

# Firenze

A strategy game for 2 or 3 players by  
Néstor Romeral Andrés

## INTRODUCTION

**Firenze** is a tile-laying game for 2 or 3 players inspired by the beauty of the *Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore* in *Firenze* (Italy)<sup>1</sup>. The exterior of the basilica is faced with polychrome marble panels in various shades of green, pink, and white.

It is derived from TAIJI and OMEGA, by the same designer.

## EQUIPMENT

- 60 rectangular tiles composed of two squares of different colour<sup>2</sup> (20 of every combination of white, green, and pink).
- 12 black pyramids.
- Box.

## HOW TO PLAY

Each player has an allocated colour (White, Pink, or Green). In a 2-player game, one of the colours will act as neutral (I recommend White).

The player that has been in *Firenze* more recently starts. In case of a tie determine the starting player by any peaceful means. Keep all 60 tiles and the pyramids within all players' reach. You can use 2 sets of Firenze instead of one for longer and deeper games.

- 1 By no means am I trying to emulate its beauty, as it would be impossible. This is just a game.
- 2 As in TAIJI, by the same designer.

Players take turns in clockwise order placing **any** unplayed tile directly on the table, following these placement rules:

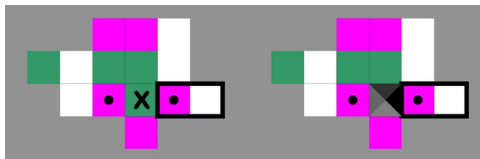
- a) The tile must align with an imaginary square grid whose squares are the size of each of the tile's squares.
- b) The tile must be orthogonally<sup>3</sup> adjacent to at least one tile already played (except for the first play, obviously).



Examples of legal placements for the second player

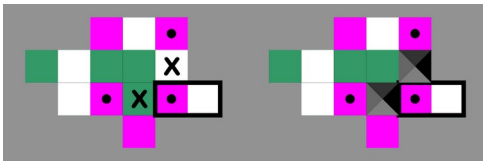
## LAMPREDOTTO<sup>4</sup>

If, as a result of your tile placement, you've 'sandwiched' a square of **any colour** (Even your own) with two squares of **your colour** on opposite sides, you **can** cover it with a black pyramid<sup>5</sup> (you can say "lampredotto" if you wish). Notice that you can sandwich several squares with the same placement.



Pink places a pink-white tile, sandwiching a green square and placing a pyramid on it.

- 3 Diagonally doesn't count as adjacent.
- 4 Firenze's traditional sandwich.
- 5 If there are still pyramids left to play.

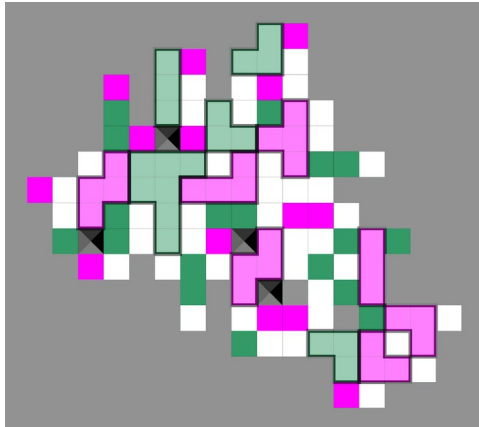


Pink places a pink-white tile, sandwiching a green square **and** a white square, placing a pyramid on each of them. She could have placed just one, or none.

## GAME END

The game ends when there are no more tiles left to play.

Your score is equal to the number of groups of **3 or more squares** of your colour. The player with the highest score wins. Ties are broken by the largest group. If the tie for the win persists, play again.



Example of endgame for a 2-player game. Pink scores for 7 groups. Green scores for 5 groups. Pink wins the game.

## STRATEGY TIPS

Pay attention to the unplayed tiles. If you play very aggressively at the start you might run out of ammo for the end game (I've seen some nice comebacks at the end).

Winning is all about having fewer 'useless' squares than your opponents on the board. Place your opponents' squares so that they become useless. A 'useless' square is either:

- A single square that can't be expanded into a group of 3 because it's surrounded by others.
- A group of 2 squares that can't be expanded into a group of 3.
- Any square beyond the 3<sup>rd</sup> one in a group (although this is not that terrible; see below).

The game has constant trade-offs. You lose a point here, but your opponent loses a point there. Set up traps so that you get the upper hand on those trade-offs. For example, you might recover an apparently lost square by threatening your opponent nearby at the same time.

*Lampredotto* is obviously the key to tipping the balance in your favor. It can be used to reduce the size of opponents' groups, block further growth, or even split your own large groups into small ones (remember that a group of 7 is worth one point, and two groups of 3 are worth 2 points).

Arrange your groups so that they can't be split by a *lampredotto*.

As the number of tiles left is reduced, the endgame becomes more and more clear, but the *lampredotto* is a card up your sleeve!

Use 'holes' to block the growth of your opponents' groups.

Ties for number of groups are frequent among experienced players, so having a big group (6 – 7 squares) to break the tie might not be that bad after all.

If you sandwich a lot, the pyramids will eventually run out and this will prevent your opponents from sandwiching your squares (although usually no more than 6 pyramids are played).