



# **Mice in a Maze®**

**A game of finding food  
and avoiding traps  
in an ever changing maze**

**for 2-4 players  
(playing time 30 minutes)**

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**Version 1.1**

# Introduction

Haven't you ever dreamt of playing a laboratory mouse? No? Well, here is your chance anyway.

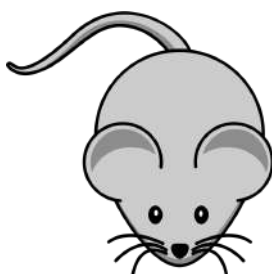
Somewhere outside your safe nest there is a tasty cheese. The catch is that the stupid humans have not only placed it in a maze but also that the maze keeps changing. Nevertheless, you want that cheese, even if it means that you have to face dangerous traps. Beware, there are other mice in the maze as well and they may trick you to leave the cheese in their nests instead.

## Components

- 1 mouse in turn tile
- 1 cheese chamber tile
- 56 maze tiles; 28 crosses and 28 curves
- 12 nest tiles; 8 private and 4 shared
- 4 corner mats with shared nests
- 8 cheeses
- 8 marbles (advanced game only)
- 8 mice; 1 in each color

## Setup

1. Set up the maze according to the image below.
  - a) Place the Cheese Chamber tile in the middle **face up**. This is referred to as the **Chamber**.
  - b) Shuffle the the maze tiles and place 48 of them in a grid of 7x7 tiles around the Chamber **face down**. They are referred to as the **Maze**. When face down, they are referred to as **hidden**, and when face up, they are referred to as **open**. The colors are merely decorative.
  - c) Place the nest tiles and the corner mats along the edges according to the image below. (Note that the corner tiles will partly overlap the corner mats.) Those are referred to as **Nests**. Each mouse has a private Nest of its own color and there are 8 shared nests.
  - d) Place the 8 cheeses on the Chamber tile.
  - e) Place 1 marble on each of the 8 maze tiles adjacent to the Chamber (advanced game only).
2. In turn order, choose 1 mouse each and place it in its private Nest with its nose pointing **towards** the Maze.
  - a) For 3 to 4 players, choose 1 additional mouse each. You do not play them in the game but you do score for their colors.
  - b) For 2 players, choose 2 mice to play and 2 additional to score for. Player 1 plays the 1st and 4th mouse and player 2 plays the 2nd and 3rd mouse.
  - c) **Note that all nests are placed, even if not all mice are used.**
3. Draw 1 maze tile each, look at it and place it in front of you **hidden** (face down).
4. Discard any undrawn mice and maze tiles.



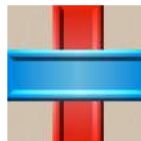
Mouse in Turn



Chamber



Cross



Curve



Private Nest



Shared Nest



Cheese

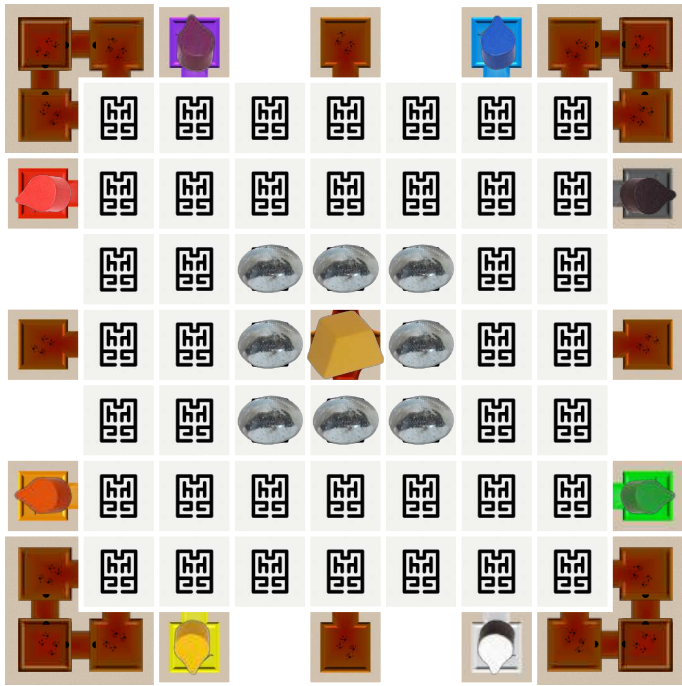


Marble



Mouse





## Object of the Game

Your object is to change the Maze so that you can move through it, find a cheese and bring it back to your Nest without falling in the traps or getting your cheese stolen by the other mice.

## Course of the Game

Each maze tile has two **paths** that the mice move along. The paths are strictly separated so mice cannot switch from one path to another. If the paths of two or more maze tiles are connected, the mice move along all of them. Paths do not extend past Nests or the Chamber, i.e. the mouse stops there and continues next turn. In the course of the game, you place tiles to open/close paths for the mice to make them bring cheese to your nest.

Take turns to move your mouse through the Maze. In your turn, you **must** take all the actions listed below in order. Note that your mouse moves **before** placing a maze tile so your moves will be affected by all other players' placements. Players will frequently take advantage of other players' mice to bring cheese to their nests.

1. Move mouse
2. Place maze tile
3. Move marble (advanced game only)

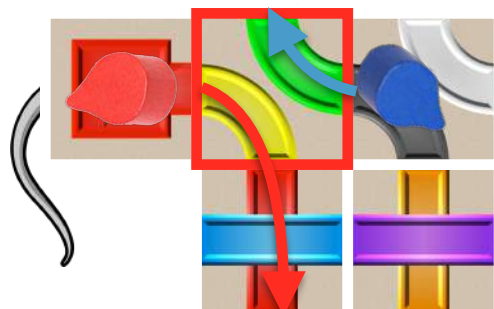
Each action is described in detail below. Moving **to** something refers to **ending** a move in that tile. Moving **past** something refers to moving **through** that tile.

### I. Move Mouse

If there is an open path in the direction of your mouse's nose, move along it. You may neither stop, nor turn, but must follow the path to its end.

If you start your turn with your mouse outside the Maze, you must use the move action to **return** your mouse to **any** Nest of your choice

The following may happen when you move:

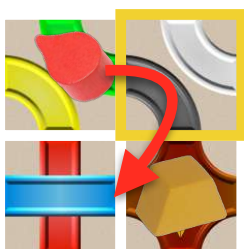


1. The **red** mouse has a **yellow-green** curve ahead of her and moves along the **yellow-red** path. She may not move along the **blue** path.
2. The **blue** mouse moves along the **green** path. She may not turn and move along the **orange** path.

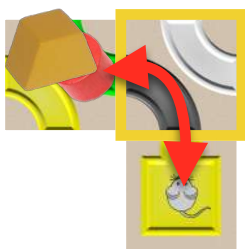


1. If your path leads **to the Chamber**, take 1 cheese and place it on top of your mouse. You will carry it while moving. You can only carry 1 cheese at the time. Place your mouse at the opposite exit and continue through that **next turn**.
2. If your path leads **to a Nest**, leave the cheese you carry, even if it is not your own Nest. Once left in a Nest, cheeses cannot be carried further.
  - a) If the nest has one exit, turn your mouse and continue through that next turn.
  - b) If the nest has two exits, place your mouse at the opposite exit and continue through that **next turn**.
3. If your path leads **to a cheese** left in the Maze, carry it with you (if you do not already carry a cheese).
4. If your path leads **to another mouse**, you take any cheese that the other mouse carries and the other mice takes any cheese that you carry. If this happens in the Chamber, take a cheese from the Chamber first if any, otherwise from the other mouse. If there is one mouse on the same tile, choose which to take from or give to.
5. If your path leads **to a marble**, nothing happens. The marble can only harm you when it moves.
6. If your path leads **out of the Maze**, remove the mouse from the Maze to your hand. If a cheese was carried, return it to the Chamber.
7. If the path is a **loop**, do not move your mouse.

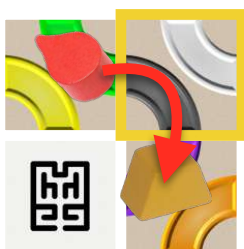
The images below illustrates the moves. Yellow has placed a black-white curve and it is red's turn.



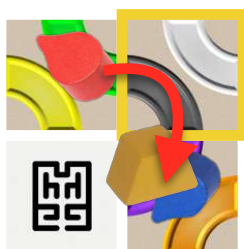
1. The **red** mouse moves along the black path to the Chamber. She chooses to exit along the **blue** path and places herself there with a cheese



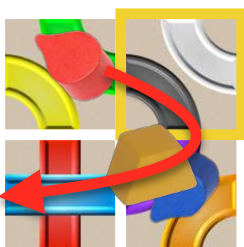
2. The **red** mouse moves along the black path to the **yellow** Nest. She leaves the cheese behind, although it isn't her Nest. Next turn she will move out of the Nest.



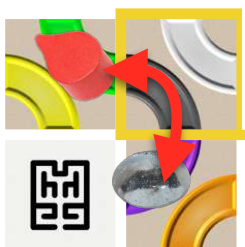
3. The **red** mouse moves along the black-**purple** path, stops and takes the cheese. Had the path continued past the cheese, she would have taken it with her.



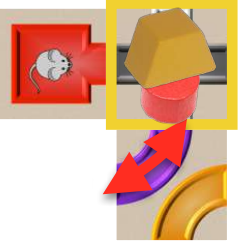
4. The **red** mouse moves along the black-**purple** path, stops and takes the cheese from the **blue** mouse.



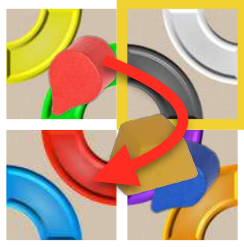
4. The **red** mouse moves along the black-**purple-blue** path and takes the cheese from the **blue** mouse.



5. The **red** mouse moves along the black-**purple** path, and stops. The marble does not affect her.



6. The **red** mouse moves along the **purple** path with a cheese and stops at the end. Next turn she will move in the opposite direction.



7. The **red** mouse is in a loop and does not move at all. This also means that the **blue** mouse keeps the cheese for the time.

## 2. Place a Maze Tile

Take a **hidden** (face down) or an **open** (face up) maze tile. The maze tile must be in the path either ahead of or behind your mouse and it must be **empty** (without mice, cheeses or marbles). Replace it either with the same tile or the one you have in front of you and place it **open** in any orientation.

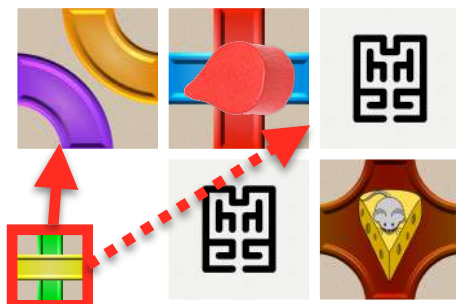
If you take an open maze tile, the next maze tile you take must be hidden.

To keep track, do the following:

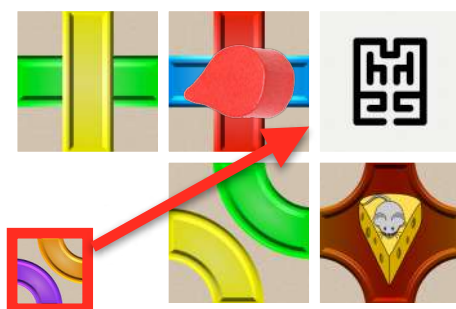
- If the maze tile in front of you is
  - hidden**, you may replace an **open** or a **hidden** tile.
  - open**, you must replace a **hidden** tile.
- If the maze tile you took was
  - hidden**, place it in front of you **hidden**.
  - open**, place it in front of you **open**.

If you must replace a hidden tile and only have open tiles near your mouse, replace a hidden tile anywhere in the maze instead and place it hidden instead of open.

HAND	REPLACE TILE	NEW HAND



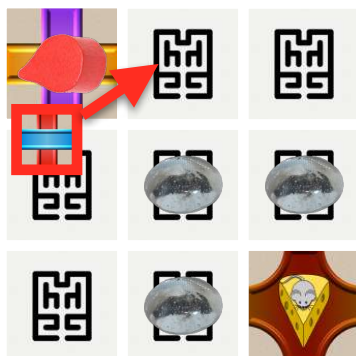
- Red** has a hidden cross. She can replace the hidden tile ahead of her mouse but that will move her away from the Chamber. Instead, she replaces the open purple-orange curve behind her.



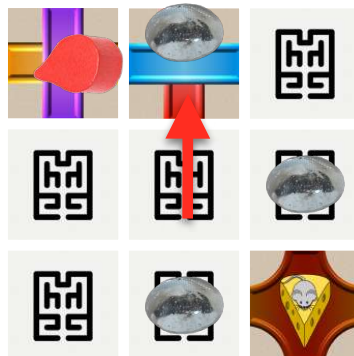
- Red** now has an open curve. Next turn, she can only replace the hidden tile along her mouse's path but that is exactly what she wants to do to open a path to the Chamber.

## 3. Move Marble (advanced game only)

The marbles in the maze are dangerous traps. When the game starts, all marbles are on hidden tiles and do not move. However, they start moving as soon as adjacent tiles are opened and continue moving whenever new paths are opened.



- The Chamber is surrounded by marbles. The **red** mouse places a cross to remove one of them.
- The marble moves along the **red** path. Next turn, the **red** mouse will safely move along the **blue** path.

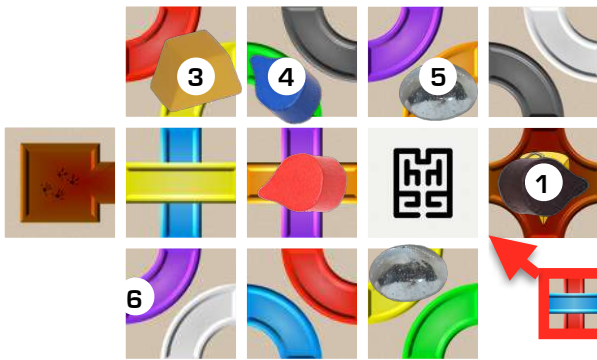




Move a marble along its path to the end similar to how a mouse moves.

1. If the marble path leads **to** the **Chamber**, the marble stops. The player in turn chooses **this turn** which exit it continues through **next turn**. It must be a different exit than the one entered through. Mice and cheeses in the Chamber are not affected.
2. If the marble path leads **to** a **Nest**, the marble stops.
  - a) If the nest has one exit, it continues through that next turn.
  - b) If the nest has two exits, it continues through the opposite exit **next turn**.
- c) If the marble path leads **to** or **past** a **cheese** left in the Maze, the cheese is not affected.
4. If the marble path leads **to** or **past** another mouse, remove the mouse from the Maze to the player's hand.
5. If the marble path leads **to** or **past** another **marble**, nothing happens to any of the marbles.
6. If the marble path leads **out** of the Maze, remove it from the Maze.
7. If the marble path is a loop, do not move the marble.

The image below illustrates the moves. The red mouse is about to place a maze tile.



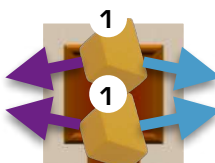
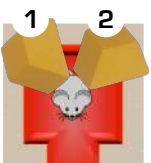
The **red** mouse can place a cross to open a path to the Chamber. This also opens paths for two marbles.

- A. The bottom marble passes the top marble (5) to the Chamber. Red chooses the bottom exit and the marble stops and continues next turn. The black mouse in the Chamber is not affected.
- B. The top marble first passes the blue mouse and removes it from the Maze (4). Then it passes the cheese but does not affect it (3). Finally it reaches the edge and is removed from the game (6).

## End of Game

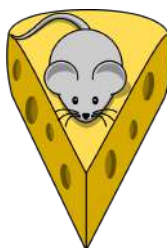
The game ends if no player is able to bring any more cheese to the Nests. This happens if:

- All maze tiles are open, both in the Maze and in front of the players. This means that the maze cannot change anymore. The players **must** continue to move as long as they can bring more cheese to the Nests, even to other players' Nests.
- All cheeses have already been placed in the Nests or cannot be reached by any mice.



The first 4 cheeses in Nests score 1 point each to the owner and the following 4 score 2 points each. Place the first 4 on the side to tell the difference.

The **red** player has 2 cheeses in her private Nest scoring  $1+2=3$  points. The **purple** player has only 1 cheese in her private Nest but 2 cheeses in the Nest shared with the **blue** player (who has only 1 cheese in her private Nest). **Purple** scores  $2+0.5+0.5=3$  points and **blue**  $1+0.5+0.5=2$  points. **Red** wins thanks to having scored 3 points for "private cheeses" ahead of **Purple** (2) and **Blue** (1)!



Cheeses in shared Nests are shared between the two adjacent private Nests while cheeses in Nests not owned by any player do not score.

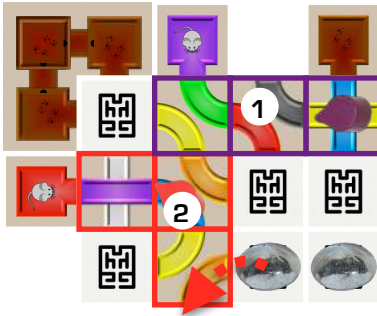
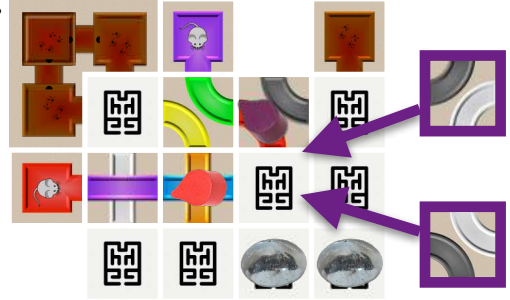
In a tie, the tied player with the most points for "private cheeses" wins.

# STRATEGY TIPS

## 1. Don't put yourself in danger

The red mouse is in danger. Purple has two options to disrupt her path:

1. Place a curve pointing outwards. Red's path now leads to the purple Nest, from which she may be used to bring cheese to the purple player.
2. Place a curve pointing inwards. A marble will then move past the red mouse and remove her from the Maze.



## 2. Be careful in the opening

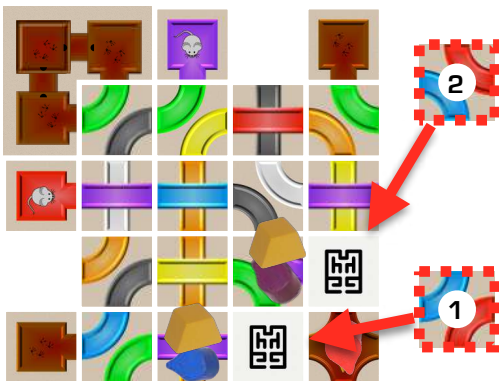
Both the red and the purple mouse avoids getting too close to the dangers in their first turns.

1. Purple focuses on opening paths to her private and shared nests before approaching the Chamber.
2. Red focuses on removing the marbles without getting in their way.

## 3. Don't enter the Chamber with no safe exit

The red mouse has moved to the Chamber and taken a cheese but neglected to secure a safe path back to her Nest.

1. Red places a black-white curve, hoping to continue to the red Nest on her next turn.
2. However, Purple replaces the black-white curve with a red-yellow cross. Red's path to her Nest is suddenly replaced by a path to Purple's Nest, something that will give Purple 1 point.



## 4. Look for cheese in Maze

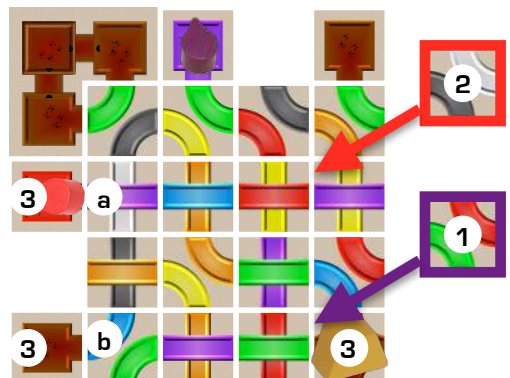
Both the blue and the purple mouse have found a cheese but failed to return to their Nests. Red has reached the empty Chamber and has no cheese but she does have a red-blue curve.

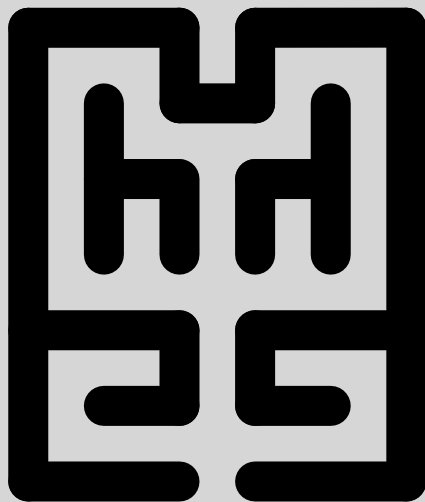
1. A red-blue curve ahead of Blue will lead Blue to Red's shared Nest in her turn, giving Red 1/2 point.
2. A red-blue curve ahead of purple will lead Purple to Red in her turn, not only giving Red the cheese but also opening path to Red's private Nest, giving Red 1 point.

## 5. End the game with a path to the Chamber

All maze tiles are open and all players except Red replaced maze tiles the previous turn so they may not do so again. The game ends when Red has replaced a maze tile and all cheeses have been brought to the Nests.

1. Purple replaced a red-green cross in her last turn, giving her a path from her Nest to the Chamber.
2. However, Red replaces the red-yellow cross with a black-white curve, giving herself not only a path to her private Nest (a) but also to her shared Nest (b).
3. Red can now move between her Nests via the Chamber until all cheeses are gone!





## **Credits**

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Game design: Nicholas Hjelmberg  
Artwork: Nicholas Hjelmberg  
Production: The Game Crafter  
Game testers: Fredrik Sandell, Peter Sahlin, pleasant people at Café & Co  
Special thanks: My wife Su-San Oh for having to listen to my endless historical and game-technical considerations

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