

Egyptian Music

No one really knows what music sounded like in ancient Egypt, but we do know what some of their instruments used during that time looked like.

Some of the beautiful hieroglyphics found in the pyramids and in tomb paintings show that Egyptian musicians enjoyed playing harps, drums, and also used an instrument called a sistrum.

A sistrum is a hand-held percussion instrument, that was most often played by priestesses or the court musicians who entertained pharaohs and nobility. Instead of shaking it around like you might play maracas, the sistrum was moved back and forth and the rattles or bells on the instrument would create a “swooshing” sound.

It's easy to make your own Sistrum you just need to find branches or sticks in the shape of a "Y", then add the wires plus the bells, buttons or washers to create your own version of this ancient instrument.

This is what you need for creating a wooden sistrum:

- 3 Sticks or branches shaped like a “Y” (you can use lolly sticks or coffee stirrers)
- Assorted buttons, jingle bells or metal washers.
- A small amount of floral wire, fishing twine or embroidery thread
- A wire-cutter

Thread different kinds of buttons, bells or metal washers onto a small piece of floral wire . [You can also use fishing twine or embroidery thread, but wire is better at keeping the items in place.] Tie or secure the wire in place on each side of the branch by twisting the wire securely around the branch (making sure no pointy parts are sticking out).

Then try out your instrument. It should make a pleasing sound when moved from one side to another.

Enjoy!



Mehen – The Snake Game.

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Mehen was played in Ancient Egypt over 5,000 years ago.

Make your own Mehen board and play the game yourself!

The aim of the game is to move your four counters around the snake to its

head, and get them back to safety before your opponent's lion eats them!

See the instruction sheet for how to make your game and how to play it.

Mehen is an ancient Egyptian board game that was played from the predynastic period to the Old Kingdom (c.3000 – 2181 BCE). It is also called the 'snake game' because the board is shaped like a coiled snake. Its name comes from the snake god, called Mehen, who wrapped around Ra, the sun god, to protect him during his nightly journey through the underworld.

The game is for two players; we know this because scenes from the tombs of nobles show people playing mehen and other board games. The boards have sometimes been found with six lion pieces and many marbles.

It is possible that the marbles travelled along the spiral grooves, a hypothesis based on worn paint on some boards. Unfortunately, the rules for the game have been lost over the intervening 4000 years, so instead experts make their best guesses about how they think the game might have worked.

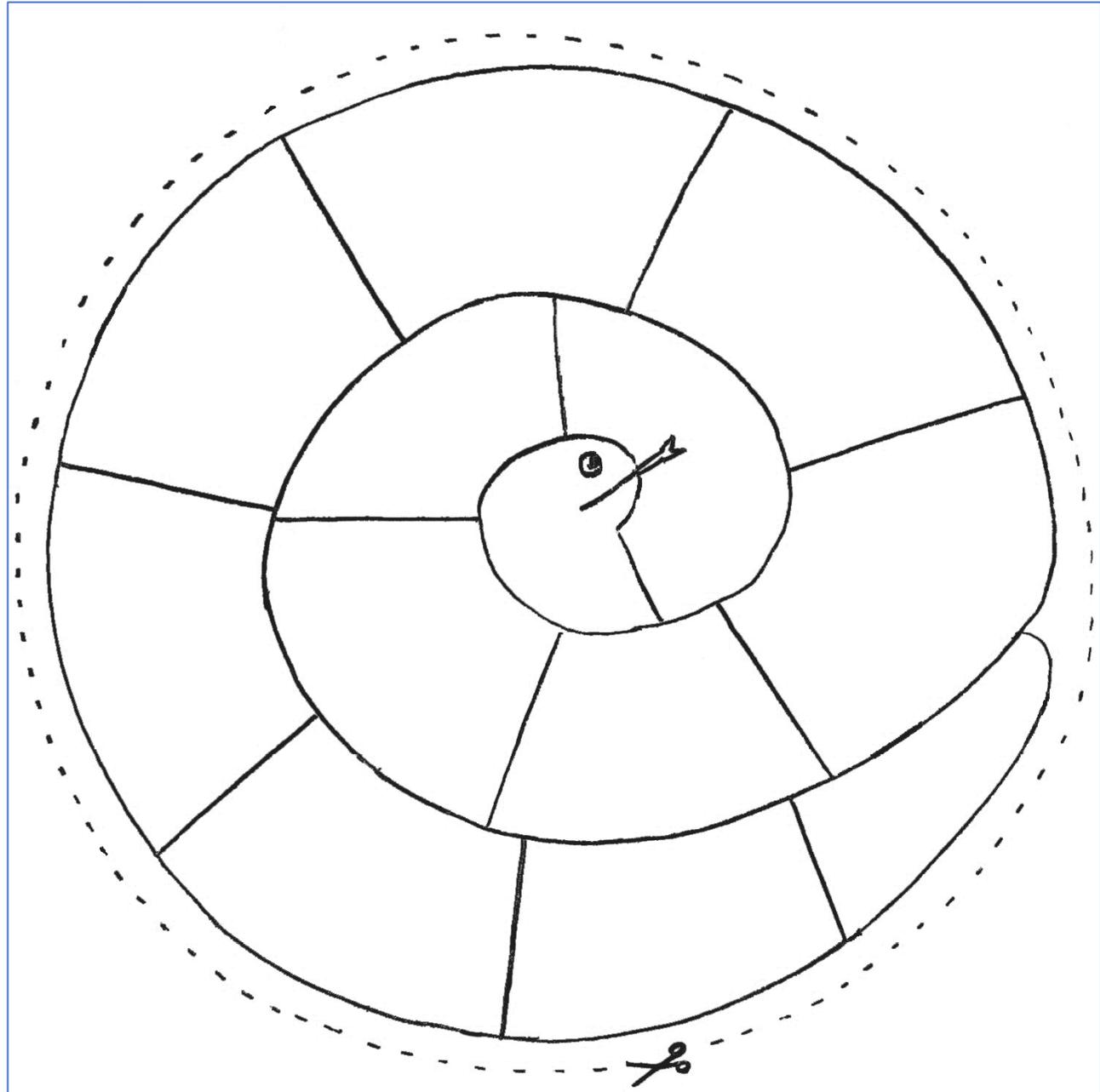


Mehen Board.

You can use this template to make your own board:

Cut along the dotted line and then stick the cut out template onto a piece of card.

You could decorate the board using coloured pens or sticking on paper – some of the Mehen boards found in Tombs had precious stones and metals to decorate them.



Instruction Sheet for playing Mehen.

You will need:

Counters for

Player 1

Counters for

Player 2

Scissors

Four lolly sticks

Coloured pencils

How to make your Mehen Game:

1. Cut out the snake board and the counters (at the bottom of this sheet).
2. On the back of each counter, copy the same symbol as on the front.
3. Colour in your snake board.
4. Colour in one side of each of your lolly sticks; you will use these to work out how many spaces to move on each go.

How to use your counting sticks:

Throw the sticks into the air. When they land, count how many coloured sides are showing. This is the number you have thrown and the number of spaces you can move.

If no coloured sides are showing, you miss your go and it is your opponent's turn.

(You could use a die if you can't make your own counting sticks; for throws of 5 or 6, miss a go.)

How to play:

1. Each player has 4 counters and a 'lion' counter which all have the same symbol on.
2. The youngest player throws the sticks first. If they throw a '1', they put a counter into the first space on the board. If they throw any other number, they miss their go.
3. It is now the other player's turn. They must also throw a '1' to start. If they throw any other number, they miss their go and play returns to the first player.
4. Keep going - taking turns - until all of your own counters (except the lion) are on the first square on the board.
5. Once all of your own counters (except the lion) are on the board, you can start moving them round towards the snake's head. You can pick which counter to move on each go. Any number of counters can be on the same space at any time.
6. When each counter reaches the snake's head, you must turn it over to start its return journey back to the tail.
7. When one of your counters has made it back, you can start your lion counter.
8. Move your lion counter around the snake towards the head like all your other counters, but on the way back your lion can eat up any of your opponent's counters that get in its way! To eat an opponent's counter, your lion must land on the same square. Lions cannot eat each other!

The winner is the person whose lion has eaten the most counters.

Counters for player one.



Counters for player 2.



You can use these counters or make your own from clay or cardboard with your designs !!!

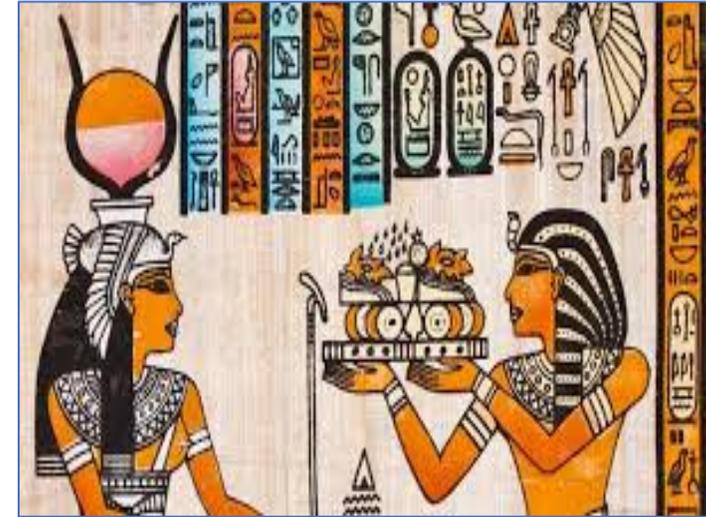
Dulcis Coccora – Cleopatra's favourite !!!

These sweet honey cakes were said to be a favourite treat for Cleopatra .

Preparation

- To make the Cleopatra's Dulcis Coccora, an **ancient Egyptian food**, start mixing the flour and water and adding dried figs and walnuts.
- Shape the mixture into little balls to cook and caramelize in the boiling honey.
- Let the dulcis cool and serve them adorned with pomegranate seeds or slices of your preferred fruit.
- Coccora were edible seeds from Mediterranean plants that, during antiquity, were added to sweets. Today they can be substituted with pomegranate seeds or slices of fruit.*

This recipe is taken from the book "[Tacuinum dè Eccellentissimi](#)", by Alex Revelli Sorini and Susanna Cutini



INGREDIENTS

Flour
200 g
100 g
Dried fruit and nuts
200 g
Honey
As needed
Fresh fruit
300 g