

# Dwarves (Mountain Dwarves)



## Summary

Mountain Dwarves are hearty and cheerful when in relaxed company. They enjoy, above all, a good drink, a grand hearth, and great tales of battle. You'll never find a Dwarf far away from their weapon of choice; after The Third War, epic Dwarven stories of Troll and Orc hunts were passed down through the generations and have not been forgotten by the Mountain Dwarves now marooned in the Exiled Lands. The legendary combat prowess of a Dwarf is no mistake, and they will share their own stories to any who offer ale and an ear. However, most rumors of insatiable bloodthirstiness are exaggerated; those who interact regularly with them joke that Mountain Dwarves will enjoy a good nap with equal, or greater, enthusiasm.

## Costume Requirements

Note: In order to play a Mountain Dwarf, a player at Lands of Exile must follow a few costuming requirements. Optional costuming is NOT required to play the race, but rather a

suggestion based on how Mountain Dwarves look in this world.

### Required Costuming:

*Note: There is no height requirement for Mountain Dwarves*

- ♦ **Hair:** If long enough, hair must be braided and contain braids and be obviously decorated with metallic baubles, such as beads or metal filigree

Also pick at least two of these:

- ♦ **Facial hair:** Some visible facial hair (real or prosthetic). This can be from short/cropped facial hair, to obvious sideburns, to a long and luxurious beard.
- ♦ **Metal face decor:** Flat metal face decorations, arranged in geometric patterns and focused on the lower face – jawline and chin – in place of facial hair (see

TemmeT section for more information).

- ♦ **Tattoos:** Knotwork, braids, geometric shapes, and imagery tattoos covering a significant portion of the skin from the collarbone up the neck. Tattoo transfer paper is recommended for this. **Dwarves never have tattoos on their faces.**

### Optional Costuming:

- ♦ **Tattoos:** Tattoos covering the entirety of a Dwarf's body are not uncommon. These are not all beautiful braids or geometric shapes – many Dwarves have “bad” tattoos from a pint of ale and a friend to goad them along. **Dwarves never have tattoos on their faces.**
- ♦ **Clothing:** Braids are a common cultural aesthetic choice for Mountain Dwarves at any opportunity - woven braided belts, decorative braided border on their armor, braided texture for the collar of their shirts, etc. Metal adornments and geometric patterns are commonplace as well.

## Physical Description

### Average Life Span: 200-300 years

When encountering a Mountain Dwarf for the first time, many flatland races expect something along the lines of a stocky, furry Halfling, with a penchant for ale, and the temperament of an Orc with a bad cold. And, they would be mostly correct, except that Mountain Dwarves are not all short. Their varied stature has been one of the most surprising things many learn about Mountain Dwarves in the Exiled Lands. Still, many Mountain Dwarves are rugged, with extensive and elaborately decorated facial hair, often with long, braided, and equally decorated hair. Piercings of all kinds are very common, as it is an excuse to show off as much metalwork and skill as possible.

Mountain Dwarf style showcases their unsurpassed talents in carving stone and working metal. Angular filigree, knotwork, and geometric patterns are the overarching theme in Dwarven mastercrafts and armor. Attire is generally blocky and heavy looking. Wool and other heavy fabrics are used, often with ornate decorations of metal and leather adorning the garments and armor. Braids and fancy knotwork in worn items (clothing, armor, personal decoration) are often indicators of wealth or skill, the meanings of them dependent on the region they are from – these are called TemmeT (no “s,” even if plural). Wylde Elves take every opportunity to decorate

and embellish these to the fullest.

## TEMPERAMENT

Many Mountain Dwarves hail from large centers of Dwarven commerce nestled deep in mountainous regions, and are well-versed in Dwarven customs and lineages. However, with the upheaval of their homelands during the Age of Fire, many of the usually rigid social structures have been relaxed when Dwarves meet in the Exiled Lands.

Historically, they were accustomed to being surrounded by their kinfolk; due to the abrupt change after fleeing the Dragon fire, they are often gruff or solitary when encountered in the Exiled Lands. Still, Mountain Dwarves seem to tolerate all races.

Mountain Dwarves can seem greedy both with coin and gifts to outsiders, but in actuality Dwarves value the history and meaning of the object just as importantly as the objects physical form (see TemmeT). For this reason, Dwarves do not want to give or receive a gift that they do not know the history of. A cooking pot gifted to a Dwarf, without knowing the history, would not even be considered a gift. But a cooking pot given by a friend that cooked delicious food would be seen not only as a utilitarian gift (of something to cook with), but also the gift of good food.

It is rare for a Dwarf to "enjoy" the company of others than their kin, but Dwarven hospitality extends to any who also offer a good drink. Loyalty is a common trait among all Dwarves, though earning that loyalty can be a time consuming task, especially in the patchwork communities of the Exiled Lands. Although they will not abandon a friend in time of need, a Mountain Dwarf will never let you forget what they've done for you, and will expect the same in return.

Stubborn and set in their ways, they aren't quick to take to change, and the exodus to the Exiled Lands has been difficult for many. It is said that if 9 dwarves agree on a subject, the 10th will disagree, simply to be contrary. This can make them a burden in struggling refugee settlements, though most military-minded individuals see Mountain Dwarves as necessary assets.

## CURRENT & PRESSING CONCERNS

Mountain Dwarves were traditionally exclusionary towards other races, save for the merchant cities and extensive trade networks throughout the entire Homelands.

After the Age of Fire, many Mountain Dwarf clans felt safe and protected in their caverns, sealing the doors and attempting to “wait it out”. Sadly, even inside their well-protected fortresses, the Dragon Fire began to penetrate and wiped out entire bloodlines. Like other races, Dwarven families and clans were broken and scattered. Due to their excessive stubbornness, most stayed on the mainland far longer than any other race. Mountain Dwarves are said to have lost nearly 90% of their population, though if asked to speak on this loss, you may find yourself on the business end of their weapon.

In the Exiled Lands, Mountain Dwarves are mostly concerned with keeping good food in their bellies and ale in their tankard, but show surprising vigor when called upon to defend new friends from harm.

## GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

Before the Age of Fire, aside from trade routes, Mountain Dwarf cities tended to be expansive and isolated from each other; this being the case, each was considered its own kingdom. Within a kingdom, there existed an elected Regent, supported by a Council of guildmasters and military leaders. The Council, in turn, was advised by Clan Elders from each clan.

Dwarven Regents were elected from a pool of candidates, chosen by the Clan Elders, who were seen to “embody what it is to be a Mountain Dwarf”. The Council, comprised of the guildmasters of each Crafhall and military branches, were positions determined by skill, and were often held for many decades by a single individual. Due to this, it was necessary for each Clan to be represented in the government; and so, Clan Elders were responsible for having their Clan’s needs heard, by advising the Council.

In the Exiled Lands, these positions of respect and power are no longer relevant, and Dwarves rarely demand subservience from others based on what title they held in previous life. This does not mean Mountain Dwarves ignore status; only that they strive to re-earn their positions within a community and will fiercely prove their worth to others in order to eke out their place.

## RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Mountain Dwarf theology and worship centers around the elemental teachings of Memnis. Without the gifts of this Eldest, the history, culture, and goods of the

Mountain Dwarves would be nothing. Shrines are elaborately decorated to the honor of Memnis in the more affluent families, but even the poorest Dwarf family would have their finest stone carved in a dutiful display.

Due to their valuation of the gifts of Memnis, craftsmanship is held in high regard. Even other races see Mountain Dwarves as the inimitable artisans of the world when weapons, armor, alcohol and metalcraft are concerned. Mountain Dwarves regard Memnis as the Great Forgemaster, and seek enlightenment in their craft of choice through Memnis' guidance.

This passion for physical materialism can sometimes show itself as a negative trait when a Dwarf values ownership over admiration.

Because history, bloodlines, and storytelling are such important aspects of Dwarven culture, Ordin is also a frequent religious figure. Libraries and record halls are dually devoted to Memnis and Ordin, and it is possible for some Dwarves to choose a closer path with Ordin for the purpose of perfecting their abilities in poetry, storytelling, and recordkeeping.

As with most races on this plane, although some Eldest find special places in Dwarven culture, all Eldest are honorably regarded in some way.

## LEGENDS & CULTURAL PRACTICES

Mountain Dwarves in the Exiled lands are often relieved to be in the company of others of their race. No one understands the social system like a Mountain Dwarf, and to outsiders, it almost looks as if there is none. The system was all but abolished after the Age of Fire, as no Dwarf will turn away the company of another- no matter their previous rank on the homeland. However, Dwarves still value craftsmanship, battle prowess, and drinking ability, and when a group is involved in these activities, each falls in line accordingly.

Dwarves of all genders participate in the crafts of their race, and although there are more common professions for some, there is no mandate on life path based on gender. Respect is gained by show of skill, in all things.

The knowledge and advanced recordkeeping of Mountain Dwarves is comparable to that of the K'ojin, at least when Dwarven affairs are concerned. Great libraries are dedicated to tracking the lineages, clans, and Regents, as well as other notable affairs. Although material possessions are more regularly celebrated, all Mountain Dwarves know that their culture would be lost if it were not for the Scribes and Recordkeepers

of Ordin.

Dwarves tend to pass stories and information through oral tradition, and keep written information on stone and permanent structures using a written language called Lemel that they share with Ryggs. As such, the written language is rarely known or used by those except Dwarven or Ryggan scholars, or those that have made it a priority to seek out and learn at some point in their life. Calling the language Dwarvish or Ryggan is considered disrespectful to both societies, as they consider it one of the very few shared cultural values between them. Some uninformed people reference Lemel as the Dwarven or the Ryggan language, depending on who you ask – and both Dwarves and Ryggs tend to have strong feelings about this. See the Guide to Lemel for more information about the language.

Dwarven naming conventions are surprisingly close to the similarly-clannish Wylde Elves. With Mountain Dwarves, First names are a given name, while Third names are their Clan name. “Middle names” are given to Dwarves, by their Clan, when they reach the peak of their ability in their chosen craft.

Middle names are generally unique to the individual. For example, a Master in dental hygiene could be given the Middle name of “Grindtooth”, as in the legend of Gron “Grindtooth” Rockbreaker, when he used his unique skill to calm the rage of a Mountain Troll that had been terrorizing the neighboring trade route. More commonly, you will encounter a combat-seasoned Dwarf with the Second name of “Orcsmasher”, “Facegrinder”, “Axemender”, etc.

Even the lorekeepers and clerics will receive a Middle name, as in the case of Fliga “Earthrider” Lornen, a priestess of Memnis who is said to have ridden an avalanche and diverted it around her city’s gates, in order to prevent disaster. Expectedly, Mountain Dwarves don’t often reveal these names to non-Dwarves, because their significance is mostly lost to outsiders.

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Mountain Dwarves were generally isolationist pre-Age of Fire, only interacting with other races willfully when trade was involved. However, the current circumstances and cultural upheavals have forced many Mountain Dwarves to acclimate to diversity of company or suffer isolation. Many choose the latter, and usually do not survive long in the Exiled lands because of the dangers of living alone. Therefore, you tend to encounter the more easy-going Mountain Dwarves in the

settlements and Elendari camps.

Mountain Dwarves tend to be at odds with Ryggs – feuding over the origination of Lemel (their shared written language) being Dwarven or Ryggan. Mountain Dwarves are often defensive and quick to clarify that “Cave Dwarves” (Rygg) are not Dwarves, despite popular belief.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### TemmeT:

*(pronunciation: teh-MET)*

*The unusual capitalization is important in written language due to the word's Lemel origins.*

TemmeT has three meanings in Dwarvish society: First and foremost, it refers to metals that have a story or history behind them – it is widely believed that the properties of metal act as a natural conduit for energy, and as a result TemmeT are imbued and imprinted with the objects past. A gilded plate that's a family heirloom of a Dwarvish family is a TemmeT. A knife that cut a Dwarf's finger off when they were slicing an apple is a TemmeT. A sword passed down generations to the warrior of their family is a TemmeT.

This has led to varied classism throughout the Dwarven Kingdoms – a Dwarf with a sword passed down through generations of great warriors is automatically assumed to have the energy of those great warriors before them. A Dwarf with a hand-me-down sword of unknown origins does not have those imbued energies. This goes for many things in their society – the wealthy having special coins that only they handle; expensive homes having special carved wooden doorknobs so as to not absorb the energies of those who touch them; replacing things that have absorbed bad energies (like weapons) with newly smithed ore, fresh from the earth.

Likewise, most metal objects in Dwarven society are TemmeT, and are a reason that many Dwarves are so protective of the things they own and do not like for others to touch or borrow them. A used knife may not fetch too much at a Dwarven market because the history is unknown. Because of this, many Dwarves have picked up wooden-handled or wooden weapons when they fled to the Exiled Lands – as they don't know the history of available metal weapons. Both the object itself, and the

history, are called TemmeT, as in Dwarvish society they are seen as one object.

The second meaning of TemmeT is the metal that Dwarves wear on their person (on clothing, jewelry, baubles, beads, etc). Every piece of metal that is attached to a Dwarf carries significant meaning or history to them, and often a personal story. It is well known that if you're trying to engage in a conversation with a Dwarf – asking about their TemmeT after a pint of ale is sure to get them talking.

The third meaning of TemmeT is the metal decorations on their faces. All of these adornments – whether attached to their face, or piercings, or enchanted into their skin are TemmeT – but the latter are known specifically as **MetteM**.

**MetteM** are enchanted pieces of metal actually integrated into a Dwarf's skin in geometrically arranged patterns – most frequently on the chin and jaw area in place of facial hair, but they can sometimes be seen on other areas of visible skin. To the untrained eye it can be difficult to tell the difference between an integrated MetteM and a TemmeT facial decoration – but the cultural difference is significant. MetteM are created and integrated into Dwarvish skin with a very special, traditional, and secretive ritual that many fear has been lost forever with the loss of elders and those that carried the knowledge.

Lands of Exile