

### Rayuela

Rayuela means hopscotch in Spanish. In most Spanish speaking countries you would be playing hopscotch if you were playing Rayuela. However, in Chile it is a completely different game. According to Arthur Gould who grew up in Chile, Rayuela, also known as Tejo for clarity purposes, is rooted in ancient Spanish games and Chilean natives first learned about it after Spanish Conquistadors took over. It was originally played by soldiers at their bases during the colonial era. It was then spread outside the military by the lower classes. It is still popular today, especially in rural areas. For those living in the city, the game is a popular event during Independence Day festivities on September 18. It is popular among all ages, although adults have taken it to a more competitive level, turning it into a sport.

The setup for the game still hearkens back to its simple roots in the military barracks. Originally the playing field was just drawn in the dirt. Today, the game has taken the playing field and elevated it. Setup requires a large area, usually outside, with a crate filled with dirt. The crate is approximately 90 cm wide, 50 cm long, and 20 cm deep. It is tilted slightly towards the player with the top open and filled with moist dirt or clay.

The necessary equipment for this game is the lienza and tejos. The lienza is a thread that is elevated slightly above the dirt and is placed from left to right along the center of the playing field. For more competitive players, it will only cover half the length of the playing field. The tejos are heavy brass, lead, or iron cylinders that weigh between 1.5 to 3.5 lbs.

To play the game, players are broken up into teams of two, how many teams there are is dependent on how many are playing. The players stand away from the crate by 12 meters. The player gets three tejos. They toss each tejo, attempting to get as close as possible to the lienza. After the player's turn is over, the distance of the tejos from the lienza is measured and points are granted based on that distance. If the player lands directly on the lienza, their points are doubled. If all three of their tejos are tossed outside of the crate, the player is disqualified from further games.

This set of rules is how the game is professionally played. Casual players will normally not break into teams and the distance from the playing field is greatly lessened from 12 meters to being between 2-

5 meters.

Other rules that are not necessarily in the standard goal-oriented rules, include not distracting your opponent during the toss. Psyching your opponent out or being disruptive right before their toss is considered unsportsmanlike. Although, at least in casual play, trash talking in between turns is not just acceptable, but expected. Also, in casual play when distances become less enforced, it is generally expected that players try to adhere to the agreed upon distance. Essentially they don't take that extra long step in throwing the tejo or extending their body in some way to have an unfair advantage over other players.

Some legitimate tactics, though, for playing the game includes trying to knock your tejos closer to the lienza. Final distances aren't measured until after a player has thrown all three tejos. So a player can aim his current tejo at a previous tejo instead of the lienza in an effort to get the previous tejo closer to the lienza. Depending on your skill set, this may be an easier way of getting points than just tossing them at the lienza. Also, there is no specific way of tossing the tejo, but one tactic is to develop your own technique that best works for you.

The fun of Rayuela comes from the excitement and anticipation after throwing the tejo. Once it leaves the player's fingertips, their control over the game is left to chance. Much like bowling or golf, the player's excitement builds until the tejo lands, which will either result in a grand celebration or saddening defeat. This built up anticipation gives Rayuela its appeal. But for Chileans, there is more to the game than just a game of skill and patience. It is also a game that is deeply rooted in their heritage. This is seen in its beginning as a game amongst soldiers and then spreading to being a popular game during their Independence Day festivities. For Chile it is a social game that everyone knows and plays, which leads to a game that's not only meaningful, but also a means of national camaraderie.