

# Ginseng Pai Sho

Rule Book

By Mikkel





This is dedicated to all the wonderful people who helped shape Ginseng Pai Sho into what it is today. While there are too many names to list, special thanks go to those who made significant contributions: Skud, Pip (my brother), Ginger8readMan3, emanuelovici, Sambews, sir stotes and Dallin. Your efforts are truly appreciated.



**The Garden Gate:** [SkudPaiSho.com](https://SkudPaiSho.com)

**The Garden Gate Discord:** [discord.gg/thegardengate](https://discord.gg/thegardengate)

**Download this rulebook:** Ask at the Discord Server

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# History Behind the Game

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In January 2017, I finished watching Avatar: The Last Airbender (ATLA) for the first time. Soon after, I stumbled upon Pai Sho and even though it was difficult for me to learn, I was immediately captivated. Fast forward to September 2019, after playing a lot of Skud Pai Sho, I started to get ideas for a new Pai Sho variant. I had already watched ATLA numerous times and was inspired by some Pai Sho scenes there and in The Legend of Korra. The scenes were a guiding factor mainly in the setup, choice of tiles and some tile movement.

I shared the concept with my brother, Pip, and he immediately started to help develop it. Pip even came up with the name for Ginseng Pai Sho, which later on would also inspire us to create the unique Ginseng tile for the game. We shared the idea in the Discord server, and initially, it didn't grab much attention. However, after about a year, Sambews stumbled upon the game and thought it was interesting, which led to the creation of a dedicated server for developing Ginseng Pai Sho. The Ginseng community grew rapidly, and many contributed to making Ginseng Pai Sho a balanced game through countless test games on skudpaisho.com's playground mode.

On December 6, 2021, with enormous help from our favorite Skud, the game became official on the site. Even though it found its place online, there were still some aspects of the game that was not quite balanced. About a year later, Ginger8readMan3 realized why it was so difficult to make it a balanced game. The reason being that some of the game mechanics treated it as a game of capturing even though it was more about movement and strategic positioning. With this realization it only took us about an hour to figure out the necessary changes. Shortly thereafter, a major update was rolled out for Ginseng Pai Sho that turned it into a balanced game.

There are many other aspects that could be highlighted, but these were the main events. What I love most about Ginseng Pai Sho is that it wasn't created solely by one person but by a large, fun, welcoming, and loving community. The Garden Gate community is truly the healthiest online community I have ever experienced, and creating something together with these people is one of the most awesome things I have ever done.



# What is Ginseng Pai Sho?

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Ginseng Pai Sho is a game of movement and capture. You have to move your tiles closer to the opponent, and might risk having tiles captured in your attempt to win the game. The first couple of times you play, you might get the feeling that it is a capture focused game, but as you get more and more experienced, you will likely see that it is mainly a game of movement and careful positioning.

## Reviews

"Ginseng is one of my favorite variants because of how well things fit together. There's so much opportunity for strategy and planning, but it's not so complex that it's hard to wrap your head around. The movement feels easy to understand, and every single piece's ability feels important and useful. Each game feels different, not very repetitive at all. There's a reason it's one of the most played variants right now, and that's because how engaging and enjoyable it is to play. I'd really encourage all of you to consider learning Ginseng; it's one of the best variants out there right now in my opinion."

— *Aurorabreeze* —

"I really like Ginseng Pai Sho for two main reasons: firstly, it features all the original benders from Avatar; secondly, the tiles possess a diverse range of skills, allowing for numerous possibilities and surprises for both you and your opponent. In order to be good at the game, having a strategy is important, but being present in the moment sometimes matters more."

— *turtl* —

"Ginseng Pai Sho is a thrilling game that always causes me to keep on playing once I have started. The tiles and setup are perfectly balanced; in fact, there is no imbalance between the tiles, as they all can have positive and negative effects depending on the game state. One of my favourite parts of the game is the numerous strategies and openings, together with the endless possibilities of movement and placement. Sometimes I just randomly get this urge to start playing Ginseng Pai Sho - almost as if it is calling my name."

— *Leaves* —

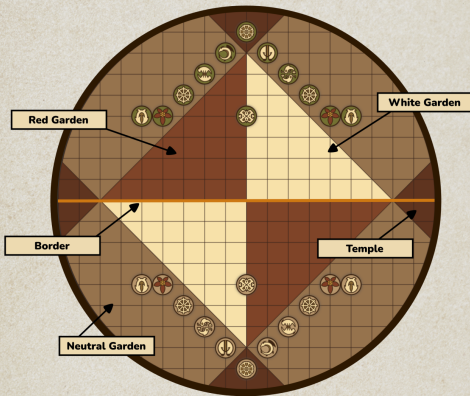


# Ginseng Pai Sho Rules

The following sections will teach you quickly and easily how to play Ginseng Pai Sho. Begin with deciding who will play as Host and who will play as Guest. The Guest has the honor of making the first move.

## Game Setup

Before starting a game of Ginseng Pai Sho, set up the board and tiles as shown in the picture below. As you may see, each player starts with a total of twelve tiles. Among these tiles, there are only nine unique ones, with some duplicates present. It might be overwhelming at first sight, but it is relatively easy to remember what the tiles do. We will come back to that soon.



## Objective

To win a game of Ginseng Pai Sho, you must be the first player to move your White Lotus from its starting point to the other side of the Border (or midline) and into your opponent's territory.

## Playing a Turn

Players take alternating turns. When it is your turn, select and move a tile according to its specified movement and apply any triggered abilities.

## Draw

If a player reaches a point where no moves are possible, the game results in a draw.

# General Rules

Here are the four fundamental rules that apply to **most** of the tiles in Ginseng Pai Sho, distilled for easy understanding.

## 1: Movement

- Each tile is allowed to move within a range of up to 5 spaces.
- Tiles are played on the intersections, and may be moved along the horizontal and vertical lines; no diagonal movement allowed.
- Furthermore, a tile cannot pass through another; it must navigate around obstructing tiles.

## 2: Capturing

- Each tile can capture.
- You capture your opponent's tiles by moving your tile onto theirs. Captured tiles are taken off the board and placed in the captured tiles pile.
- Tiles can only be captured when both White Lotuses are outside Temples.

## 3: Temples

- The Northern and Southern Temples may only be used by the White Lotus that started there.
- Each tile may enter the Eastern and Western Temples.
- Tiles inside Temples are protected from being captured.
- When moving a tile into the Eastern or Western Temple, you may exchange it for one of your captured tiles.

## 4: Abilities

- Each tile possesses a unique ability that influences other tiles on the board.

**However**, it is worth noticing that there are exceptions to this simplicity. The White Lotus, Ginseng, and Wheel do not adhere strictly to these rules. In the next section, we will go through each tile individually, focusing on abilities and exceptions. By the end you'll have a complete grasp of how all tiles work.



# Tile Abilities

Since rules regarding Movement, Capture and Temples have been explained, we will only go through the abilities of the tiles and any exceptions here. See the examples for further clarification.



**Koi:** Traps all surrounding<sup>a</sup> enemy tiles if it is touching a White Garden<sup>b</sup>.



**Badgermole:** It may flip one surrounding tile over itself after moving to a new spot if it is touching a White Garden.



**Dragon:** It may push one surrounding tile 1 space away from itself after moving to a new spot if it is touching a Red Garden.



**Sky Bison:** Grants +1 movement to surrounding friendly tiles if it is touching a Red Garden; excluding the White Lotus and Wheel.



**Lion Turtle:** Temporarily nullifies the abilities of surrounding enemy tiles; excluding the enemy Lion Turtle.



a) By "surrounding", we mean the eight spots around a tile.

b) See the picture under "Setting up the Game" to familiarize yourself with the various sections of the board.



# Tile Abilities – continued



**Orchid:** When it captures a tile, it is also removed from the board. Keep in mind that this ability can be apprehended by the enemy Lion Turtle.



**Ginseng:** Protects friendly tiles in an uninterrupted line of sight on the horizontal and vertical lines from being captured. One exception from standard tiles: It cannot capture.



**Wheel:** Two exceptions from standard tiles: 1) Instead of moving up to five spaces, it can travel unlimited spaces in one direction along horizontal or vertical lines. 2) It does not have a specific ability.



**White Lotus:** Three exceptions from standard tiles: 1) Moves by jumping over any tiles diagonal to it, creating a potential chain jump. 2) It cannot capture. 3) When captured, return it to its Temple.

Now you are ready to play Ginseng Pai Sho! So bring your board and tiles out, or play online at [www.skudpaisho.com](http://www.skudpaisho.com).



**"Sharing a game of Pai Sho  
with a fascinating stranger  
is one of life's true delights."**

**— Iroh**  
*(with a twist)*