Chinese Solitaire

Getting Started

Introduction
How To Play
Auto Play
Revision History

Customization

Background Color
Card Back
Preferences
Sound Options

Advanced

Statistics
Strategy
Structure Of CS.INI

Support

How To Contact The Author
Other Shareware By Randy Rasa
Future Features?

Registration

How To Register
Registration Form

If you enjoy this game, please support it!

Introduction To Chinese Solitaire

Background

This game was suggested by **James Jonte** (budda@phoenix.net). Here's how he described it to me:

> "Years ago an Oriental girl taught me a game of solitaire that she called "Chinese Solitaire" I have never seen another game quite like this one.   If you are interested I thought this might be a fun game for others to play.   I have enjoyed it since 1972."

He went on to describe the game, which I then tried with a deck of real cards.   I was immediately intrigued by the gameplay, and searched through a half-dozen solitaire reference books, figuring that a game this good just *had* to have been described before ... but I found nothing.

This game plays like a cross between "Klondike" and "Scorpion", two of the very best and most popular solitaires.   It offers ample opportunity for skill, yet it's very winnable. James reports that he wins roughly 33% of the time, and my own play has borne this out.

It really is a cool game -- I think you'll enjoy it!

Requirements

- Since Chinese Solitaire is written with Visual Basic version 2.00, it requires the **VBRUN200.DLL** run-time library. This file may or may not have been distributed with this program. If not, the file is available on most Internet, BBS, and online services shareware collections, or should be available from wherever you obtained this software, or from the author.
- This program requires Windows 3.0 or later.   It was developed under Windows 95, and has been tested under Windows 3.1, Windows 3.11, and Windows 95.
- To utilize this program's multimedia sound, a sound card (or Microsoft's speaker driver) is required.   In addition, Windows 3.1 or later, or Windows 3.0 with the multimedia extensions, is required.
- This program requires at least four megabytes of RAM.
- This program requires about 600K of disk space.
- This program requires at least 640x480x16 video capability; 800x600x256 or higher is highly recommended.
- You may wonder why I didn't write this program for Windows 95. There are several reasons.   First, the size penalty (at least using Visual Basic 4) would be immense.   I did some experimentation, and found that a small game written for VB4 would have required about 1.5M for all the files it needed.   Compare this to essentially the same game written with VB2 and I think you'll understand. Second, there's just not that much that VB4/Win95 brings to the party for card games, or at least for this particular game.   Most of the user-interface niceties that Win95 offers don't add much ease-of-use for a card game.   Third, card games, unlike say, databases or graphics editors, don't require huge amounts of memory, so being 32-bit doesn't mean much here. So, for the time being at least, this program is a 16-bit program.   If you really want to see a 32-bit version, let me know and I'll give it some consideration ...

Credits

- Chinese Solitaire was suggested by James Jonte, who also provided the rules of play.
- Chinese Solitaire was designed, written, and tested by Randy Rasa.
- Chinese Solitaire was written with Microsoft Visual Basic for Windows, version 2.0.
- QCARD.DLL is freeware by Stephen Murphy (70661.2461@compuserve.com).   Please note that this is a special version of QCARD.DLL, with special graphics just for this game, so do not mix it up with other versions of QCARD.DLL that you may obtain

from other games ...

- This help file was written using RTFGEN, a freeware utility from Dave Baldwin (76327.53@compuserve.com).
- The game graphics, icon, and sound are all based on stuff I found at various locations on the Internet. The MIDI music is a piece called "Dan Da Dan", by the Chikurin Music-Factory.

Legalese

Chinese Solitaire is shareware!   It is not freeware.   It is not public domain.

As shareware, you can play it, copy it, and give it away as you wish.   In fact, you are encouraged to distribute the program to friends, family, and strangers alike.   This includes distribution via the internet, world wide web, electronic bulletin board systems (BBS's), user's groups, CD-ROMs, and disk-distribution services. All that I ask is that the package remains unaltered and complete. Refer to the **VENDINFO.DIZ** file for detailed distribution information.

The registered version may not be distributed.

Standard Limited Warranty

This software is sold "as is", without any warranty as to performance or any other warranties whether expressed or implied.   Because of the vast number of possible hardware and software environments in which this software may be used, no warranty of fitness for a particular purpose is offered.   The user assumes the entire risk of using this program.   Any liability of the author will be limited to product replacement or the refund of the registration fee.

How To Play Chinese Solitaire

Getting Started

The game is begun by dealing forty-nine cards to the **tableau**, arranged as seven stacks of seven cards each.   The first three stacks are deal with all cards face up; the fourth has three cards face down and four face up; the fifth has four cards face down and three face up; the sixth has five cards face down and two face up; and the seventh has six cards face down and one face up.

The three remaining cards are set aside to form the **stock**.

Object

The object of the game is to arrange the cards into four **foundation** suits, running from ace to king. The foundations may be placed in any order.

Moving Cards

Cards on the tableau may be moved from one tableau to another, either singly or in blocks.   Play cards in alternating colors and descending rank.   For example, a four of diamonds may be played on a five of clubs.

As the face-down cards are uncovered, they are automatically turned face-up and become available for play.

If a tableau space is created, only kings may be moved to the empty space (unless "easy mode" is enabled).

The Stock

When you have exhausted all the plays among the tableaus and foundations, click on the stock pile to deal the three cards to the first three tableaus.   (Actually, you can use the stock at *any* time, even if move moves are available -- it's just not a particularly good idea ...).

If the stock is empty, clicking it is equivalent to selecting the "New Hand" menu item.

Winning

If you manage to move all the cards to the foundations, you win!

Losing

If you come to an impasse, where no move moves are possible, select "New Hand" from the "Game" menu (or click on the empty stock) to abandon the current hand and start a new one.

Chinese Solitaire Statistics

Statistics

The program keeps track of the following statistics:

- Number of games played
- Number of games won
- Winning percentage
- Average score

Clearing The Statistics

The statistics can be cleared by clicking on the "Clear Stats" button in the statistics dialog.   If you answer "yes" to the "Are you sure?" question, all statistics will be reset.

Improving Your Scores

For hints on improving your scores, refer to the strategy section.

The Author's Stats

At the time of this writing, my statistics are:

Games Played:	175
Games Won:	74
Winning Percentage:	42.29%
Average Score:	26.97

Chinese Solitaire Strategy

The strategy I find most useful is to make sure the face-down cards get turned over as quickly as possible.   The sooner you can get all cards into view the better. Often you'll be forced to choose between moving a card to a foundation, or exposing a face-down card.   Try to resist the urge for instant gratification, and take a step into the unknown ...

Managing the three stock cards can also be worked to your advantage.   In general, don't use them until you have to, and when you do, try to arrange the first three tableau piles so that the incoming stock cards can do as little damage as possible. That is, if the bottom of the first tableau pile contains a card you're likely to need soon, try creating a space and moving the pile into the empty space.   Often this is not possible, but occasionally it will work out.

Try to keep the four foundations relatively "even".   That is, don't allow one foundation pile to be built up while the other three languish.   If you do that, you'll find yourself needing one of the cards that you already played to the foundation.

On the other hand, it's sometimes safe to build up two foundations (a red and a black) in sync, while the other two are relatively empty.   In fact, as you near the end of a hand, this is often the only way to expose badly-needed face-down cards.

Finally, management of tableau spaces is very important to success.   Try to create a space as soon as possible -- unless, of course, there are no exposed kings.   In that case, creating a space would do you no good at all.   But that's a relatively rare phenomenon ...

Chinese Solitaire Sound

Chinese Solitaire has the ability to play various sounds in response to your actions. This requires Windows 3.1 or later (or Windows 3.0 with the multimedia extensions) and a Windows-compatible sound board.

The "Chinese Solitaire Sound" dialog box allows you to enable or disable each sound, and customize which sounds are played for each event.

The following sounds are available:

- **"Card" Sound** - This sound is produced when you move a card or a block of cards.
- **"Shuffle" Sound** - This sound is played when a new hand is dealt.
- **"Win" Sound** - When you win a hand, this is what you'll hear.
- **"Lose" Sound** - When you lose a hand, this is what you'll hear.
- **Background Music** - This is the MIDI file that is played while the game is running. The music will play continuously, automatically re-starting when it reaches its end.

Each of the above sounds may be individually enabled or disabled by clicking on the check-box next to each sound. You may select a file for each sound by selecting a filename from the drop-down list next to each sound's name.

Your selections will be saved in CS.INI, and recalled each time the program is run.

The default sound files are:

- **"Card" Sound** - CS_CARD.WAV
- **"Shuffle" Sound** - CS_SHUF.WAV
- **"Win" Sound** - CS_WIN.WAV
- **"Lose" Sound** - CS_LOSE.WAV
- **Background Music** - CS_MUSIC.WAV

Note that this game can only recognize sound files that are in the same directory as the rest of the game. If you want to add your own sounds to the game, copy the WAV or MID files into the Chinese Solitaire directory.

Chinese Solitaire Preferences

Chinese Solitaire offers several configurable options from which to choose:

Easy Mode: If this option is selected you will be allowed to move any card to an empty tableau space.   If this option is not selected, only Kings may be moved to spaces.

Beep on Illegal Moves: If this option is selected, the program will "beep" if you attempt to make an illegal move.   If the beep is disabled, the illegal cards will simply be moved back to their original positions.

Use Textured Dialogs: Use this check box to enable or disable the background image that appears in most dialogs.   I think it looks cool, but if it annoys you, or looks bad on your system, turn it off ...

Once you've set the options, click the "OK" button to accept them and save them to CS.INI, or click "Cancel" to abandon your changes.

How To Contact The Author

Your comments, criticisms, suggestions (and of course, registrations) are always welcome. If you think of something that would make the game better, I'd like to hear it!

This program has been thoroughly tested and debugged, but with the wide range of hardware and software that Windows supports, problems are always possible. If you're having any difficulties with this game, please let me know about it, and I'll do my very best to help. Please describe the problem in as much detail as you can, and include information about your computer's configuration.

The latest version of this game, as well as the author's other shareware offerings, are available from:

World Wide Web

    http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw.html

Support BBS

    FoxFire BBS: 913-722-6577 or 913-722-3321

Internet E-Mail

    rrasa@sky.net

Snail Mail

    Randy Rasa
    18215 Troost
    Olathe, KS 66062-9208

If the addresses above are no longer in service, your best bet is to do an Internet search using one of the search engines.   Search for "randy rasa", and I'll be there somewhere ...

Phone support is not available at this time.

Shareware By Randy Rasa

If you enjoy Chinese Solitaire, these are sure to tickle your fancy as well. At the time of this writing, my other games include:

Poker Squares
A solitaire card game for Windows, also known as "Poker Solitaire", where the object is to make the best possible poker hands on a 5x5 grid.   Challenging and addictive, no two games are ever the same! Complete with sound. music, full statistics.   Very slick interface.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_psq.html.

Four Seasons
A solitaire card game for Windows, also known as "Corner Card" and "Vanishing Cross". This is a very full-featured game, with multimedia sound, undo, a high-score list, and challenge scoring.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_fs.html.

Solitaire Suite
This is a collection of **seven** classic solitaires, including Calculation, Concentration, Idiot's Delight, Midnight Oil, Monte Carlo, Osmosis, and Royal Cotillion.   Feature-packed and easy to play, this is a very popular collection. Requires EGA or VGA and a mouse.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_ss.html.

Simple Pleasures
This is a collection of **eight** new solitaires, all in a smooth and elegant program.   All of the best features of Solitaire Suite, plus a few more.   A new favorite! Requires EGA or VGA and a mouse.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_sp.html.

Pyramid Deluxe
This is a SuperVGA version of the classic solitaire card game, featuring 640x480x256 graphics, hint mode, undo, demo mode, and full scoring statistics for up to ten players. Requires 386, SuperVGA and a mouse.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_pd.html.

FoxFire 13 for DOS
This is a new, original solitaire conceived by Todd Svec, and written by Randy Rasa.   It is one of the first DOS solitaires to feature SoundBlaster sound, and offers all the features you've come to expect from my games, including multi-player support, undo, and color configurability. Requires EGA or VGA and a mouse.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_ff.html.
Todd Svec handles FoxFire 13 registrations -- download the game and print out the registration form for details ...

FoxFire 13 for Windows
This is a Windows version of FoxFire 13 for DOS, and shares the original's great gameplay, and offers excellent sound support to complement a full range of features. Addictive!
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_ff.html.
Todd Svec handles FoxFire 13 registrations -- download the game and print out the registration form for details ...

More great games are in the works!

How To Register Chinese Solitaire

Registration Requirement

Chinese Solitaire is shareware.   You may freely evaluate it for a reasonable period (30 days).   If you continue to use it beyond the evaluation period, you need to register it.

Registration Benefits

When you register you will receive a registration code good for all future updates of Chinese Solitaire.   This code will allow you to convert current and future shareware versions to registered versions, getting rid of the opening reminder screen in the process.

Unlike some commercial apps, you are not stuck in an endless cycle of expensive upgrades.   With Chinese Solitaire, you register once, and that's it. What this essentially means is: **Free Updates!**

You'll also get special discount pricing on other games I've written.   Basically, if you register Chinese Solitaire for the full price ($10.00), you'll get a $5.00 discount on each of my other games. This amounts to a savings of 33-50% over the list price. If you order all the games, you'll save twenty-five bucks -- the equivalent of getting two-and-a-half games free!

Also, if you provide me with your Internet e-mail address, you'll receive notification of updated versions and new releases.

Finally, you'll receive the peace of mind of knowing that you've done the right thing, you'll be supporting the shareware process that made this game possible, and you'll encourage me to write more games in the future.

Printing The Registration Form

Click on the "Print Registration Form" button in the About dialog to bring up an on-screen form which you can fill out, then either:

- **Print** to the currently-selected printer.
- **Save** to a text file, which can then be e-mailed.
- **Copy** to the Windows clipboard, to be pasted into another application

Be sure to fill out the form completely and accurately.   If you're mailing or faxing the form, and paying by credit card, please sign on the "Signature" line.

Remember, shareware is user-supported software.   If you use it, please register. Your support is appreciated!

Chinese Solitaire "About" Box

This dialog box is displayed each time you run the program (in the shareware version) or if you select the "Help-About ..." menu item. Once you have registered, received your code, and entered it, this box will no longer be displayed automatically each time you run the game.

You can click on the Register ... button to enter your registration code, or on the Print Registeration Form button to print a registration form.

Chinese Solitaire Registration Form

This on-screen registration form gives you an easy way to enter the information that is necessary to register this program.   Enter data in the following fields:

Name and Address: Be sure to enter your complete postal address.

Country: Select your country; Shipping and handling is free to the US and Canada, $5.00 elsewhere.

E-Mail: If you have an Internet e-mail address, enter it here.   If you do so, I'll automatically keep you informed of program updates and new releases.

Programs To Register: Select the programs you want to register.   Note that every program after the first garners you a $5.00 discount.   Register all six, and you'll save twenty-five bucks!

Diskette: Select this if you want me to send you the latest version of Chinese Solitaire to you on disk. If you have access to the Internet, there is no need for a disk, as the latest version is always available on my web site.   A disk is $2.00 extra, to cover the cost of the media and extra postage.

Total: This area shows you an up-to-date total, including each program you're registering, diskette, shipping, and whatever discount you've earned by registering multiple programs at once.

Payment: Select the method you prefer to pay for Chinese Solitaire.   Cash must be in US dollars. Checks must be in US funds and drawn on a US bank.   Credit cards may be Mastercard, VISA, or Discover.   If you choose to pay by credit card, please complete the information at the bottom of the form, and sign the registration form after you print it out.

Print: Click this button to print the registration form to the currently-selected printer. If any information is missing, you'll be prompted to enter it.

Save As Text File: Click this button to save the registration form to a file called CS_FRM.TXT in the Chinese Solitaire directory. If any information is missing, you'll be prompted to enter it.

Copy To Clipboard: Click this button to copy the registration form to the Windows clipboard. From there you can paste it into another application for printing. If any information is missing, you'll be prompted to enter it.

Once you've filled in the form, print it out and send it in!

There are three ways to get the form to me:

1. Send it to: Randy Rasa, 18215 Troost, Olathe, KS 66062-9208.
2. Fax it to: 816-746-9991 -- credit card orders only!
3. E-mail it to "rasa.software@dden.com" or "rrasa@sky.net" -- credit card orders only!.

If you e-mail your registration, you'll get the registration code in a day or so -- otherwise it will ship within two weeks of receipt of order.

Chinese Solitaire Revision History

This program is an ongoing development.   I will issue new versions as necessary, to add or improve features, correct problems, address user concerns, or add requested features.
Once the program is mature, I will generally release updates every six months or so.

v1.00 08/25/96

- Initial release.

v1.01 09/21/96

- Fixed problem with "subscript out of range" error with "easy mode" enabled.

Chinese Solitaire Registration Dialog

Here's where you enter the registration code you will receive as a registered user of Chinese Solitaire.   Once you enter the correct code, you need never see the shareware reminder screen again.

Note: In the registered version, the "Register ..." menu item will be changed to "Un-Register", which will allow you to convert the game back into an un-registered version, for easy copying to friends ...

The Future Of Chinese Solitaire

Here are some ideas I have in mind for future versions of Chinese Solitaire:

- Undo.
- Session stats.
- Support for multiple players.
- Alternate scoring schemes, perhaps a timed mode.

If you have an idea that you think will make the game better, please let me know!

The Structure of CS.INI

The file CS.INI is used to save information about the program, so that it can be recalled the next time the program is run.   This file is stored in the same directory as the rest of the Chinese Solitaire files, and may be deleted if you want to start "fresh".

Although it is not recommeded that you edit the contents of this file, here is its structure, in case you are adventurous:

    [Startup]
    WindowState = state of Chinese Solitaire window (0 = normal, 2 = maximized)
    Width = width of Chinese Solitaire window, in twips
    Height = height of Chinese Solitaire window, in twips
    Left = position of left edge Chinese Solitaire window, in twips
    Top = position of top edge Chinese Solitaire window, in twips

    [Options]
    Easy Mode = should "easy mode" dialogs be used? (0 = no, -1 = yes)
    Textures = should "textured" dialogs be used? (0 = no, -1 = yes)
    Beep On Error = should the program beep on illegal moves? (0 = no, -1 = yes)
    Card Back = which card back design should be used (0-5)
    Background Color = main game window background color (Red/Green/Blue (0x000000-0xFFFFFF) -- in decimal)
    Display Errors = display error message on mistakes? (0 = no, -1 = yes)
    Sound x Enable = Disable (0) or enabled (-1) individual game sounds (0 = "Card" Sound, 1 = "Shuffle" Sound, 2 = "Win" Sound, 3 = "Lose" Sound, 4 = Background Music)
    Sound x File = Name of sound file to play for each of the above sounds ...

    [Statistics]
    GamesPlayed = total number of games played
    GamesWon = total number of games won
    TotalScore = total score

Of course, if you play with the values in the [Statistics] section, that means you're a cheater. And cheaters never win.   You know that, don't you?   Don't you???

End-Of-Hand Dialog

This dialog box appears automatically at the end of a hand, and allows you to either begin another game, exit the program, or view the statistics.   Pressing 'Esc' will deal another hand.

Are You Sure You Want To Abandon This Hand?

If you answer "yes", then the current hand will be abandoned (and count against you in the statistics) and the game will end.   If you answer "no", the current hand will continue.

Exit

Select the "Exit" item from the "Game" menu to exit the program.   You may also press Alt-F4, Ctrl-X, double-click the control box, or click the "close window" button (in Windows 95). If a hand is in progress, you'll first be asked if you want to abandon the current hand.

New Hand

The "New Hand" menu item is used to deal a new hand at random.   If a hand is in progress, you'll first be asked if you want to abandon the current hand.

Select Hand

The "Select Hand" dialog allows you to select a specific hand from among 999999 different games. If a hand is in progress, you'll first be asked if you want to abandon the current hand.

Redeal Hand

The "Redeal Hand" menu item is used to re-plat the current new hand.   You'll first be asked if you want to abandon the current hand.

Undo

The "Undo" menu item allows you to take back up to three moves. The hotkey "Ctrl-U" may also be used as an alternative to using the menu. If no undo moves are available, the menu item will be grayed out.

Select Card Back

This dialog allows you to select from one of six card back designs (shown on the current background color, so you get a sense of how they'll look in the game). The currently-selected card back will be highlighted with a dashed line. Click on a new card back to select it, then click the "OK" button to accept the selection and save it to CS.INI, or "Cancel" to exit the dialog without changing the card back.

Note: If a game is in progress, the card back change will not take effect until a new hand is begun ...

Select Background Color

This dialog allows you to select a background color for the main game screen. You can select the color in two ways:

1. Select one of the 16 "standard" colors, or
2. Use the Red, Green, and Blue scroll bars to adjust the colors in fine increments.

Either way, the selected color will be shown in the large color box.   Depending on your video card and its settings, you may not be able to select all colors and/or dithering may occur.

Once you've found a color you like, click the "OK" button to accept the selection and save it to CS.INI, or "Cancel" to abandon your changes.

Note: If a game is in progress, the background color change will not take effect until a new hand is begun ...

AutoPlay

 The AutoPlay button (and equivalent menu commands) give you and easy way to move cards from the tableau to the foundations.   Left click the button to move a single card, or right-click it to move all possible cards.

In addition to its autoplay function, the button also gives you a visual indication as to whether or not and foundation moves are possible.   That is, if there are no moves possible, the button will be grayed out.

By the way, if you're wondering, the image on the button is supposed to be a horse and chariot ...)

Refresh Screen

This menu item causes the screen to be refreshed if, for whatever reason, it should become garbled.