



Cherokee Butterbean
Game.

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ACTIVITY: Play a traditional Cherokee game using butterbeans.

MATERIALS: Six butterbeans (six large lima beans can be substituted); twenty-four kernels of dried corn; basket, basket lid or other round, lightweight container

at least 12 inches (30 centimeters) in diameter and 1-1/2 inches (4 centimeters) deep in which to toss the butterbeans; pot or bowl for the corn kernels; paper and pencil; felt-tip marking pen.

DIGGING IN: This is a variation on the traditional Cherokee Butterbean Game. It can be played by several individual players or several teams. Traditionally, this game uses three butterbeans that have been split in half. We do not recommend this because it is very easy to cut oneself while splitting a dried butterbean from edge to edge. We use six whole butterbeans (or six large lima beans). Color one side of each bean with the felt-tip marker.

To play a round of the Butterbean Game each player will:

1. Place the six butterbeans in the round basket, basket lid or other lightweight container.
2. Gently flip the butterbeans into the air and catch them in the basket.
3. Look at how the butterbeans have landed. Only three combinations are counted as a score:
 - All butterbeans land with plain sides up: 6 points
 - All butterbeans land with marked sides up: 4 points
 - A single butterbean lands with one color facing up and the other five butterbeans land with the other color facing up: 2 points
 - Three butterbeans land with the same color facing up and the other three butterbeans land with the other color
4. If the player scores during a turn, he or she will gather up the number of corn kernels from the pot that equals that score. The kernels will be kept in front of that player.
5. Players or teams take turns flipping the beans. Each flip that scores earns that player or team another turn. If the flip does not score, it becomes the next player's or team's turn.
6. The game is over when all the corn kernel counters have been removed from the pot. The team left with the highest score—the most corn counters—wins.