

RULEBOOK

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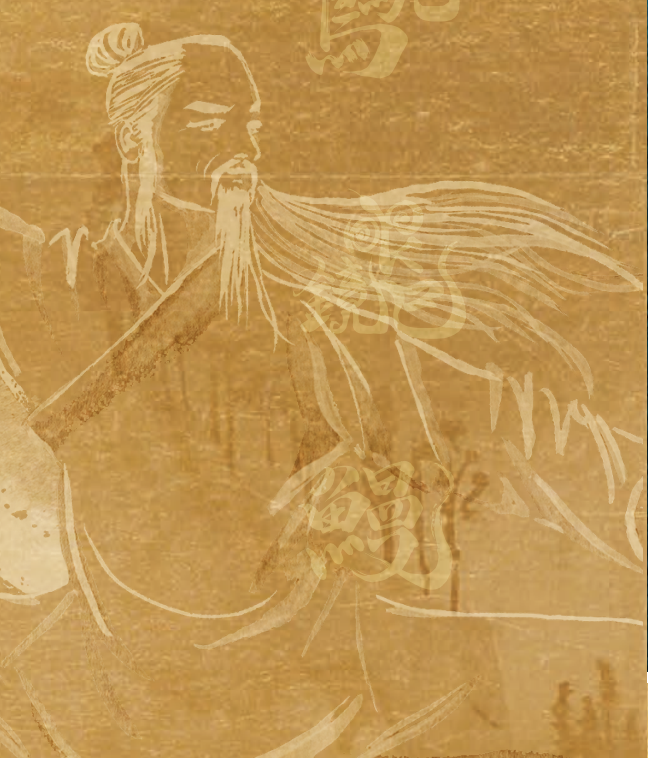


"Hear now, the words of the Eight Immortals: O true sage and vigilant warrior, if you would find true mastery of the Body and Spirit, seek the path to the Shrine of Onitama."
— The Book of Heaven, Seventh Scroll

Onitama

Carved into the crags of the mist-shrouded mountains of ancient Japan lies the Shrine of Onitama. It is a place of enlightenment and skill, a site dedicated to the spirits that guide the Schools of Martial Arts across the land.

Masters of these schools hazard the journey to Onitama with their most promising disciples to meet within its hallowed walls and to prove their superiority in battle against the others.

These contests are more than simple combat — for in this place, the Animal spirits that guide the Schools whisper their guidance to the Masters, and bolster the students with otherworldly strength and dexterity.

"Hear me, if you would prove your Art above all others. When you have mastered its mysteries, then may you seek to challenge others. It is through

Onitama is an elegant and simple game which captures the essence of martial arts. Each game is quick, usually 15 minutes in length.

COMPONENTS

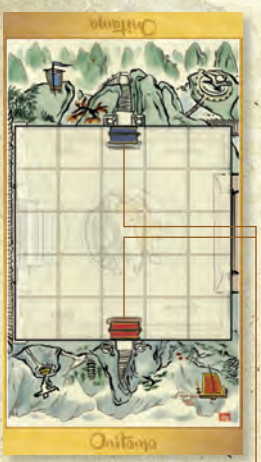
Welcome to the Shrine of Onitama, aspiring Master. In addition to this rulebook, this box contains:



2 MASTER PAWNS



8 STUDENT PAWNS



ROLLUP GAME MAT

TEMPLE ARCH SQUARES



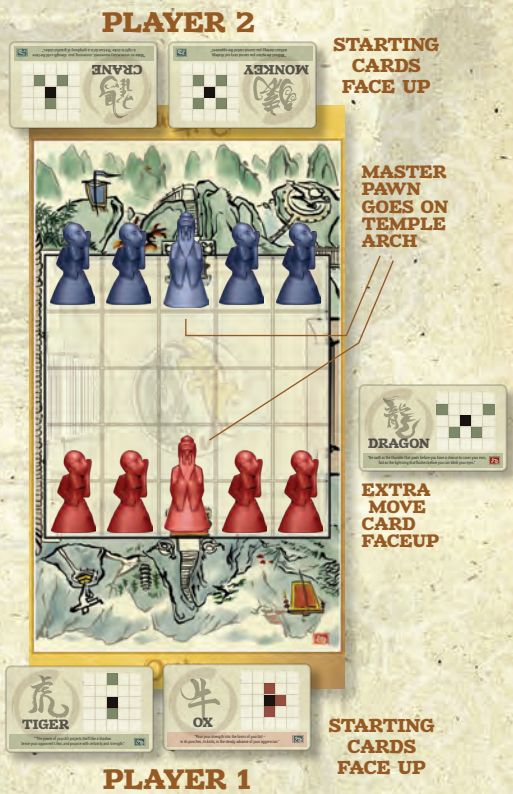
16 MOVE CARDS

GAME SETUP

Arrange the playmat on the table between you and your opponent, as shown in the diagram.

Each player chooses 5 pawns of one color (1 master + 4 students). Each player places their Master pawn on the temple arch nearest them, and their 4 Student pawns on the 2 squares on either side of the master, as shown in the diagram.

superior strategy and superior skill that the Master of Masters will be known, and the true Art will be revealed."
— The Book of Heaven, Second Scroll



Shuffle the 16 Move cards. Give two random cards to each player, face up – this is the player's "hand". Each player places both of their starting cards in front of them, face up. Turn over one more Move card, and examine the stamp in the lower right hand corner of the card.



The player with the pawns that are the same color as that stamp will go first.
Place this card so that it is on the right side of the game mat (with respect to the player going first).

The rest of the Move cards will not be used -- return them to the box. You can use them in future games, to create new challenges and tactics.

"These words are written in the presence of the scribes of Onitama. I have unlocked the mysteries of my Art, which I believe to be the true Art. I have listened to the Spirits, and have studied the manuals of my ancestors, passing

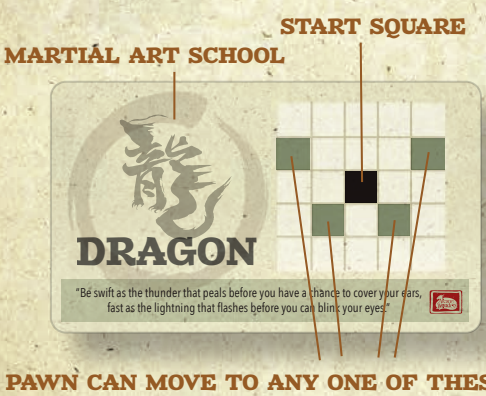
HOW DO I PLAY?

It is time to prove the power of your Art.
Combat at Onitama is simple and elegant, as befits a contest between two Masters. You and your opponent will take turns following the two steps below, one for the body, one for the spirit.

On your turn, follow each of these two steps, in this order:

STEP 1: MOVE & ATTACK

On your turn, examine and choose one of the two Move cards in front of you. Then, move one of your pawns (student or master) as shown on that card. (The square grid will show you the way.)



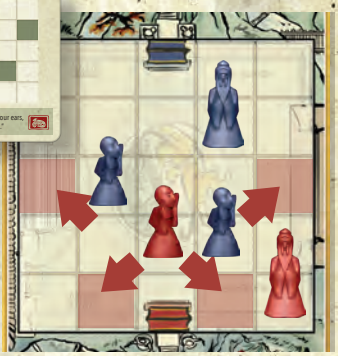
The black square in the middle represents the space your chosen pawn occupies. The colored spaces show where your pawn can move, relative to its starting position. You can move your pawn to any one of the spaces indicated.

Other pawns (yours or your opponents) and Temple Arches do not block the movement of your pawn across the board.

along the wisdom to my disciples. I ask now, in this place between Heaven and Earth, that my Art be judged in the eyes of the Eight Immortals and all men."
— the Scroll of Onitama, on which the names of the true Masters are written



EXAMPLE: MOVEMENT

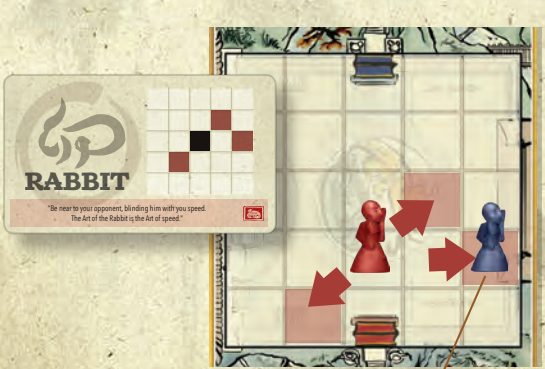


You can never make a move that would cause a pawn to move off the board or move onto the same square as one of your own pawns.

If your pawn moves onto a square that is occupied by one of your opponent's pawns, the opponent's pawn is "captured" and removed from the game. Put it back in the box.

You must actually land on the piece to capture it – moving over or through a square occupied by an opponent's piece does not capture it.

EXAMPLE: CAPTURING AN OPPONENT'S PAWN



STEP 2: EXCHANGE CARDS

Take the Move card you just used, and place it to the left side of the playmat, rotating it 180 degrees to face your opponent.

Then take the card that is on the right side of your playmat and add it to your hand. You may use that card starting next turn, as one of the two Move cards you can choose from.



Now it is time for your opponent to take a turn, following the same two steps.

You shall continue to take turns until one of you has won the game, demonstrating mastery of your Martial Art.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO MOVE?

If you have a legal move, you must take it–even if you don't want to! Be careful that your opponent does not trap you in a position from which you cannot escape. It is possible that you will find that you cannot use any of your cards to make a legal move. If this happens –and only then– you must pass your turn. None of your pawns will move. But like the river that constantly flows, you cannot remain unchanged: you must still choose one of the two cards in front of you, place it to the left of the playmat and rotate it, then take the card from the right side of the board.

"These are the words of the Enlightened Ones: there are two paths to superiority: to best another Master as the larger stone breaks the smaller; or to wrest control away from his Art, as the stream carries away all within it."
— The Book of Heaven, Golden Scroll

HOW DO I WIN?

There are two ways to prove that your Art is stronger – the Way of the Stone or the Way of the Stream.

1 **To win in the Way of the Stone, you must capture your opponent's Master pawn.**



2 **To win in the Way of the Stream, you must move your own Master pawn into your opponent's Temple Arch space.**



Neither path to victory is easy! You will need careful strategy to achieve your goals.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