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About the author

TZAR CHESS

A Chess Variant By Simon Edward Jepps

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How To Play

Tzar Chess is a fantastic variant whereby a player's **King** and **Queen** may effectively "switch roles" ~ only instead of each piece becoming the exact other, the **King** becomes a **Tzar** (Rook+Knight combo) and the **Queen** becomes a **Czara** (female **Tzar** but moves only like a classical King).

I have long found the concept of the **Queen** going off to fight a war for her **King** to be unsettling and have often considered other ideas. Needless to say, in real life it is more likely that the **King** would go off and fight to defend his **Queen**: unless perhaps he is disabled and she is of the muscly variety.

Nevertheless, a subconscious adoration for the Classical game has always begged me to seek out new dimensions within the same foundations, so as to preserve its immeasurable academic heritage and allow any new evolution to thus transpose upon this heritage into a greatly augmented future.

Indeed, a paramount focus behind the scenes of my Chess Variant projects has been to create more substance from the same inventory and to evolve Chess without adding any more physical pieces or squares.

The reason is twofold: **Firstly** there are many issues with larger boards or extra pieces, both algorithmically and thematically, whereby the game always features an unwelcome anomaly of design ~ particularly with larger boards. **Secondly**, regardless of how popular any Chess Variant may have become, none such alternative 'evolutions' of the game have ever succeeded the Classical game loved immemorial, which aside from its miniscule yet ever nagging qwirks, is otherwise a mathematically perfect and almost 'sacred' design.

Yet it is true, Grandmasters have been saying for over a hundred years now that the game of Chess is becoming "played out" and needs to evolve ~ not just for elite players, but even at tournament level whereby one's good knowledge of Openings is imbalanced by the inability to reach elite depths of study, in turn resulting in a bugging boredom with common positions.

I have always sought to find a single "key" which, whence unlocking merely one "square", would in turn augment the "infinite" possibilities of Chess to beyond the mere reach of Grandmasters and into the hands of all who would dare transcend other dimensions of Chess exploration.

Herewith, let me teach you **Tzar Chess**.

- The **Tzar** is a combination of **Rook+Knight** and thus may move like either piece at any time.
 - This piece was first publicised under the name 'Chancellor' by *José Capablanca* in 1925 and has since been adopted by various other games, such as *Seirawan Chess* in which it is called an 'Elephant'.
 - The **Tzar** is of equal value to a **Queen** (9+ points). Whilst a **Queen** is effectively a **Rook + 1½ Bishops** (9.71 points) and yet a **Tzar** is only a **Rook + 1¼ Knights** (8.75 points), the ability to leap your **Rook** equalizes the comparison.
- The **Tzar** is created when a player chooses to switch the roles of his/her **King/Queen**, making the **King** move like a **Tzar**, whilst the **Queen** assumes the role of the **King** (moving ONE square in any direction) and in turn becoming the female **Czara**, the new throne piece and objective of the game.
 - To do this, the player **MUST** ensure the **King's** FIRST move is a **NON-CAPTURING Knight** move and that it is made **BEFORE** the **Queen** has made her first move also.
 - Providing neither the player's **King** or **Queen** has yet moved, then this first move of the **King** like a **Knight** declares itself a **Tzar**, assigning the **Queen** as a **Czara** who may only move ONE square in any direction.
 - **[+]** Alternatively, the player **MAY** **Castle** his **Queen** to declare both **Tzar/Czara**, but likewise this **MUST** be done **BEFORE** the **King/Queen** has yet moved.
 - Herewith the opponent must now Check-Mate your **Czara**, whilst you (providing your opponent has not done the same) will continue to Check-Mate your opponent's **King** with a new strongest piece.

To distinguish between the new roles of **King** and **Queen**, it is appropriate to change their titles - this prevents confusion when reading through notation.

Herewith a **King** becomes a **Tzar** and a **Queen** becomes a **Czara**. Hereafter the **Tzar** is notated with a 'T' and the **Czara** with a 'C'.

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To do this, the player **MUST** ensure the King's FIRST move is a **NON-CAPTURING Knight** move & that it is made **BEFORE** the Queen has made her first move also.

Providing neither the player's King or Queen has yet moved, then this first move of the King like a Knight declares itself a Tzar, assigning the Queen as a Czara who may only move ONE square in any direction.

Alternatively, the player **MAY** **Castle** his Queen to declare both Tzar/Czara, but likewise this **MUST** be done **BEFORE** the King/Queen has yet moved.

Hereof, the opponent must now Check-Mate your Czara, whilst you (providing your opponent has not done the same) will continue to Check-Mate your opponent's King with a new strongest piece.

CHECK of course can still be given to a **King** which has not yet declared itself a **Tzar**, however the **King** MAY escape Check with the non-capturing **Knight** move declaring itself a **Tzar** instead. Yet, until either **Tzar/Czara** is declared, a Check MUST be addressed as per usual: thus **BLOCKING** Check is the best method of prolonging anonymity to still become a **Tzar** later.

CASTLING rules and notation remain the same, only whence it is the **Czara** who must now Castle, we notate this as "**S~S**" **Queenside** and "**S~S~S**" **Kingside**, as is commonly accepted '*Queen-Castling*' notation in Chess Variant forums.

Castling the **Queen** as a declaration of **Czara** IS subject to the same restrictions as Castling the **King**; thus she MAY NOT be declared by Castling through/into Check.

If you didn't already know (and it's surprising how many people don't) the "**O~O/S~S**" & "**O~O~O/S~S~S**" notation refers to the number of squares the **Rook** must move, relative to each side. Thus here in **Tzar Chess**, 'Long Castle' and 'Short Castle' become the opposite relative destinations for the **Czara**.

Whence depicting the new pieces in game diagrams, it is actually possible to merely use the same symbols/images as per the **King** and **Queen**, since if one is actually following the game one would understand. However in case you would want to make it clear for observers who do not know the history of the position, or that it is a Chess Variant they are looking at, then I would purely indicate their new roles by attaching a ' **T** ' or ' **C** ' to each one respectively, much as I have done in the diagram here. However I do not personally assign any newly designed images for these pieces.

Please note, whilst the correct term for a female **Tzar** is actually '*tzarina*' or '*czarina*', being an eccentric game designer I chose to create my own good term, the **Czara**.

In conclusion and summary, I am extremely keen on this variant as a prime candidate for evolving Chess because it ticks all the boxes and offers a fantastical new treasure trove of infinite gameplay possibilities.

Thank you for reading.



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