

Although no-one is quite sure when or where croquet was invented, people have been enjoying similar games for over 500 years!

Isn't it about time you joined in? All you need are a few simple pieces of equipment and you then can play whenever you like, right in your own back garden!

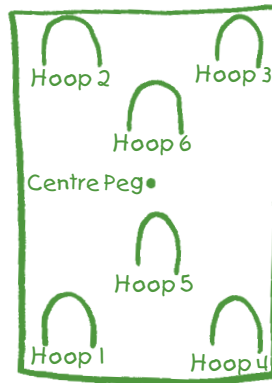
Equipment

- A lawn or area of grass
- Set of 4 croquet balls (red, yellow, black and blue)
- Set of 6 croquet hoops and 1 peg
- 2 or 4 croquet mallets



Instructions

1 To begin with, set the croquet hoops and pegs out on your lawn. Professional croquet courts are enormous (they measure about 25 x 32 metres), but don't worry if your garden isn't that big - just spread the hoops as far apart as you can.



Start here

2 Croquet can be played with two players (singles) or four (doubles), but there are always four balls. The red and yellow balls play against the blue and black balls. If you're playing singles, one player hits both the red and yellow balls and the other player takes blue and black. In doubles, one person hits each colour, but the red and yellow-ball players form a team and the blue and black players form the opposing team.

3 The player who has chosen to play blue takes their turn first, followed by red, black and yellow. Standing about 1 metre away from hoop number four, place your ball on the ground and hit it with your mallet towards the hoop 1. The object of the game is to score hoops in the right order, as they are numbered.



4 Player two then takes their turn. He or she can either decide to aim for the first hoop or try and hit the blue ball to knock it out of the way and stop player one scoring the hoop.



5 Once each of the four balls have been played in order (remember, it's blue, red, black and then yellow) for the first time, player one takes a second turn with the blue ball. This time, instead of standing at the start of the course, he or she stands next to the blue ball and hits from that spot.



6 Play continues with each player aiming for the hoops in number order. It's up to you whether you use your shot to try and score a hoop or move your opponent's ball out of the way. Don't forget they might try and knock you off course, too!

7 The first player to score six hoops and then hit the centre peg with one of their balls is the winner!