

# play



## 10 great games



Steve Dahl lets fly on the auto jet set. **PAGE 12**

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# 10 cool board games for cold winter gatherings

The shorter days and colder nights are perfect for gathering with friends and family for a couple of hours of good-natured fun. Board games bring something extra to the table, providing an enjoyable excuse to laugh, show off your skills and trade stories and memories.



**Eric Gwinn**  
Gadgets

We know you like games too, so we've scouted

the new ones that also would make nice gifts this holiday season. We know you hate to read instruction manuals, so we sought games that are easy to explain and fun to play. And because games that go on for hours can test the patience of even the heartiest players, we hunted for games that could be played in a half-hour or less. Shorter games mean you'll play them more often, so we made sure these games won't grow thin on you.

Here are 10 cool new games we've enjoyed, in alphabetical order. You can find them on the sites below; stores such as Walmart, Target, Go, Calendar Club, Barnes & Noble, and at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). For hard-to-find games, try shops such as Games Plus (101 W. Prospect Ave., Mt. Prospect; 847-577-9656), Cat & Mouse (2212 W. Armitage Ave.; 773-384-4454) and Marbles the Brain Store (55 E. Grand Ave.; 312-494-7769).

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### AmuseAmaze

2-6 players, age 8+ (\$25; [hlgames.com](http://hlgames.com))  
**Goal:** Race through the letter maze—the game resembles a find-a-word puzzle—and collect Target Cards as you go.  
**How to play:** Move one space for each letter in the word you find. Use the shortest route to the Target Cards, because there's no advantage in spelling long words, Scrabble-style.

**Why we like it:** The board changes during play, adding a twist to a simple game.

### The Chain Game

2-8 players, ages 10+ (\$25; [otb-games.com](http://otb-games.com))  
**Goal:** Be the first to lose all your link tokens by quickly saying a word that relates to the previously spoken word.  
**How to play:** Flip a card with a word—e.g., "fish"—and the player to the left says a related word—e.g., "fish sticks"—followed by the next player—who might say "drumstick." Play continues until someone falters, or breaks the chain, and must give up a link token. When one player's last link is gone, the game ends and the player with the most links wins.  
**Why we like it:** The fast pace and building tension.



### Dominion

2-4 players, ages 10+ (\$45; [riograndegames.com](http://riograndegames.com))  
**Goal:** Build your deck of cards by turning your copper and lowly estates into gold and provinces to create the biggest dominion of monarchs.  
**How to play:** Each player may use the value of a card in his or her hand to acquire more cards. It's a strategy card game that flies by and plays very differently each time because there are so many card combinations.

Should you attack an opponent or improve your resources? Caution: Though simple to learn, the game will take about 10 plays before the myriad paths to victory start to emerge.  
**Why we like it:** It's an addictive, challenging game that doesn't break your brain.

### Ilium

2-4 players, ages 8+ (\$45; [playrooment.com](http://playrooment.com))  
**Goal:** Place your teams of archeologists around the board to collect the most valuable artifacts.  
**How to play:** A card will tell you how many archeologists you can place on one space, near a dig site. Once the spaces between two dig sites are connected by a line of archeologists (yours or your opponents), the site can be plumbed for treasures. Each time a dig site is worked, the value of the contained treasures grows. At the end of the game, the player with the most valuable artifacts wins.  
**Why we like it:** Lots of strategy but it's not overwhelming.



### LoYo!

2-4 players, ages 7+ (\$16; [loyogame.com](http://loyogame.com))  
**Goal:** At the end of the game, have cards that total the fewest points.  
**How to play:** Each player receives four face-down cards—each numbered 1 to 9, with special cards numbered 15. After glancing at two cards, the player can replace a held card with one drawn from the deck. After six rounds, card values are tallied and the lowest score wins.  
**Why we like it:** This quick-playing game combines the best of poker, Concentration and Uno.

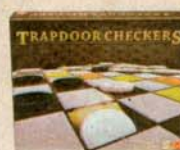


### Pictureka

2+ players, ages 6+ (\$23; [hasbro.com](http://hasbro.com))  
**Goal:** Collect cards by quickly finding the object or objects on each card.  
**How to play:** Flip a card and find the object(s)—five men with beards, for example—among the hundreds of crazy illustrations on the board—"Pictureka"=Picture+Eureka ("I found it!"). The wacky illustrations and simple gameplay are the stars. Successfully perform the task and keep the card; the first person to collect six cards wins.  
**Why we like it:** Great two-player games are hard to find.

### The T-Shirt Game

3-6 players, ages 10+ (\$18; [buffalogames.com](http://buffalogames.com))  
**Goal:** Collect 3,000 points by providing the funniest or most appropriate slogan for the image on the T-shirt card.  
**How to play:** Each player takes a turn as Judge, flipping over a T-shirt card with a preprinted image. Non-judges submit the Slogan Cards they think the Judge will like. The Judge declares a winner, who picks a Hot or Not Card that assigns points. The goal is to get to 3,000 points first.  
**Why we like it:** Odd slogans paired with ironic images lead to unexpected laughs.



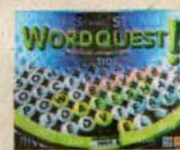
### Trapdoor Checkers

2 players, ages 6+ (\$30; [goliathusa.com](http://goliathusa.com))  
**Goal:** Eliminate all your opponent's game pieces by hopping over them.  
**How to play:** The game is like regular checkers, except the checkerboard has eight colored trap doors. Before each turn, a spinner determines whether one of the colored trap doors can be lowered, taking out

the checker that's on the trap door.  
**Why we like it:** The unpredictability means young children and parents can play this ancient game together.

### Treasure of the Lost Pyramid

2-4 players, ages 8+ (\$25; [toysrus.com](http://toysrus.com))  
**Goal:** Correctly guess the contents of the five treasure rooms on the 3-D pop-up game board.  
**How to play:** Turn over a card and decide whether to move your two game pieces or thwart opponents by blocking their path or sending a monster after them.  
**Why we like it:** The no-assembly-required 3-D game board combines slick strategy make for memorable match-ups.



### WordQuest

2-4 players, ages 7+ (\$30; [goliathgames.com](http://goliathgames.com))  
**Goal:** Be the first to spot the word hiding among a host of letters  
**How to play:** Place a find-a-word puzzle beneath a plastic shield playing board, then spin the board to reveal the current word. Be the first to sound the included noisemaker, indicating the current word has been found. Place transparent colored disks on top of the plastic shield, over the word. After a number of rounds, the winner will have the most colored discs.  
**Why we like it:** WordQuest shakes up the world of quiet word games.