

CHESS · VARIANT 149 OF 153

Upside-Down

8×8

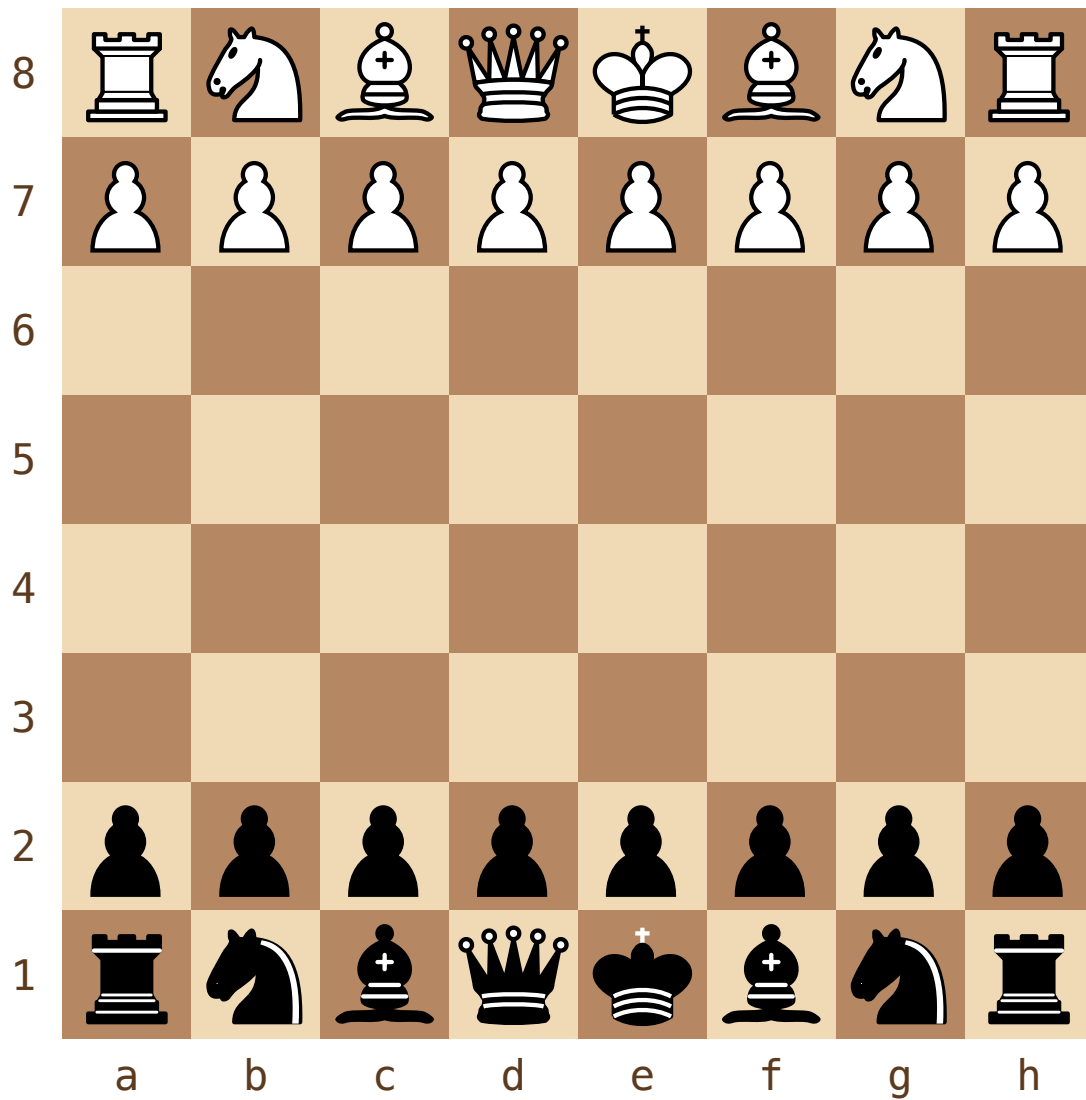
BOARD

2

PLAYERS

UPSIDE-DOWN

Pieces start on the opponent's back rank. Pawns move "backward" toward their own side. A disorienting mirror of standard chess.



Upside-Down Chess – starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=chess&variant=upside-down>

SETUP

Board: Standard 8×8.

Setup (FEN): RNBQKBNR/PPPPPPPP/8/8/8/8/pppppppp/rnbqkbnr

White's pieces start on rank 8 (Black's usual side). Black's pieces start on rank 1 (White's usual side). Pawns still move in their normal direction – White pawns advance toward rank 8, Black pawns toward rank 1 – but since they start on rank 7/rank 2 respectively, they're already deep in "enemy territory."

RULES

All standard chess rules apply, including:

- ♦ Pawns move in their standard direction (White toward rank 8, Black toward rank 1).
- ♦ Pawns promote on the far rank from their perspective (rank 8 for White, rank 1 for Black) – which is where they started.
- ♦ Castling is available if King and Rook haven't moved.
- ♦ En passant applies normally.

WIN CONDITION

Checkmate, same as standard chess.

STRATEGY

Pieces are already developed, with no opening phase of moving pieces out. Pawns are immediately adjacent to enemy pieces, creating instant tactical tension. The game is sharp from move 1. Pawn structure becomes strange because pawns are "behind" the pieces they're supposed to shield.

ATTRIBUTION

Traditional variant. Public domain.