Chocolatl

3-5 Players
45 -60 Minutes

GÜNTER BURKHARDT

WITH ART BY RYAN LAUKAT

Chocolatl: a game set in the midst of the fascinating time of the Aztecs, the legend of Quetzalquatl and of course, Cacao: the fruit of the gods! Your goal: make the greatest offerings to the gods--harvest the best Cacao, help build the pyramid and earn points at the 6 different locations on the map. The player who brings the most valuable offerings to Quetzalquatl (=Chocolatl) will be the winner of the game!

Gameplay is fairly simple and easy: each round, play takes place at the 6 locations (here numbered 1-6) one after the other.

GAME SETUP

Place the game board in the middle of the table. It shows the 6 locations (1-6) where, each round, actions occur in clockwise order starting from the bottom right corner (Chocolatl: Location 1). In the middle of the board is the temple's sacrificial altar (A) which is only used at the beginning and end of the game.

Place the Chocolatl figure and the Old Man figure on the circles on Location1. Take the improvement cards (black border) sorted by type (shown on the back of the card) and shuffle each type separately. There should be two card decks: one for each type. Place these decks face down next to the board.

Each player receives a set of cacao cards (showing sacks of cacao with the numbers 0-12) as well as the 9 cubes of his color.

Take all the players' score markers, mix them and blindly draw one by one, placing them on the '0' of the score track (B) so that each newly drawn disc is placed on top of the previous discs. This stacking will be important if there is a tie at location 1.

Each player also receives a player board, which he places in front of him. The 6 locations are shown on the front and there is a rules summary on the back. The sixth player board is intended to be placed next to the game board with the rules summary showing so that all the players can see it.

COMPONENTS

5 x 9 cubes in five colors

7 bonus chips for the huts

1 white cube

1 old man figure, 1 Chocolatl figure

12 improvement cards (black border)

5 x 13 cacao cards in five colors

7 bonus dice (black) & 3 cacao harvest dice (white)

5 score marker discs

6 Player Boards

1 game board
Game rules

STARTING THE GAME-- The Sacrifices

Cacao was the drink of the gods and was found in great abundance in the Aztec temples.

Before the game begins, all players must lay one of their Cacao cards face down on the temple's sacrificial altar in the middle of the game board (see illustration on first page, A). These cards remain face down the entire game and are unavailable to the players. However, at the end of the game they are worth the point value on the card, plus 3 bonus victory points for whoever has made the highest Cacao sacrifice.

GAME PLAY

The game is played over several rounds (max 7). In each round the players will each assign 2 of their cocoa cards to each of the 6 locations on the board. This is done by playing the cards onto the corresponding locations on their player boards.

After the locations have been resolved one after the other, a new round begins.

PREPARATION FOR EACH ROUND

Preparation for each round (for Location number see first page):

1. Roll the three, white cacao harvest dice and place them each on a circle in the Cacao Bean Harvest: Location 2 at the lower middle of the board.

2. Place one black die in the circle in the center of The City of Tenochtitlan: Location 3 at the bottom left of the board. (The number showing on the die is not important.)

3. The white cube is placed in the first circle (above 8/4, next to "-2") at Location 5: Making The Cacao Drink. This cube will be moved one circle to the right at the start of each next round, to keep track of the rounds (max 7).

4. The two top cards of each improvement pile are drawn and placed face up on the open boxes labeled "6" and "3" at Location 6: Tachli at the top right of the board.

OFFERINGS:

Players make offerings using their 12 cacao cards (having already permanently placed one of their thirteen as a sacrifice at the temple). They must always place two cards at each location. These cards will be added together and the sum will be used to determine who wins each location. There are three different kinds of offering (see the back of the player boards.) The type of offering which will be made each round, for the duration of the round, is determined by the color of the box occupied by the highest score marker on the score track.

In a round in which the highest player score marker is on a gold box: offerings are made to each of the 6 locations one at a time. Players begin by each placing two cards face down on the Chocolatl: Location 1 on their player boards. They then reveal and resolve the offerings on that location. This continues for each location in clockwise order until all players have placed, uncovered and resolved their two-card offerings on each of the six locations.

In a round in which the highest score marker is on a red box (or on the '0' of the score track), the players immediately place all 12 cards (2 per location) face down on their player boards at the start of the round. Then, starting with Chocolatl: Location 1, reveal and resolve the offerings on that location. Continue for each location in clockwise order.

If the highest player score marker is on a green box: each player must put one card face down on each location on their player board. Next, each of the player's 6 cards are uncovered and then each player must put a second card face down on each location. Afterwards, players uncover and resolve each individual location in clockwise order.

NOTE: Movement on the score track. When a player lands on an already occupied box on the score track he must place his marker on top of the marker which is already there. This order is kept to break ties (when the Chocolatl figure is not involved). See "TIES WHEN OFFERING".

Location Results:
At each location, resolving the offerings has different results. Depending on who made the highest or lowest offerings, there are bonuses, victory points, and penalties given at each location. (Remember that the total offering is the sum of the two cards played at each location.)
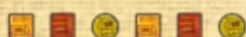
Location 1: CHOCOLATL
It is said that Quetzalquatl used to look in the mirror of the future. When he saw himself, he was shocked at the image of himself as an old man with a grey beard.

The player with the largest offering at this location receives the Chocolatl figure. He immediately moves forward one box on the score track and will now win every tie (that he is involved in) as long as he has the Chocolatl figure.

The player with the smallest offering must take the old man figure. In this round, he must place this figure (with the "-1" symbol) in front of his player board. At the remaining 5 offering locations of this round, he must always subtract 1 from the total sum of his offering.

NOTE: In the next round, the "old man" figure is returned to Location 1, the player returning it will receive one bonus point on his offering at this location!

IMPORTANT: TIES WHEN OFFERING:
In every tie of the game (including ties on the pyramid) the following tie rule is valid: If ties occur after all bonus and penalty points are considered, if one of the tied players has the Chocolatl figure, he wins. If the player with the Chocolatl figure is not involved in the tie, the tied player whohas the lowest score on the score track wins. If several players occupy the same box on the score track, the player whose marker is on top wins (see NOTE: Movement on the score track).

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1. LEADING PLAYER ON GOLDEN BOX:
Face-down offering of 2 cards for one Location. Then reveal all cards and resolve this Location, and on to next Location.

2. LEADING PLAYER ON RED BOX (OR BOX '0"):
Face-down offerings for all Locations at start of round, 2 cards per Location. Then reveal all cards and resolve each Location.

3. LEADING PLAYER ON GREEN BOX:
Face-down offering for all Locations, 1 card per Location, then reveal those cards. Next another face-down offering for each Location. Now reveal and resolve each Location.

LOCATION 1: CHOCOLATL

Highest offering gets Chocolatl figure (1 V.P. and tiebreaker)

Lowest offering gets old man figure: minus 1 for offerings at Locations 2-6, plus 1 for offering at Location 1 (next round)

TIES:
Chocolatl figure wins, or else the player with the least victory points

Location 2: CACAO BEAN HARVEST

Quetzalquatl provided for a rich harvest of the Cacao fruit he loved so much.
The player with the largest offering on this location immediately receives victory points equal to the highest number showing on the three dice and scores these on the score track. The player with the next largest offering receives the value of the second highest die, and the third highest offering receives the value of the lowest die.

Location 3: THE CITY TENOCHTITLAN

Here stands Tenochtitlan, the capital city of the Aztecs
The player with the largest offering here has a choice:
a) He can build a hut (placing one of his colored cubes on a free building). This hut gives one extra point in each offering at other locations for the rest of the game. As a reminder, the player takes a bonus chip "+1/-1" which he places in front of his player board.
OR
b) he can take the die on the circle in the middle of the city. This die can be used once in the future, to increase his offering. To do so, after the offerings are uncovered, the die (or dice, if a player has more than one and wishes to roll more than one) can be rolled, and the number rolled is added to his offering. Once any die is rolled it is used up and must be discarded.

The player with the second largest offering at Tenochtitlan must take the bonus which the first player didn't choose.

NOTE:
The huts count as bonuses in every offering except on The City Tenochtitlan, where they count as a "-1" to the offering due to the hut occupants having to be fed!
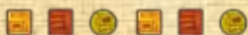
Location 4: THE PYRAMID CHOLULA

The most important holy tomb in the Aztec world lay in Cholula.
By volume, the pyramid of Cholula is the largest man-made pyramid and monument in the world!
The pyramid is built from the bottom to the top. In each round 2 stones (colored cubes) are placed in the pyramid. Each stone counts as one victory point at the end of the game. (Extra bonuses will be calculated later in the game play). When offerings are resolved at Cholula, either:
a) The player with the largest offering places both stones on the pyramid. That is the case if the highest offering is at least 3 points more than the second. He places two of his colored cubes on the lowest and left-most available boxes on the pyramid.
OR
b) The players with the two largest offerings (when there is a maximum of 2 points difference) each place a stone in the pyramid. In this case the player with the lar-gest offering determines who places their colored cube first. (This is important in receiving pyramid bonuses at the end of the game, as well as at the completion of each row. See below.)

Bonus Points: As soon as a row is completed, the player with the most cubes in that row immediately receives 2-5 victory points (whatever value is designated at the left side of the completed row.)

As with all other ties in the game, (see page 4 under "Ties When Offering"), if there is a tie in a row of the pyramid, if one of the tied players has the Chocolatl figure, he wins. If the player with the Chocolatl figure is not involved in the tie, the tied player who has the lowest score on the score track wins.

Example: Orange player receives five points for having the majority on the bottom row of the pyramid. Green player receives four points on the second row: Green player owns the Chocolatl figure and so wins the tie with Purple player.

Location 5: MAKING THE CACAO DRINK
According to legend, Quetzalquatl discovered the Cacao fruit on a mystical mountain full of Cacao trees.

In each round, victory points are awarded immediately at this location. Each round, the number of victory points awarded is lower. In round 1 the player with the largest offering receives 8 points, the second largest 4 points. In round 2, there are 7 points for the largest offering, 3 points for the second largest. Starting from round 4, only the player with the largest offering receives victory points. In every round, the player with the smallest offering loses 2 points.
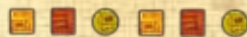
Location 6: TACHLI
The Aztecs loved the game of Tachli. It is a competitive sport played with a hard rubber ball and resembled a combination of basketball and football.

Whoever plays the game of Tachli best, receives a reward of new and better Cacao cards for their future offerings. The player with the highest offering at Tachli: Location 6, receives the higher-valued card; the player with the second highest offering takes the lower card. Both players must discard a card, putting it back in the box, in exchange for the new card they received (naturally they would discard their lowest valued Cacao card).

NOTE: In the last round (which is only known to be the last during the actual round; see the ending conditions below) an improvement card has no more practical use. Therefore, in the last round no improvement cards are awarded at Tachli. Instead the two highest offerings receive immediate victory points (on the score track): the player with the highest offering receives 6 and the second highest offering receives 3.

Bonus Points:
If a row is complete
-> 2-5 points for the majority

LOCATION 5: THE CACAO DRINK
- Players with highest and 2nd highest offering get points in round 1-3
- Starting with round 4, only player with highest offering gets points
- Every round the player with the smallest offering gets -2 points

LOCATION 6: TACHLI
- The player with highest offering gets higher card
- The player with 2nd highest offering gets lower card

Both players discard another card

GAME END

When one of the following three conditions occurs, the game is immediately in its last round:
- The pyramid is finished. In this case all 7 rounds are played.
- A score marker reaches or exceeds 40 victory points.
- A player runs out of colored cubes because he has used them all in game play. Once this occurs, players complete the last round, resolving all offerings, and then continue to End Scoring. If a player has run out of cubes, he can still score points, as if he still had cubes left! To make this easier to see he could use cubes of an unused color, if available.

END SCORING

After the last round is completed, bonus points are awarded and added to each player's victory points on the score track.
Bonus points are awarded for:

- each stone in the pyramid	1 point
- the majority of stones in the pyramid*	3 points
- the player with the Chocolatl figure at game end	3 points
- the player with the old man figure at game end	-3 points
- the value of the card which was sacrified at the temple	? points
- bonus for the highest Cacao sacrifice at the temple*	3 points
- any players with a bonus die leftover (max 1) can roll it and take the value as victory points	? points

*If there is a tie in either of these cases, each of the tied players get the bonus points. So the Chocolatl figure here has no effect!

Whoever has pleased the gods and earned the most victory points is the winner of Chocolatl! In case of a tie (in winning the game), the tied player who made the largest sacrifice at the temple wins the game. If more than one tied player made the same largest sacrifice, they share the victory.

GAME ENDS when:
- pyramid is finished
- a player reaches or exceeds 40 victory points
- a player runs out of cubes

END SCORING

Ties during end scoring: Chocolatl figure has no effect!