Northern Races

A variety of both human and nonhuman—some would say inhuman—races call the North their home. These range everywhere from dwarves to the various human cultures in the Barbaric North. This section provides a brief racial overview for the North.

Nonhumans

The Wildlands is a stronghold for a variety of nonhuman races, and even the elves are flourishing here now that Hellgate Keep has been destroyed. Dwarves, once thought disappearing from the North, have recently taken control of the Citadel of Many Arrows, and dwarves from the southern lands are slowly migrating northward. While the North is still primarily the home to humans and monsters, the nonhumans of the Savage Frontier have their territory here as well.

Dwarves

The grim, reclusive, and dour dwarves normally separate themselves from other folk. It should be no surprise that few dwarf communities survive here. Ironmaster on the shores of the Cold Run, Citadel Adbar in the Ice Mountains, Mithral Hall, and the newly liberated Felbarr (formerly the Citadel of Many Arrows) are the only holds of any consequence remaining, though several cities—notably Mirabar, Neverwinter, Silverymoon, and Sundabar—have dwarven quarters in their walls. Men trade freely in Adbar, but they have few dealings with the isolated dwarves of Ironmaster other than to battle orcs or purchase iron goods. Many other trading concerns are concerned about the stability of Felbarr, as the old citadel is one orc horde away from being leveled.

Dwarves acknowledge but one king, Harbomm of Citadel Adbar, but are more loyal to tribe and clan than to king. Yet in time of need the clans unite under the king’s banner. They are the finest forgemen and metalcrafters in Faerûn and produce armor and weapons beyond compare. Merchants of Sundabar still bring magical weapons south from Adbar for sale in distant markets.

While the demand for such weapons and armor is high, the production is diminishing.

Dwarves tend to be extremely suspicious of strangers. They think others want to find and loot the halls of their ancestors (which is often what they themselves want to do).

Elves and Half-Elves

Though at least two elven realms once existed, the closest elven land is Evereska. Elves are wanderers and adventurers, though a realm of drow exists. Elves of most nonaquatic subraces dwell in Waterdeep and its neighboring territory, and the Ardeep Forest houses retired elven adventurers. Sundabar has a half-elven population, and Loudwater and Daggerford a small one, due to half-elven descendants of Eaerlann who wed other half-elves.

Some folk in the North (law-abiding humans and dwarves) consider the elven withdrawal to Evermeet a “desertion” from racial responsibility and treat elves with suspicion and contempt. Long-standing elven families, such as Elorfindar Floskin who lives north of Daggerford, are held in high esteem by most folk, regardless of the disdain held by humans for the rest of the elven race.

Rumors are just beginning to circulate that the elves of the High Forest have plans of establishing an elven presence in the North again. Fortunately, such idle gossip is quickly cast off as wild tales by many of the local rulers—and this might just give the elves the time they need to actually establish themselves again (assuming such gossip is true, of course).

Gnomes

This once-populous race of wry little folk is nearly gone, their realms overrun by orcs until few remained. The survivors avoid contact with all but dwarves, but are highly sought by nobles and merchants who prize their work with toys and illusions.
Halflings
Four to five months of fierce winter doesn't appeal to the average halfling. While Waterdeep has a fair population (and a milder winter), it's rare to find them in the North.

Half-orcs
Given the vast orc population and the amount of raiding, one might suspect a plague of these half-breeds, yet there are few. Northerners have a distinct dislike for anything even vaguely orcish, and only the most human-looking half-orc can pass safely among northern folk.

Lizardmen
The lizardmen of the Mere of Dead Men are the degenerate descendants of a reptilian race. While they don't hate mankind or demihumans, they've no interest in them either; they treat all other beings—except dragons—as cattle. Sightings of lizardmen usually include descriptions of them dancing wildly around megalithic stone pillars or skulking about Uthgardt mounds.

Lizardmen are accompanied by a shaman of 1d6+1 levels. There's a 1-in-20 chance the group is in the service of a lizardman lich and another 1-in-20 chance the lich is with them. If they encounter bullywugs orarakoca, the lizardmen attempt to capture them for later sacrifice.

Orcs
The five geographically divided orc clans worship an alliance of chaotic, orcish gods. In addition to the clerical spells granted by the god, they sometimes control creatures associated with their deity, using them as mounts, familiars, or bodyguards. Shamans of Bahgtru mount mighty oxen; shamans of Shargaas summon bats, giant bats, and colossal doombats; Yurtrus shamans animate dead to create skeletons and zombies; priestesses of Luthic (also shamans) summon cave bears. Tribal names are variants of orcish gods' holy symbols. Thus, the icon of the Stinking Claw would be a rotting claw (a variant of Yurtrus's white hand).

Orc holy spots are marked by huge piles of humanoid skulls. Orcs are so devoted to their holy sites they become berserk if they find a site desecrated, destroying all they encounter in their frenzy.

Fallen Lands Orcs: The orcs of the Fallen Lands and Gray peaks follow King Ogrash, a powerful orcish shaman and warrior who's reputed to wield Skellripper, a halberd +3. To the south, many petty orcish kings wage constant battle against each other. More often than not, orcs encountered in the southern region are involved in battle with other orcs. Known tribes of the Fallen Lands include King Ogrash's Bloody Scar tribe, Black Slasher, Severed Fist, Seven Eye, and Black Bone tribes. Orcs of the Fallen Lands have cavalry—20% of all encountered orc bands are mounted on ugly, black, ostrichlike flightless birds (use ostrich statistics). Most mounted orcs have short bows and lances.

High Forest Orcs: These orcs dwell in tunnels and small villages about two days' journey into the wood. They're arch-foes of rangers and possess forestry skills. They worship a power they call Herne the Wild Hunter, a lawful evil variation of the Master of the Hunt (which, in reality, is Maladril with a different mask). Orc tribes in the High Forest include the Tanglethorn, Sharpspike, Bloody Eye, and Horned Lord tribes. Orcs of the High Forest have the nonmagical abilities of rangers, but they gain no pluses in battle against goblin-class creatures. Wild Hunter shamans actually grow stag antlers from their heads.

Ice Mountains Orcs: Most of the orcs within these mountains are loyal to King Graul, son of Eldoul. The orcs of the Ice Mountains wage constant war with the dwarves of Citadel Adbar and stage frequent raids against Silverymoon and Sundabar.

Spine of the World Orcs: In these bleak mountains, the most powerful orc tribes skulk in stone fortresses stolen from the dwarves and renamed Eyegad. Within their gloomy, squat buildings and oppressive, black temples are the visible tips of sprawling underground tunnels and cavern complexes that house tribes with names like Skortchclaw, Skreetch, and Bleeding Eye. Others, like the Slashers and Orcs of the Severed Tongue, lurk in the unnumbered small caves that pepper the valleys and passes of these mineral-rich mountains.

The Skortchclaw tribe, under King Ugra Ngarl, is forcing goblin slaves to mine mithral beneath Fortress Eyegad. The metal is apparently being sold in great quantity to someone in the High Forest.

Troll Orcs: These orcs are loosely organized and rove the Evermoors in bands to prey on travelers, attacking boats on the Rauvin, raiding against outlying settlements near Nesme and Everlund, and organizing in the fall to attack the Uthgardt Runemeet at Flintrock. Known orc tribes in the moors include the Vile Rune, Dripping Spear, Bonesnapper, Red Murderer, and Throat Slitter tribes. They worship the various orc gods—Bahgtru, Gruumsh, Ilneval, Luthic, Sharngaas, and Yurtrus.

The various tribes have been having some difficulty with the sudden influx of giants, and there are reports that the entire Vile Rune tribe was destroyed by a black dragon. For the last year, the orcs have concentrated their attacks on the outskirts of the Evermoors, ready to run at the first sign of a black wing or the thundering fall of a nearby boulder.

Trolls
After orcs, trolls are the North's scourge. The "everlasting ones" roam the wilds, chasing, attacking, and eating all they meet. These fierce creatures are currently fleeing the Evermoors, having met foes even more powerful than themselves—giants and at least one dragon. This is creating a free-for-all battleground outside the city of Nesme.

Humans
The North is populated by humans with a variety of cultures. There's no unified human nation, only individual towns, villages, cities, and roaming barbarians loosely linked by trade. A starting PC might be from any one of these folk.

Ice Hunters
This ancient people lived here long before other humans. They tend to be short, dark-haired, and broad-faced with light-brown skin. They were the original primitives dwelling on the shores of the Trackless Sea. The arrival of the Northmen drove them farther and farther north until now they live only in small tribal communities along the Cold Run and on the Ice Peak (though several villages have become Northmen towns).
Ice Hunters stolidly resist the culture of other people. They live simple, rarely violent lives—fishing and hunting seal, whale, walrus, and bear on the floes of the Sea of Moving Ice. On land, they travel by canine-drawn sleds. At sea, they use small watertight boats of sealskin (khveks) and larger boats (oumyeks). Though primitive, Ice Hunters are noted for their wisdom. They’re protective of their real names, and use nicknames when dealing with outsiders. Ice Hunter nicknames are based on nature and rarely indicate personal achievement, such as “Sky in the Morning,” “Man of Red Sealskin,” “Ten Dogs,” “Bride of Reindeer,” or “Wake of Ice.”

**Northmen**

The term refers to one of several seagoing, warlike people found on the coast north of Waterdeep and the western islands, including Gundarlun, Ruathym, Norheim, and Norland. The tall, fair-haired, sea-loving Northmen were the third human people in the North. Dwarven records say the Ice Hunters ranged the North millennia before Netheril, who themselves were centuries before the Northmen.

The Northmen’s primitive ancestors built small villages along the coast. Many grew to importance, including fabled Illusk (Luskon), Eigerson (Neverwinter), Port Last, and Nimaro’s Hold (Waterdeep). Early Northmen avoided the wild interior; they farmed the rocky—but rich—coastal lands, fished the waters warmed by north-bound currents, hunted deer in the forests, and whaled in the Trackless Sea. Yet with summer, the call of the sea would be irresistible to the men, and they would set sail to raid nearby communities.

From Kythorn to early Marpenoth, the barbaric battle cries of Northmen were heard in Lantan, Amn, Tethyr, Calishan, and other cities of the Shining Sea, even as far south as Nimmers. The Northmen explored the Trackless Sea, discovered Illern, Gundarlun, Ruathym, The Purple Rocks, the Whalebones, and eventually the Moonshaes (though others had been there before them). Still others braved and explored the orc-infested interior, becoming partners of The Fallen Kingdom, ancestors of the Uthgardt, and mercenaries for Ascalhorn.

Though they’re referred to as barbarians, not all fit this classification. Many of these sea raiders have become civilized, primarily due to the influence of southern folk. They farm, fish, and mine their rugged lands and then trade their goods with southern merchants. Many once-feared raiders have become merchants whose skill at bargaining equals or better the warlike talents of their ancestors, such that many Northmen merchants return with more southern booty than do raiders.

A savage edge remains; the Luskar and the islanders are fierce and warlike. Fierce dragonships ply the waters, whose wily pirates can outrun and outmaneuver heavily laden merchant galleons. Each summer, the battle cries of Northmen can be heard throughout the Ten Towns, only to be repulsed by an expected alliance of the towns and the dwarves of Kelvin’s Cairn. The barbarian warriors were destroyed. Heafstaag, the wily king of the Tribe of the Elk, allied the tribes with Akar Kessell for the evil wizard’s attack on the Ten Towns. Wulfgar, a barbarian youth whose life was spared by the dwarf Bruenor, slew Heafstaag in a challenge and became king. He brought the barbarians to the Ten Towns, but as allies, not enemies. With their aid, the townsfolk repulsed Kessell’s horde.

Only a few tribes now roam the wilderness. The rest dwell in the Ten Towns, learning the ways of civilization, having completed rebuilding from the destruction. Their leader is Revjak, an elder barbarian who succeeded Wulfgar Dragonslayer, who rules from Caer-Konig. This city, relative to the other nine cities, contains the greatest number of barbarians. The tundra barbarians worship both beast totems and the god Tempos (their name for Tempus). Unlike the Uthgardt, the tundra barbarian shamans cannot call upon their totem’s beast power. The barbarians dwelling on the tundra can raise a horde of 250 men. The barbarians in the towns can raise 500.

**Uthgardt Barbarians**

The Uthgardt are a black-haired and blue-eyed folk descended from a mixture of Northmen, Netherese, and a few savage...
tribes. One of these descendent tribes includes the Beorunni, who live by raiding, hunting, gathering, and farming.

Presently, the Uthgardt are divided into scattered tribes, each named after the beast totems which Uthgar conquered—Black Lion, Thunderbeast, Red Tiger, Blue Bear (although there’s not much left of them right now), Great Worm, Sky Pony, Tree Ghost, Black Raven, Griffon, and Gray Wolf. Although civilization has come north in waves throughout history, much of the Uthgardt land is wild and untamed. Their lands extend north into the Spine, south to Stone Bridge, east to Cold Wood, and west to Neverwinter Wood.

Although some tribes have embraced agriculture and fixed habitations, the Uthgardt have few stable villages. Most tribes wander the wilderness in small clans or family groups and live within a few weeks’ travel of their ancestor mounds. Tradition is the centerpiece of Uthgardt life, and this blind devotion to tradition keeps them savage. Strength is everything, and civilization is a weakness not tolerated. Among the Uthgardt, men are warriors and hunters—women tend to gathering and family needs. They have no written language and no art beyond geometric carvings and clothing decoration. Religion and philosophy focus on war, plunder, and survival. They’re superstitious, with a paranoid dislike of magic.

The Uthgardt have little to do with city folk, other than as prey, though some tribes have made “civilized” alliances. Both lone travelers and large caravans are considered ripe fruit for plunder. Though they prey on civilized folk and frequently fight among themselves, they’re quick to unite—even with non-Uthgardt—against their ancestral enemy: the orcs.

In addition to hand axe, knife, and spear, the Uthgardt favor the battle axe, atlatl and javelin, and long bow. Most barbarians wear leather or studded leather armor, and a chieftain is normally found with chain mail. Shields, when used at all, are typically spiked bucklers, something that a warrior can use as a weapon when necessary.

Uthgar Gardolfsson, Thane of Ruathym.
Gardolf Beorunni, the Thane of Ruathym, raised a son named Uthgar Gardolfsson who became a great warrior and tactician like his father. Unlike his father, though, Uthgar gained great strides in cruelty, becoming a true genius in the punch and counter-punch of armed combat. Yet for all his skill and knowledge, Uthgar truly yearned to prove his worth in battle.

Once completing the rite to manhood, Uthgar gained his own fleet of boats, gaining the title of Thane. On his first quest across the seas, he attacked Bjorn’s Hold on the Ice Peak and returned with boats laden with furs and fish—but no gold. His people were disappointed with the lack of truly useful treasure, so Uthgar set out again, this time for the coast of the Great Island (the continent of Faerûn).

He attacked the civilization of Illusk and successfully subdued the central government, killing its rulers. This freed the Illuskans of their bondage to the spellcasting heathens, and Uthgar expected the people to rejoice. Instead, they attacked the “barbarian” and his warriors, destroying his ship. Uthgar and his remaining men were forced inland, with the Illuskans hoping that the savage beasts of the North would finish off the troublesome barbarian and his warriors.
But Uthgar and his followers survived, raiding town after town across the North. These raids also served to swell his followers, as men and women impressed with his fighting prowess joined him in his ever-increasing raids. With these new followers came the knowledge that Uthgar needed to survive the harsh environment of the “Great Island.”

Uthgar was a man of tradition, however, and even though he raided villages for food, clothing, and treasures, he still felt obligated to defend the villages that chose to swear fealty to him. When an orc horde swept south from the Spine of the World, Uthgar and his people stood and faced them.

Uthgar was not the only brave warrior to die that day, but his loss was felt the greatest. In honor of their fallen lord, the survivors of the horde renamed themselves as the Uthgardt, the descendants of Uthgar.

Uthgar was buried with all his belongings along with an honor guard of seven warriors, brave souls who died with him in battle. The nearby ground was piled high above his body, and a huge stone was placed on the apex of the mound. Seven smaller stones were aligned around the mound to permanently mark the location of his body. The ground was consecrated by the tribal shaman and became a holy burial ground, the first ancestral burial mound as well as the foundation of a tradition that lives on in Uthgardt tradition.

Black Lion Tribe

Ancestor Mound: Beorunna’s Well
Chieftain: Andar Heartfood
Cleric: Patreveni Onehand
Shaman: Bogohardt Blackmane
Ritual Enemy: Tundra barbarians

Nestled in the wide valley that separates the North from the glacier beyond is the small village of Beorunna’s Well. The community is comprised mostly of small huts, long houses, and a few tents, all of which stand a respectful distance from the watery pit that is its namesake. Here, the compliant Black Lions have forsaken tradition to become farmers and herders. Hunters still roam the wilds, but the tribe no longer depends upon them for survival. Agricultural success lets them trade with others for their needs. In forsaking their barbarian traditions, they have also cast aside their tribal totem. Most folk of Beorunna’s Well worship the Tyr alliance (Tyr, Torm, Ilmater, and Helm).

Beorunna’s Well is one of the most sacred sites of the Uthgardt barbarians, but the Black lions sense its eldritch nature and fear it more than they revere it. During Runemeet, the Red Tiger tribe performs the required rituals, while the Black Lions avoid entering the well.

Black Raven Tribe

Ancestor Mound: Ravenrock
Chieftain: Ostagar Tenfeather
Shaman: Pureheartman
Ritual Enemies: Griffon Tribe, foreign merchants and clerics

Of all Uthgardt, the Black Ravens are the most conservative, holding tightly to the old ways and reacting violently to the new. Pureheartman and his assistant, Wulphgehar, are the only shamans tolerated by the tribe. Clerics who seek to “enlighten” the Black Ravens are likely to find themselves labeled heretics and hunted down by the angry barbarians.

As far as the caravans who ply the north are concerned, the Black Ravens are the worst of the tribes. Black Raven warriors are renowned as bandits, gaining this reputation because they prey on those whom they despise the most—foreigners, especially merchants and missionary clerics. They seek to destroy that which may threaten their way of life.

The tribe is aided in their quest by their totem, the gigantic ravens of Ravenrock. The raiders sit astride massive ravens, swooping down out of the sky to rob and terrorize caravans. The Black Ravens have little respect for tribes who dwell in towns (particularly the Thunderbeast and Griffon tribes), since those tribes have adopted foreign ways. In return, they are enemies of those tribes. King Gundar Brontoskin, the Thunderbeast chieftain, offers a bounty for the destruction of the ravens’ eggs.

Because their raiding spoils are tainted with foreign influence (including gold, jewelry, weapons, fabric, and other nontribal prizes), these items are sacrificed to the Black Raven and secreted away in Black Raven shrine, near the Ravenrock ancestor mound. The Black Ravens protect their shrine closely and do not welcome foreign intrusion. Woe to the person who is caught searching for—let alone robbing—the tribe’s treasure-laden shrine.

Elk Tribe

Ancestor Mound: Flintrock
Chieftain: Zokan Thunderer
Shaman: Berchtwald (Elk totem), Trothgar Grunald (Auril)
Ritual Enemy: “The ancient ones” (any old ruin, tomb, or evidence of ancient civilization qualifies)

The Elk tribe’s range includes the Evermoors, the plains east of the Dessarin, the Dessarin, and the lower Surbrin valleys. Of all the tribes, they’re the most arrogant, surly, and self-indulging. Considered by many to be little more than bandits, they often raid other tribal settlements for food, women, and sport. They have loose ties with the rulers of Luskan but are unwelcome elsewhere. Chief Zokan Thunderer (CE hm F9 [barbarian]) is regarded by most as a vulgar thug. Under his rule, clerics of the Talos alliance have gained a strong hold on the tribe.

Zokan is a surly Uthgardt chieftain who’s the ugliest, rudest, richest, wildest, most feared, and most hated bandit leader in the north. His barbarians raid caravans and villages incessantly, taking prisoners for ransom but selling them to traders from the south if the ransom is too small (keeping the ransom money, of course). He has a price on his head, but he is difficult to find and even harder to kill—he’s always guarded by ten 5th-level warriors and a 6th-level shaman.

Gray Wolf Tribe

Ancestor Mound: Ravenrock
Chieftain: Alrik Tenstone
Shaman: Clovis Greenteeth
Ritual Enemy: Orcs

Members of this tribe have one indisputable characteristic that is guaranteed to attract attention. Under the light of the full moon, all of the members of the Gray Wolves transform into ravaging werewolves.

This curse, originally instilled upon the tribe as a result of harboring refugees from the lost city of Gauntlgrym, has transformed itself over the years in the minds of the Gray Wolves. Instead of being an affliction that should be cured, most members of the tribe see this as a mark of savagery, their birthright in the Savage Frontier. Those that don’t share this opinion typically leave the tribe, the “curse” removing itself within a year after the former tribesmen is adopted by another tribe.
Alrik Tenstone (CE hm F12 [barbarian]) has led the tribe for more than 15 years, guiding its actions both in human and wolf form. Many visitors to the tribe’s moving camp believe that Alrik retains control over himself during the transformation into a werewolf. His limb-rending stories told to “guests” are legendary.

Clovis Greenteeth (CE hm Sha8) has served as the spiritual leader of the Gray Wolves for even longer than Alrik. Appearing in his late 50s, Clovis and his retinue of shamans choose the “holy sites” upon which the tribe sets up their camp. Such sites are normally within striking distance of poorly defended towns and villages at just about the same time as the appearance of the full moon.

**Great Worm Tribe**

Ancestor Mound: Great Worm Cavern

Chieftain: Gweshen “Ironhand” Talistars

Shaman: Themrin

Ritual Enemy: Evil creatures

This tribe used to be ruled by a benevolent creature named Elrem, who served as shaman and protector until his untimely death at the hands of an evil adventuring company. This tribe has grown less hospitable toward strangers since the incident three years ago, but only self-proclaimed Zhentarim agents—one of which was foolish enough to demanded a feast—have been killed by the tribe’s warriors.

Gweshen Talistars (NG lf R9) has ruled the tribe for nearly five years. She’s been striving to keep the tribe on an even keel since the death of Elrem, an incident she blames entirely on herself. Themrin (NG hm Sha7) has supported Gweshen, however, citing the use of “foul magics” that led to the death of their beloved Elrem.

Both Gweshen and Themrin are wearing a sort of dragon scale armor, created from the body of Elrem. Both of the leaders deny creating the armor, and tribal belief rests firmly in the fact that the armor simply appeared one morning outside the ancestor mound. The precise powers of this armor remain a mystery.

**Griffon Tribe**

Ancestor Mound: Shining White

Chieftain: Kralgar Bonesnapper

Shaman: Adalwulf Longfang

Ritual Enemy: The cities of the North

Chief Kralgar Bonesnapper (LN hm F10 [barbarian]) is a popular man of great charisma and even greater ambition. Since assuming leadership, he has pushed his people toward greater accomplishments, making the Griffons foremost among the tribes in power, skill, and learning. His great goal is the conquest and possession of one of the northern cities.

To this end, he has declared ritual war on the cities. Unallied clans seeking either plunder or the benefits offered by cities have joined the Griffons, swelling their ranks. Even so, Griffon’s Nest, the primary tribal encampment, rivals some of the smaller northern cities. Without realizing it, Kralgar may accomplish his goal within his lifetime as Griffon’s Nest slowly changes from camp to city. While the tribe wages incessant warfare against the cities, they welcome contact with outsiders, considering all as potential allies in their quest.

**Red Tiger Tribe**

Ancestor Mound: Beorunna’s Well

Chieftain: Adalwulf Longfang

Shaman: Garinen the Maker

Ritual Enemy: Blue Bear tribe

Like their totem beast (that’s also called the snow cat, since its fur changes color in winter), this tribe is wild and solitary. They hunt in very small family groups and roam widely, primarily in the Cold Wood. They’re wary of all strangers and avoid contact with things or folk they don’t know. The tribe has few shamans and no shrines other than Beorunna’s Well.

The men of the Red Tiger tribe are strictly hunters, leaving gathering and trading to women, the elderly, and children. The Red Tigers believe the true test of a hunter is the ability to bring down prey unaided. Often, their only weapons are “tiger claws,” short wooden handles embedded with three sharp stone daggers. The hunter holds these so the daggers project between the fingers like claws. The Red Tigers are loyal to King Gundar Brontoskin of the Thunderbeasts, who won their respect during a Runehunt by bringing back a leucrotta, slain with only a pair of tiger claws.

Adalwulf Longfang (LN hm F8 [barbarian]) has ruled the tribe for many years and is preparing to hand the mantle of rulership to his son, Shinoras (LN hm F4). He feels as though he’s getting old and is getting in everyone else’s way, but Shinoras has refused to become chieftain of the tribe until his father passes along (a day he’s not looking forward to).

**Sky Pony Tribe**

Ancestor Mound: One Stone

Chieftain: Jerek Wolf-slayer

Shaman: Adalwyn Swiftwings

Cleric: Jathrin Heartflow (Tempus)

Ritual Enemy: Orcs

The Sky Pony tribe is one of the most active tribes in the North, wandering from their ancestor mound in the eastern Moonwood to the southern reaches of Icewind Dale. Their devotion to the god Tempus is legendary, and they frequently track orcs back to their lairs in an effort to rid the Barbarian North of their kind.

Jerek Wolf-slayer (CN hm F9 [barbarian]) is the aged leader of the tribe. He’s quite old, but he remains active and vigorous. With the death of Jerek’s son, Torlin, at the hands of the tribe’s former shaman, there is no heir to take control of the noble Sky Ponies. In an effort to prove their worth, many of the Sky Pony tribe’s warriors have gone to great lengths to demonstrate their battle prowess, hoping to gain the old chieftain’s nod in ruling the tribe.

Valric High Eye was the tribe’s former shaman, but he was a man truly feared by his people. He over-zealously summoned the spirit of the Sky Pony into the chieftain’s son, sending it after the barbarian Wulfgar and his companions. Upon finding the lifeless body of Torlin, the Sky Pony tribe realized that Valric had overstepped his authority, and Jerek killed the old shaman for his crime.

Adalwyn Swiftwings (CN hm Sha8 of Sky Pony/Uthgar) has since replaced Valric as the spiritual leader of the tribe. Needless to say, he’s been somewhat leery of summoning ancestral spirits without the approval of Jerek.

**Thunderbeast Tribe**

Ancestor Mound: Morgur’s Mound

Chieftain: King Gundar Brontoskin

Shaman: Kierkrad Seventoes

Druid: Wisteria Borsdotter (Silvanus)

Cleric: Sigurd Gandolfsson (Tyr)

Ritual Enemy: Wolves
The town of Grunwald near the High Forest is home to this most civilized of the barbarians. Although, he wields no official power over other tribes, Gundar Brontoskin (LN hm F9) has the charisma and respect necessary to call the tribes together into a horde.

The tribe takes its name from the apatosaurus that roamed here in ancient times, and tribal shamans claim thunderbeasts still dwell in the High Forest. The clan’s heart at Morgur’s Mound is surmounted by an apatosaurus skeleton. It said that in time of great need, the tribal shamans can animate the skeleton to fight in the tribe’s defense. In addition to the beast cult shamans, the Thunderbeast tribe in Grunwald has grown civilized enough to tolerate priests of other religions, primarily druids of Silvanus and the clerics of Tyr.

Tree Ghost Tribe

Ancestor Mound: Grandfather Tree
Chief: Gunther Lontooth
Shaman: Chungred Ghostheart
Ritual Enemy: Evil undead creatures

The Tree Ghosts, led by Gunther Lontooth (NG hm F10 [barbarian]) and their tribal shaman Chungred Ghostheart (NG hm Sha12), are one of the few barbarian tribes who have achieved peace in recent memory, rediscovering their long-lost ancestor mound of Grandfather Tree on Shieldmeet in 1368. Many of the tribe’s members believe that the destruction of the Blue Bears was Uthgar’s punishment toward that wicked tribe. The Tree Ghosts have refused to allow any former Blue Bear tribesmen to join their clan, fearful of attracting the “fury of Uthgar.” However, they have banded together with the other wood-land creatures to defend the forest from harm, swearing peace with the elves, treants, satyrs, dryads, and other forest inhabitants. While the Tree Ghosts still respect Alustriel of Silverymoon, they now believe that their true path lies with preserving Grandfather Tree and the forest that surrounds it. Alustriel has made it clear that she respects their desire to protect Grandfather Tree, and she has provided the barbarians with much-needed supplies for the tribe’s town that is being built near the ancestor mound.

Chungred Ghostheart fell while fighting a brown bear, breaking his back in the process. After three-years of depression and drunkenness, he began training a young woman, Spirthajj (NG hf Sha4), to take his place. Meanwhile, she cares for the paraplegic Ghostheart and is becoming the spiritual leader of the Tree Ghosts.

Character Classes

Claiming that one is a ranger, druid, or bard in the North carries with it both some respect and some responsibilities. The various barbarians in particular associate different levels of respect based on one’s profession. For instance, wizards and clerics are generally shunned, while druids and bards are looked upon with great respect.

Following each class section are recommendations for player characters looking for generic specialty kits to base their characters on. In addition to these references, players should examine Wizards & Rogues of the Realms and Warriors & Priests of the Realms. Of course, the Dungeon Master must approve the use of any of these optional books.

Warriors

The North is rugged territory, and most warriors are looked upon with respect. Of course, different types of warriors are viewed in varying lights by the locals. And in a land where might makes right, a strong sword arm can prove quite beneficial.

Fighters

The ready call for a strong sword arm in the North draws men and women to this profession. Fighters are constantly needed to defend against orcs and monsters, to patrol the wastelands, and to fend off barbarian raiders, and to keep peace in cities.

Player characters should look at the barbarian, beast rider, cavalier, noble warrior, savage, and wilderness warrior kits from The Complete Fighter’s Handbook (with cavaliers and noble warriors typically, hailing from the larger cities). Also, The Complete Barbarians Handbook provides a barbarian fighter class for players interested in such a challenge.

Rangers

Respected for their vigilance in the service of the Harpers and the Lords’ Alliance, the word of an 8th-level or higher ranger is the law in the wilderness. The Lord’s Alliance enforces such “words of law” as the law of the land, though such edicts by rangers are rare and always in step with nature.

The Complete Ranger’s Handbook details the beastmaster, explorer, giant killer, and guardian kits that could be easily adapted to a campaign set in the North. Players interested in becoming a Harper should consult The Code of the Harpers.

Paladins

Paladins are very rare outside the walls of Waterdeep, and most of the barbarian tribes consider them nothing more than fighters. Should a paladin demonstrate spellcasting ability, most barbarians think the warrior nothing more than a cleric who fights with bladed weapons (unusual, but certainly not worthy of any more respect than a spellcaster).

Virtually all of the kits described in The Complete Paladin’s Handbook are applicable to player-character paladins, since the church directs most actions of the warrior. The most important aspect to consider is how well the kit choice matches with the paladin’s deity.

Wizards

Although wizards have never been popular with Uthgardt or Northmen barbarians, in the cities they wield power and command great respect and fear. Waterdeep is noted for powerful mages like Khelben “Blackstaff” Arunsun, Longsaddle has its magical Harpell family, and Silverymoon is home to colleges of magic and tutors. Wizards in Waterdeep are wise to join that city’s Watchful Order of Magists & Protectors, while spellcasters living in Luskan should at least be aware of the Host Tower of the Arcane.

Mages and Specialist Wizards

Wizards in smaller towns tend to be mages, the general practitioners of magic. Specialists in a particular field, especially divination, are uncommon outside of major cities, although invokers and necromancers are an exception to this general rule.
**Elemental Wizards:** Those rare wizards specializing in one of the four elements are extremely rare in the North. Some barbarians tribes have been known to treat such spellcasters with as much respect as their tribal shaman (which in most cases isn’t much), while other tribes have been known to treat them with the same disdain as other spellcasters.

**Wild Mages:** More wild mages have been hunted down by Uthgardt tribal warriors than probably any other type of spellcaster. Each time one of their spells goes awry, the tribal shaman inevitably pronounces the spellcaster as a heretic. Wild mages intend on casting spells to show off their talents to the “savages” had better pray to Tymora for a favorable wild surge (one that teleports them as far from their audience as possible).

*Wizards and Rogues of the Realms* offers kits of interest to the player-character wizard. The *Complete Wizard’s Handbook* has a few kits (anagakok, militant wizard, patronic, and savage wizard) worthy of mention that are easily adaptable to a campaign set in the North.

**Priests**

Many of the major gods and faiths of Faerûn are represented, though few are native to the residents in the Savage North. Over the centuries, missionaries have traveled here to establish churches and shrines, meeting with varied success. Predominant civilized gods include Mystra, Lathander, Mielikki, Tempus, and Tymora. The Uthgardt and Northmen barbarians worship their tribal totems.

**Clerics & Specialty Priests**

There is no perceived difference between clerics of a particular deity and specialty priests of the same deity. While such status might be important in the social circles of civilized folk, most small towns and virtually all of the barbarian tribes could care less whether a priest is “specially chosen” by their god.

The city folk are generally tolerant of most religions so long as they don’t harm others or property, but Northmen often eject foreign priests as rudely as possible. The savage Uthgardt tend to exterminate whomever their shamans label as heretics.

Player characters looking for specialty kits are advised to review *Faiths & Avatars* and *Warriors and Priests of the Realms* for inspiration. The gods of the Realms are too specific for other generic resources to be of much assistance.

**Druids**

The followers of Mielikki have a stronghold in the eastern reaches of The High Forest, an area known as the Tall Trees. Another holy grove exists in Silverymoon, where druids maintain a shrine and sacred college, and yet another grows in the city of Waterdeep. Though druids are rare, they are respected by civilized and barbarian folk alike.

*Druidic Circles:* In northern Faerûn, from the Sword Coast to Impiltur, druids in lightly settled areas tend to gather in small groups, often with rangers and other allies. These groups, usually numbering a dozen or fewer druids and 20 or fewer allies, vary widely in prominence and working relationships. Some druids live together in a woodland grove, while others are widely scattered and loners. In some groups, druids and rangers treat each other as equals, and in others the druids are revered by those who work with them.

These druidic groups are known as circles. The term refers to the unending cycles of natural processes and emphasizes that no one creature or being is intrinsically superior to another.

In Faerûn at large, these circles provide a network of communication and aid for those who venerate Chauntae and similar powers. In general, druids of Faerûn seek balance between man and nature, at the expense of neither.

As with other priests, players should review *Warriors & Priests of the Realms* and *Faiths & Avatars* for background material and specialty kits.

**Rogues**

Bardic colleges and thieves’ guilds are virtually unheard of outside of the major cities, but the role of the rogue in the North cannot be underestimated. While looked down on in major cities, rogues are revered in some barbarian tribes. Most of this respect centers around the juggling, storytelling, or sleight-of-hand performances of the rogue, but each tribe is different.

**Thieves**

The major cities and larger towns thrive with thieving activity, and many adventuring thieves scour the North hoping to stumble across vast fortunes hidden behind rusted coffers.

Waterdeep has the greatest concentration of thieves, yet there is no official thieves’ guild, only freelancers. Neverwinter, Silverymoon, Sundabar, Mirabar, Loudwater, and even Daggerford have small thieves’ guilds. Many suspect that a thieves’ network also exists throughout the North, but those who learn of the Kraken Society often do not live long enough to reveal its secrets (see page 67).

Outside the cities, a thief’s profession is rarely safe or profitable. Northmen (those who have things worth stealing) regard stealing from others as a way of life, but one caught stealing is certainly killed. The Uthgardt have little worth taking, but what they do have often has religious significance—and sacrilege is a fatal offense.

*Wizards and Rogues of the Realms* provides interesting kits for both a city-based campaign and general adventuring in the North (the Waterdeep and Savage North kits). Players looking to break from the established mold are directed to the *Complete Thief’s Handbook*.

**Bards**

While bards are not common, they’re respected in most cultures. Northmen treat scops like heroes, particularly if they sing proudly of Northmen victories. Even the Uthgardt barbarians treat bards as near equals. More often than not, bards are members of the Harpers, though there’s nothing for the bard to worry about if he prefers to be a freelancer not associated with the Harpers.

There are no specific references for Realms-oriented bards. Players looking to spice up their bards by adding Realmsian kits to their characters should check out the *Complete Bard’s Handbook* (especially the skald kit).

**Psionics**

Those who follow this path are rare in the Realms. As far as perceptions go, however, a barbarian tribe that considers all wizards as heretics is going to have the same view of a psionist. At the very best, a psionist who demonstrates his powers might be given the respect of a shaman.
the powers worshipped in the North include many beings venerated elsewhere in Faerûn, plus a number who have followers nowhere else. Most of these deities are described in *Running the Realm* from the *Forgotten Realms® Campaign Setting*, *Monster Mythology*, and *Faiths & Avatars*. Only the briefest details are given for these deities—for a proper understanding and perspective of the religions, the DM should have the aforementioned volumes. Other deities than those mentioned here are worshipped, but their followings are not noteworthy.

## Northmen Deities

The surly Northmen are not religious. They pay grudging homage to a few powers only because they have control over things the Northmen do not. Northmen rarely devote themselves to one power, but honor three primary deities: Tempus, Auril, and Umberlee—but only when in each deity’s sphere of influence. Other deities honored by Northmen include Valkur the Mighty, protector of sailors, and rarely, Malar the Beast, who is worshipped only by berserkers who revel in battle fury. The powers’ earthly agents, shamans, are treated with callousness, having a lower status than warriors.

Tempus, the god of battles, is the only deity who receives more than cursory piety by the Northmen. Warriors worship Tempus before battles, and he is seen as the berserker’s patron, protector of those who succumb to berserk frenzy.

The Northmen venerate Auril as the bringer of winter, an important part of their existence. They placate her with offerings of food and strong drink that are placed upon rafts set adrift at sea in autumn and winter.

The seafaring Northmen give great respect—and fear—to Umberlee, goddess and queen over the dark, deadly, cold waters of the ocean, waves, and currents. Umberlee is believed to cause shipwrecks and drownings and is the mistress of the sharks that endanger stranded sailors. The ocean gladly accepts the Northmen’s customary sacrifices before each voyage. The longer the journey, the greater the sacrifice.

## Uthgardt Deities

The Uthgardt barbarians live in a harsh, cruel environment and worship harsh, cruel gods.

Tempus is worshipped by all Uthgardt tribes as the god of war. Chauntea, the earth goddess, is the patron of Uthgardt women and has female shamans who serve her. Other “southern” deities are occasionally allowed to establish shrines or temples in or near tribal strongholds, but their presence is tolerated only because they or their priests provide something valuable to the tribe. Notably, the church of Auril and the other members of the Talos alliance—Talos, Auril, Umberlee, and Malar—have nearly driven out worship of the beast spirit in the Elk tribe, and worship of Tyr, Torrm, Ilmater, and Helm has supplanted almost all worship of the Black Lion totem in its tribe.

All these deities are held secondary to Uthgar and the beast cult totems among the Uthgardt society as a whole. Uthgardt legend tells that Tempus is the father of Uthgar, founder of the tribes (while other legends claim Uthgar’s descent from Beorunna). Chauntea is worshipped as the “grandmother,” whose daughters (fathered by Uthgar after he ascended into the halls of Tempus) are the wives of the beast cult great spirits.

The tribes worship one of the beasts whose powers were taken by Uthgar, the legendary father of their race. The totem cult encompasses the worship of the tribe’s ancestors, including Uthgar, his sons, and long-dead chieftains and shamans. The Uthgardt beast totems are great spirits (see the section on Shamans below for information on great spirits) who take their names and forms from creatures of the wilds. These cults include the Black Lion, Black Raven, Elk, Gray Wolf, Great Worm, Griffin, Red Tiger (Snow Cat), Sky Pony, Tree Ghost, and Thunderbeast, and they have included in the past such cults as Golden Eagle, Blue Bear, and Red Pony, which are now extinct.