

TCI 9.11 Recreation

Recreation was also part of medieval Islamic culture. Two favorite pastimes that Muslims helped popularize were polo and chess.

Polo - Muslims first learned about the game of polo from the Persians. Polo is a sport in which teams on horseback use mallets (long wooden hammers) to strike a ball through a goal. Muslims looked at horses as status symbols, and polo quickly became popular among the wealthy. Muslims adapted and refined the game of polo, and today, the game is enjoyed all over the world.

Chess - The game of chess was probably invented in India. Persians introduced the game to the Muslim world in the 600s. It quickly became popular at all levels of society. Caliphs invited chess champions to their palaces to play in matches. Players enjoyed the intellectual challenge that chess presented.

Chess is a battle of wits in which players move pieces on a board according to a set of complex rules. Each player commands a small army of pieces, one of which is the king. The goal is to checkmate the opponent's king. *Checkmate* means that the king cannot move without being captured.

As with polo, Muslims adapted and improved the game of chess. They spread it across Muslim lands and introduced it to Europe. Chess remains one of the world's most popular board games.

