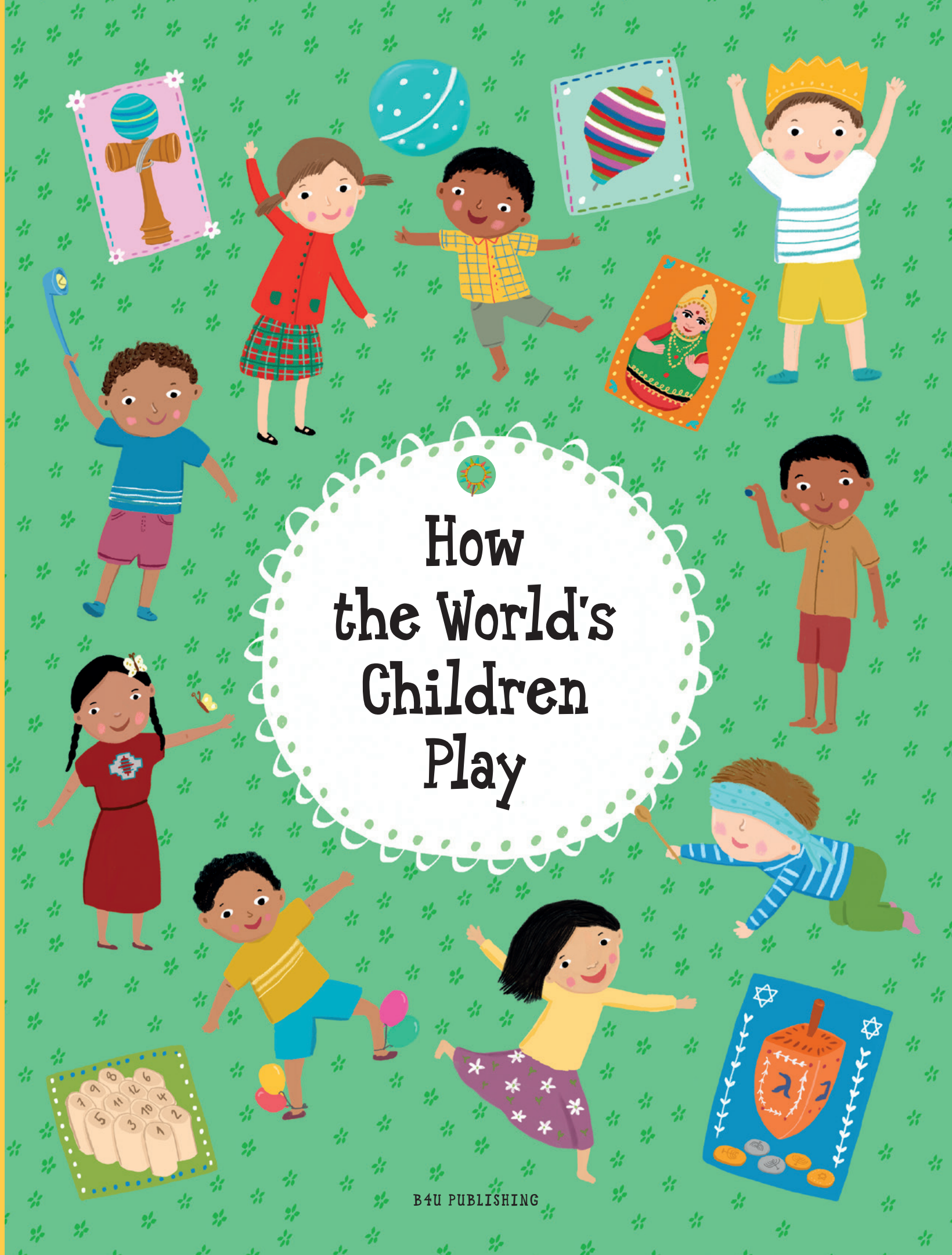




# How the World's Children Play



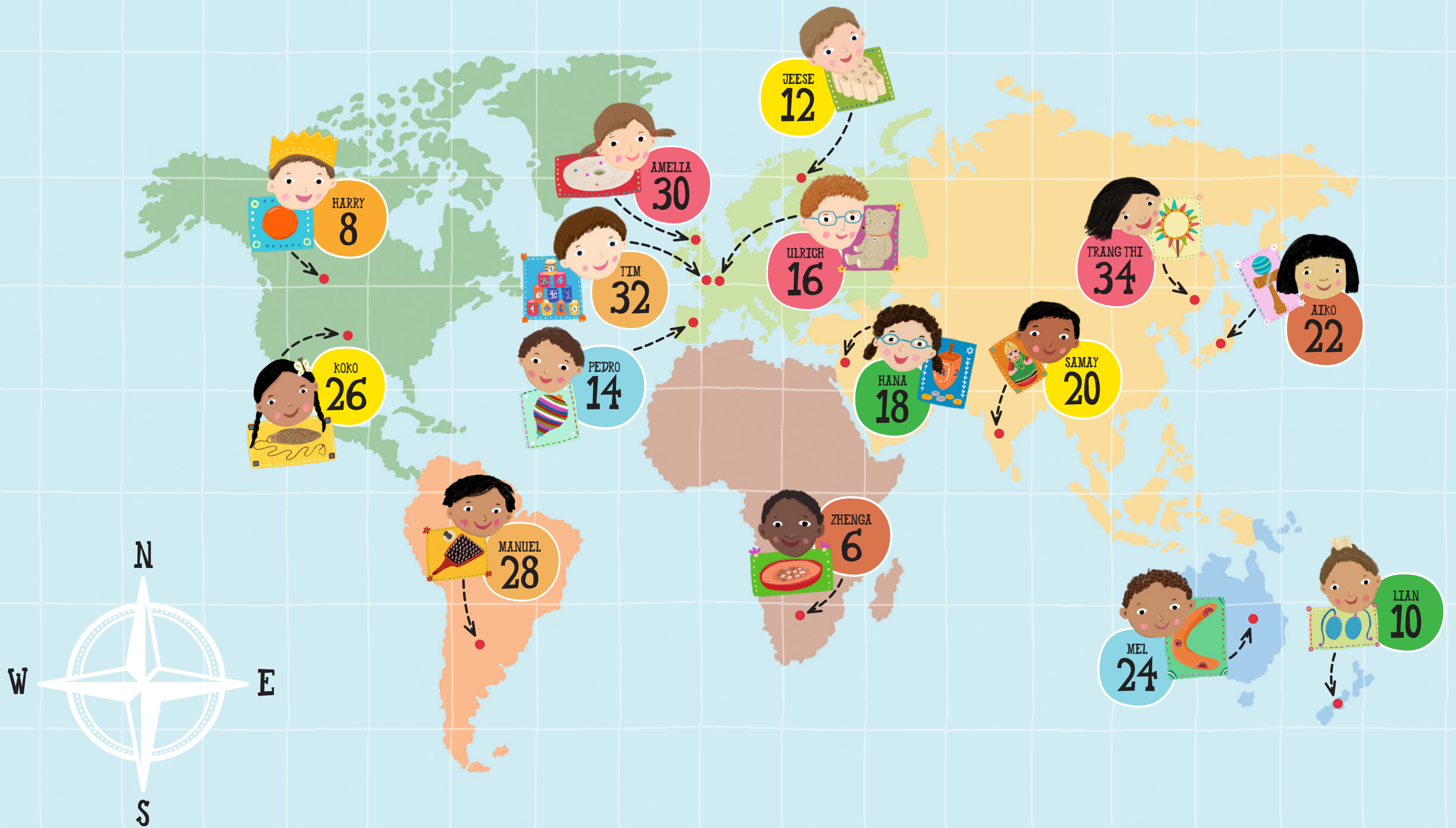


# How the World's Children Play



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# Fun and play go hand in hand with childhood

How many children do you know who don't like to play? None, I'm sure. I venture to claim that a liking for play – with toys, as well as games with friends – comes naturally to children. This can be said of ancient times, recent days and the present time. Archaeological excavation and historical sources have proven beyond doubt that people have played since the dawn of time. Quite simply, play is in our blood.



Hoorray! I'm winner!



Playing is fun!

# Games from all over the world

Children 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 in some areas only, and they may be bound up with those areas' historical development. In places where an ability to hunt was paramount, for instance, it is understandable that children's games focused on improving fitness, accuracy and attention, so 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. Why not join us as we scoot around the world to take a look at it?



I move exactly 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 a child's play is essential to their 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 playing the fool and enjoying yourself, you are actually developing. Great, isn't it?



Do you catch me?



I will jump there first!

I'm looking for chocolate!



Look what I can do!





# African Games

HI! MY NAME'S **ZHENG**A, 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 favourite games is Ampe. Two children, one of them the leader, face each other. As they jump up together, they clap and thrust one foot forward. If the leader and the other player have the same foot forward, the leader wins the point. If the feet are different, the other player becomes the leader.

## 2 Spectators of Ampe

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

## 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 from the bowl as they can, using only one hand. If you were to guess the winner, you would surely be right.



## 10 Skipping rope has a long history

From drawings found in tombs from ancient Egypt, we know that skipping rope has been a popular entertainment for many centuries. At first, this pastime was enjoyed by men only, 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 favourite 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 most jumps.



## 7 Military exercise

Tug of war was popular in ancient Egypt, Cambodia, India, Greece and China. A certain Chinese emperor used this game for the training of his soldiers. It was about pulling a rope this way and that, nothing more.

## 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 its way is clearly the stronger, and so named the winner.



## 5 Football - what a game!

Everyone loves playing football, boys and girls alike. 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 gives more satisfaction than a bought one, believe me.



## 4 Nyama, Nyama

One of my favourite games is Nyama from Kenya. It needs at least three players. The player appointed 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 as they are. They become so confused that soon they will be jumping up to greet the herbivorous antelope.





# North American Games

HI! MY NAME'S **HARRY**. I WAS BORN HERE IN THE **USA**, LIKE MY PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS AND 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 MORE TRADITIONAL CHILDREN'S GAMES. THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN REAL-WORLD FUN!

## 10 Marco Polo

Many of our games take place in water. Marco Polo is a popular water game. One player closes their eyes and calls the name 'Marco'. The other players reply 'Polo' and try to stay out of the caller's way as the caller swims towards their voices and tries to catch one of them.

## 9 The Floor is Lava

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

We play this traditional game from our preschool years. All but one of us sit in a circle. 'It' walks around this circle, taps each of us on the shoulder and calls us 'duck', until finally they call one of us 'goose'. The player 'goose' now chases 'it' around the circle, trying to reach and occupy the vacant space before 'it' does.

## 1 King of the Hill

I'll never tire of this game. If you would like to try it, 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.



HELLO, I AM  
**HARRY**

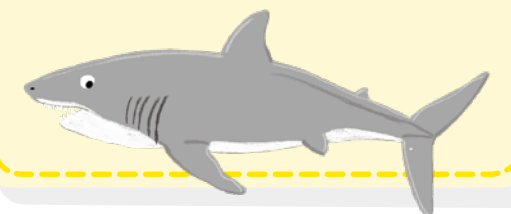


## 7 Capture the Flag

This is one of my very favourite games! It is played by two teams in a space divided into two territories. Having placed their flag on the opponent's territory, members of each team must try to get it to their own base without getting caught.

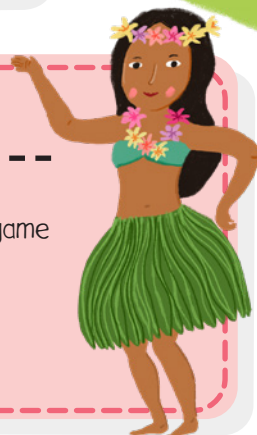
## 6 Sharks and Minnows

This is a classic pool chase. By its name, it should be clear who chases whom. 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! Hula Hooping came to us from Hawaii.



## 3 Dodgeball

We Americans love ball games. One of our favourites is dodgeball. The rules are simple. Two teams face each other. The players of one team throw small balls at the players of the other. If a player is struck by a ball, they are knocked out. This game depends on speed, especially on reflex. It is great fun!

## 4 Hot Potato

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



## 5 Wall ball

As I mentioned, we Americans love ball games. Another one is called Wall Ball. All you need for it is a ball, a wall and a marked area (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 mustn't leave the court.



# New Zealand Games

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

## 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 speed of reaction.

## 3 Poi

If you believe that turning a ball-on-a-string is a piece of cake, you will soon change your mind if you try Poi, another traditional Māori game. Can you turn a ball to the left with one hand and another ball to the right with the other hand? I can't – and that's just a beginner's trick! The real art is to master complex geometric shapes.



## 10 Time for fun and games

Most Māori games were played at times of rest, when the gathering of the harvest was over. Although games served to teach a variety of skills, people enjoyed them. They still enjoy them today.

## 9 Hipitoitoi

To play this game, you need to know these positions: both thumbs pointing down; both thumbs pointing up; left thumb pointing down, right thumb pointing up; right thumb pointing down, left thumb pointing up. One player calls the word 'Hipitoitoi' before assuming one of the hand positions, while the other player tries to assume a different position.



## 8 Ruru

If you get tired of turning the poi, you might try another Māori game with it that 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 from the point at which the poi was last caught.

## 7 Kite

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



## 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 centre. 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. During this transaction, none of the sticks may touch the ground. It's hard work and requires intense concentration.

## 5 Power of the warrior

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

## 4 Supple wrists

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



# Finnish Games

HI! MY NAME'S **JESSE**, 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 THAT'S ENOUGH TALK: I'M OFF TO THE PLAYING FIELD. WHY NOT COME WITH ME?

HELLO, I AM  
**JEESE**

## 1 Grab Ball Tag

The traditional game of Crab Ball Tag is popular with children of preschool age, up to older kids, 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. One of these is not a crab but a 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?

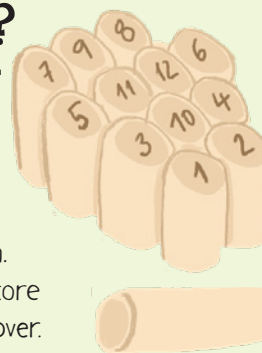
Crabs aren't helpless against the hunter's attacks. When the hunter chooses you as the target, you should try to kick or head the ball away. We older kids improve the game by playing it with two balls and two hunters. Oh, I got hit! I wasn't paying attention.

## 9 Ketju

The game of Ketju (meaning 'chain') is a great laugh! 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, believe 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 Finns' fondness for skittles is found in Molkky, another game featuring wooden pins. From the south of Finland, it harks back to the distant times of the indomitable 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 plain or the ice of 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 is a centuries-old Finnish skittles game once played in remote villages. It was rediscovered in the late 19th century by a Finnish writer and photographer.







## How the World's Children Play

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# How the World's Children Play

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ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAELA BERGMANNOVÁ

If I asked you to show me a child who doesn't like playing, I reckon you would struggle to find a single one! Children like to play above all else, often alone but ideally with friends. But how and what they play varies from place to place. Would you like to know about games played in Australia, Africa, New Zealand and many other parts of the world? If so, this is the right book for you! As you read about fun and games for children 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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