KILN

A tile-cooking game for 2 to 4 players by
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INTRODUCTION

Did you ever wonder where all those tiles from hundreds of tile-laying games come from? Well, they're made in the **KILN**. The **KILN** is the special, high-temperature oven in which you fire ceramics such as tiles made of clay.

In **KILN** 2 to 4 players compete to manufacture tiles for the publishers of tile-laying games (such as **nestor**games itself). All players share the same kiln, but each one has their own warehouse to store and sell the tiles to the publishers.
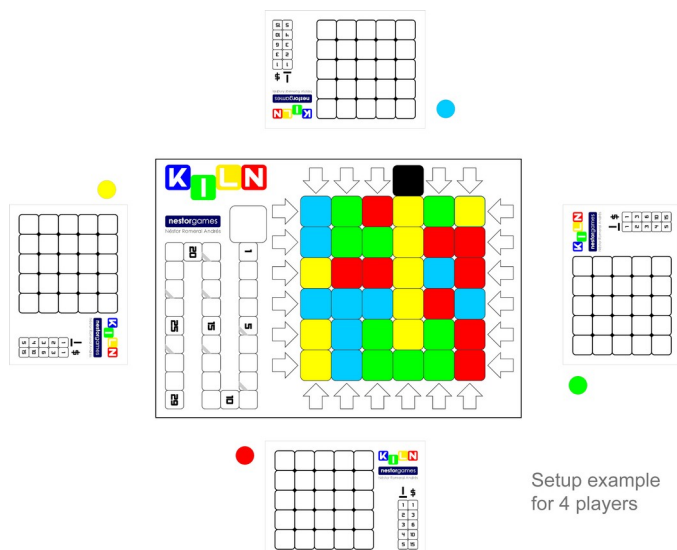
MATERIAL

- A board with a scoring track and an 8×8 square grid (the rack) with an inner 6×6 area (the **kiln**).
- Four 5×5 grids with plastic coating (warehouses).
- 8 discs in 4 colours (2 each of red, blue, green, yellow)
- 7 grey discs (for advanced play),
- One black disc (goal marker).
- 4 erasable markers.
- 36 square tiles in four colours (red, blue, green, yellow) and one black square tile (the neutral tile), all the same size as the cells of the rack.

SETUP

Place the main board in the middle of the table. Each player takes a warehouse, a coloured disc, and a marker.
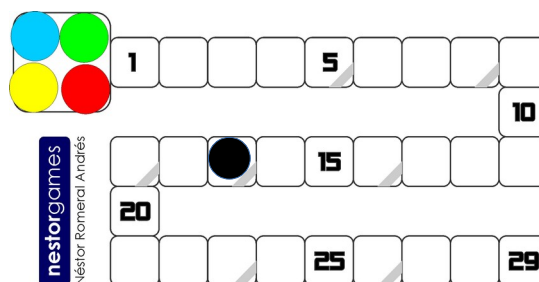
Randomly arrange 9 tiles of each colour (36 in total) inside the kiln (6×6 area) and place the black tile in one of the border cells (the ones with an arrow on them).

Each player places their warehouse before them with the sides parallel to the sides of the game board (very important!), chooses a colour and places a disc of that colour next to the warehouse (it's used to know which player uses which colour).

Setup example
for 4 players

Place one disc for each player's colour next to the first space of the scoring track. Determine the winning score for this game (try 17 for the first play, and then raise the goal as you gain some experience) and place the black disc in the corresponding space of the scoring track[1].

For each colour, look for the **biggest** group of connected tiles in the kiln (tiles are not considered connected if merely their corners touch). The owner of the **smallest** group among those groups becomes the starting player (in the previous example, the RED player). In case of a tie for the smallest biggest group check for the next larger biggest group and so on. If the tie persists, determine the starting player, among the tied players, by any peaceful means.
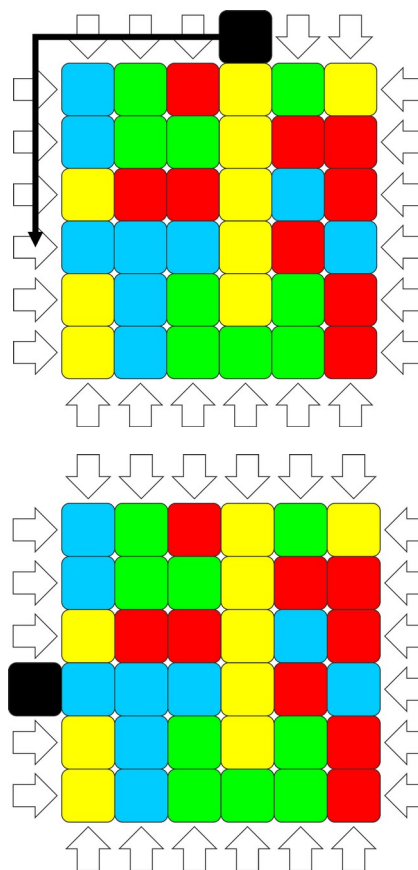
HOW TO PLAY

Definition: The '*outer tile*' is the tile that is on a border cell (a cell with an arrow in it). This tile can be of any colour, but in the first turn it is the neutral one (black).

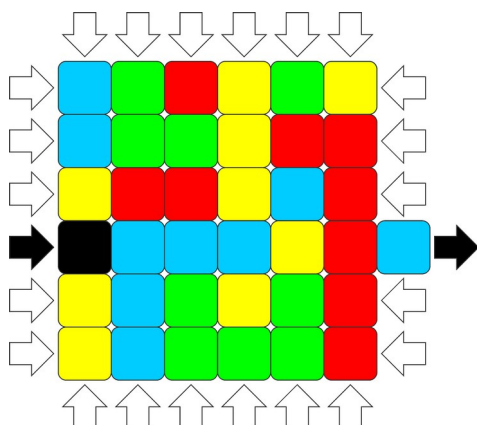Players take turns in clockwise order.

On your turn, you **must** do the following in order:

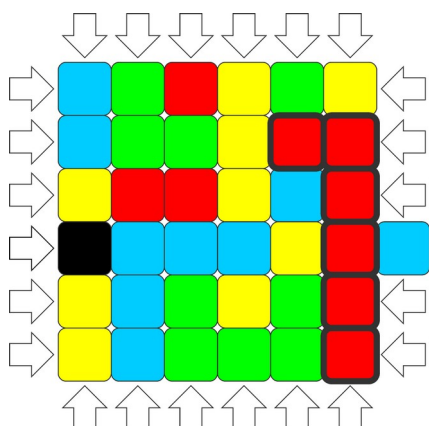1. Move the outer tile to a **different** border cell.

2. Push the outer tile into the kiln (per the arrow in its space) along the row/column it's in, so that the tile on the other side leaves the kiln (thus becoming the new **outer tile**).
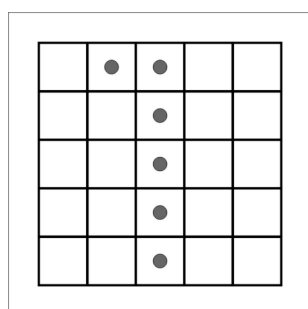

3. Identify the largest group of connected tiles of **your colour**. In case of more than one group having the same size, choose the one you wish among them (see next step).
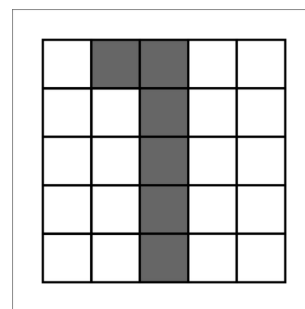

4. If possible[2], copy the group to your warehouse by doing the following:

4.1. **Without rotating or reflecting** the shape of the group, draw a dot on a cell of your warehouse for each tile of the group, so the shape of the group is preserved. You can only draw dots on empty cells (not already painted).

4.2. Fully paint the cells that you've marked with a dot. You can use symbols such as an 'X' or a smiley face instead, to save on ink.

5. **Optionally**, you can now sell either **complete rows** (in which all 5 cells are painted) or **complete columns** of your warehouse to the publishers. To do so follow these steps:
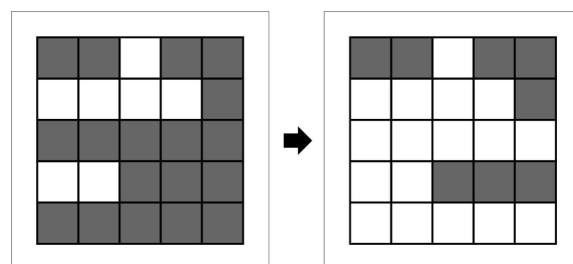
5.1. Declare which rows/columns you wish to sell.

5.2. Calculate the price of those cells according to the price table that is next to your warehouse. The leftmost number is the number of rows/columns that you sell, and its partner on the right is the points you earn by selling them):

I	$
1	1
2	3
3	6
4	10
5	15

5.3. Move your scoring disc forward along the track as many spaces as you are scoring. If, as a result of your disc moving forward, you reach or pass the space occupied by the black disc, you **immediately win** and **the game ends**.

5.4. Erase the columns/rows that you've sold from your warehouse.

Example: This player sells the 3rd and 5th **rows** for 3 points. She could have sold the 5th **column** instead for only 1 point.

6. If your push has made the **Black tile** the outer tile[3], you take an extra turn. Otherwise, you pass the turn to the next player.

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2   It might not be possible because the shape could be too big, or you might not have that shape empty in your warehouse. If it is not possible, simply skip this step.

3   This usually happens only in the early stages of the game. Later on, the Black tile gets driven towards the centre of the kiln and rarely leaves it.

KEEPING THE KILN NEAT

When pushing the tiles, block the opposing side of the adjacent rows with your fingers as follows:

Fingertips

ADVANCED VARIANT FOR 2 PLAYERS

In this variant, each player plays two colours by placing two warehouses before them with their corresponding discs.

On your turn, you move the outer tile and push as usual, but you copy one shape of <u>each</u> of your colours to their corresponding warehouses. When selling rows or columns, you first sell **and score** from one warehouse and then the other one.

STRATEGY TIPS

- Play with Tetris in mind. Try to create shapes in the kiln that will fit into your warehouse without leaving gaps.

- A small shape that fits nicely in your warehouse is usually better than a large shape that leaves too many gaps.

- At first, players will try to create large shapes to fill their warehouses quickly, but then they will need to break them up to fill the gaps with smaller shapes. Find the right balance between large and small shapes. It's easier to create one large shape than to break shapes apart into single tiles.

- Don't sell too soon (you will score low) or too late (you will spend useless turns).

- It's usually better to mind your own business than to try to annoy your opponents. But managing to do both things at once is the key to winning the game.

- Trying to annoy your opponents by creating large groups of their colour that won't fit might not be a good idea, as they could easily break them apart or sell what they have and then add that large shape on their next turn. Annoy them by breaking their groups apart as much as you can when their warehouses are empty, instead.

- Calculate the scoring 'jump' that you need to reach the score goal and build/sell accordingly.

HEATING UP THE KILN

Although the game is 'well rounded' as it is, the following rules can be applied (all players must agree on this before the game starts).

Before the game starts, agree on placing as many grey tokens as you wish on cells of the scoring track numbered 5, 8, 14, 17, 19, 23, 26 (indicated on the scoring track by tiny grey stripes). No more than 1 token per cell. Discard the rest.

Example: players agree on placing a token on 5, 14, and 17.

During play, whenever a player's scoring pawn ends its movement on a cell with a grey token, the player gets an extra turn. Extra turns are not cumulative. That is, if the player also has an extra turn because the black tile has left the oven, only one extra turn will be played.

Another optional rule:

If, after you push tiles in the oven, you can't copy a shape into your warehouse (there is no room for it), you're allowed to erase (only) one of your cells.

Why these additions?

In early games with newbies, players tend to play badly and might be lagging behind. Rule 1 lets them catch up even faster than the triangular scoring itself. Rule 2 lets them fix a previously created mess faster, too.[4]

Why those numbers?

5, 8, 14, 17, 19, 23, 26 are the only numbers under 30 that aren't triangular and also can't be expressed as the sum of two triangular numbers. So you need at least 3 selling turns to reach them, which means you haven't played very well. So those spaces are more likely to be reached by bad players. However, with this addition, good players can exploit them, too.

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4   I like 'evil' games, but I understand that some players would need some extra catch-up chances.