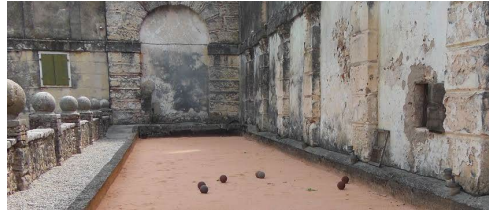


BOCCE 101

13SEP2025



Ancient Origin and Earliest evidence:

Bocce originated as an ancient pastime; it is a game from South Asia and/or the Middle East. Stone balls discovered in Turkey date to 9000 B.C. and are the oldest known artifacts related to the game.

➤ Ancient Migration from Turkey to Egypt

Trade route travelers likely moved bocce West. A painting in an Egyptian tomb from 5200 B.C. depicts figures playing a game with polished stones or balls.

➤ Migration to Greece and Then to Rome

The game spread to Greece around 800 B.C. It was later adopted by the Romans around 400 B.C., who played it using materials like coconuts and hard olive wood. It became a game of status for elites and officials, notably the Roman Empire's founder [Emperor Augustus](#) who reigned 27BC to 14CE.

Bocce Game of Today:

Bocce's modern form developed over the next 1500-2000 years primarily in Italy during the Italian Renaissance [1400 to 1700 CE]. Understandably, the name of the game as well as the name for the target ball were derived from Italian words. In Italian la.boccia means bowl and le.bocce is the plural, la.palla means ball and la.pallina is the little ball. Notably, the word la.boule.or.les.boules for bocce balls is French (derived from the French game of balls called pétanque). The target ball in that game is called the cochonnet, which means piglet.

➤ Migration to the United States

We can credit the arrival of the game in the United States to Italian migrants of 1880-1924 who brought their version of bocce with them to inner-city, make-shift courts and social clubs here and elsewhere around the world when they left Italy.

In 1934, New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia (an Italian) established the first official bocce courts in Thomas Jefferson Park in East Harlem, New York City. California's early 20th century Italian immigrant community in 1942 founded the Aquatic Park Bocce Club in San Francisco. The game surged in popularity in the United States after a boom in California in 1989, and bocce became a Special Olympics sport at the 1991 World Games in Minneapolis.

The Bocce World Championship began in Italy in 1947, but today there is no single "Bocce Ball World Championship," but rather several prominent tournaments including the World Series of Bocce (WSB) in Rome, New York, and the Vigilucci's Beach Bocce World Championship in San Diego, California. You can watch the 2025 World Series of Bocce here on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Eryd7hnM0k>