

THE NERO™ LARP BARBARIAN CULTURE HANDBOOK©

A NERO Live Action Role Play (LARP) Publication.

FORMERLY, the NERO® Barbarian Race Package©

Written by Noah Mason

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Last Updated on: 03/30/2005

VERSION: 1.1

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Out-of-Game Barbarian Racial Requirements

Makeup and Costuming Requirements

All that is specifically required for your costume is that you give the overall impression of being uncivilized and primitive. This is most easily conveyed by wearing fur or hide, but there are numerous ways to depict a barbarian. Many barbarians chose to wear war paint, have in-game (or out-of-game) tattoos, scarring, and jewelry, but none of this is required by the NERO Rules. For more information on makeup and costuming for barbarians, see the Garb and Markings section in the Role-playing Guidelines chapter. If you are unsure whether your costume accurately represents a NERO barbarian, contact your local Barbarian Race Marshal. They are the ultimate judges as to whether or not your costume needs adjusting.

Build Skills

Barbarians are a naturally oral culture, so reading and writing does not come easily to them. Furthermore, most barbarian tribes are warrior-based cultures and thus scholarly pursuits are given little importance. Barbarians must pay twice the Build Point cost for all Scholarly Skills, including Read and Write and Read Magic.

Barbarians are a people at one with Tyrra and have become intimately accustomed to their environments. Celestial magic was not part of their environment up until their first major contact with the civilized human kingdoms and empires. For every other race on Tyrra, Celestial and Earth magics have both been present in some amount throughout their history. It is because Celestial magic was absent from barbarian history up until a thousand or so years ago (depending on the area) that they can sense its presence, as something out-of-place and alien to what they consider to be the natural world. By focusing on their innate link with Tyrra, barbarians create a mystic aura that tells them of the presence of any celestial magic on the target that it strikes. All barbarians are born with this ability, and learning to focus it more often requires the same amount of effort regardless of the barbarian's class. Those who live in closer contact with humans and other civilized races tend to develop this skill faster as they are exposed to the foreign magic more and learn how to more easily sense its presence. This is a packet-delivered attack with the verbal "Detect Celestial Magic." This functions exactly as the Detect Magic spell, except that it only detects the presence of Celestial magic. It costs two Build Points for each daily use of the Detect Celestial Magic skill.

Disallowed Skills

Barbarians are not prohibited from buying any standard PC skills by the NERO Rules, however it is extremely rare for a barbarian character to purchase the Read Magic, Create Scrolls or Celestial Magic skills, due to their aversion to celestial spells. Barbarian characters with knowledge of Celestial Magic may well find themselves shunned and outcast by the mainstay of barbarian society, depending on how strongly the local tribes dislike it.

The one prohibition placed on barbarians is that no matter what skills they purchase they may never knowingly accept Celestial Defensive Spells. This includes any Celestial-only defensive spells such as Shield, Greater Shield, Elemental Blade, Enchanted Blade, Endow and Delayed Endow, as well as the crossover spells Shield Magic, Magic Armor, or Reflect Magic from a Celestial spellcaster. If you, as a barbarian character, know that another character casts Celestial spells you may never accept any Defensive spells from them. Furthermore, if your Detect Celestial Magic skill ever detects Celestial Defensives active on you then you should immediately get them removed, perform some kind of superstition or ceremony to cleanse yourself of the “bad mojo,” and very likely seek retribution against whoever cast the spell onto you.

Other

In addition to their costume, barbarians should try to depict their uncivilized, primitive upbringing through their role-playing as well. Many players chose to portray this by speaking poorly, using very basic and often incorrect vocabulary and sentence structure. However, this is not specifically required by the NERO Rules, only that you through your words and actions portray a “barbaric” character. There are countless interpretations of what it means to act like a barbarian, and certainly not all of them include poor speech. As with your costume, the local Race Marshal is the ultimate judge as to whether you are accurately representing the barbarian race through your role-playing. For more information on how to speak, act and dress like a barbarian, see the Role-playing Guidelines chapter.

Guidelines for Role-playing a Barbarian

Garb and Markings

As stated earlier in the Makeup and Costuming Requirements section, barbarians appear primitive to most humans and other civilized races. Humans, Elves, Dwarves, Hobblings, and other similar races all favor a relatively clean personal appearance and will often sacrifice utility for style and decoration. Also, these races tend to use processed cloth for most of their clothing, instead of animal hides and furs favored by barbarians. In fact, some of the more refined races, such as Quentari Elves, find it vulgar to wear the skin of dead animals. Barbarian clothing is invariably of a rough cut, is usually at least somewhat comprised of furs or hides, and seems primitive compared to human clothing of the same area. Barbarians also often wear war paint, tattoos, Spirit Marks, scarring, body piercings, and jewelry.

Humans and other civilized races find the way barbarians dress to be odd because barbarians do not employ refined cloth to anywhere near the extent that other races do. These more processed textiles are easier to clean, dye, and decorate in addition to being far easier to cut and sew, however to the ever-simplistic barbarians none of that is as important as how easy it is to obtain and how warm it is. In those two areas, fur is certainly the better choice. In the time it would take harvest the cotton, transport it to a seamstress, spin a bolt of cloth and finally tailor a typical human shirt, a barbarian could have killed and skinned eight deer. And of course, those eight deer hides would be much warmer than their cloth counterpart as well, not to mention the meat and other useful items provided by their bodies.

Another reason that barbarians favor furs and hides is their intimate connection with Tyrra and their respect for nature and the natural world. Barbarians are an extremely efficient, eco-conscious people that take from the land as little as is needed. Even the more developed, settlement raising barbarians tend to have much less of an oppressive, negative impact on their environments than the more industrious, civilized races. As such, when barbarians hunt animals for food, they almost never let the other parts go to waste, especially the hide. Since the people of the tribe will always need meat, there will always be a continual supply of hides and furs. Having such an abundance of the material around, they go out of their way to find as many uses for it as they can, such as clothes, tents, shields, armor, blankets, bedrolls, hide scrolls, signs, banners, various decorations, rawhide cords, bowls and cups, even boats! Animal fur and hide being such a prevalent material in their lives, it is not at all surprising then that mostly every barbarian you see will be wearing fur as some part of their clothing.

There is very often a good story behind the furs or hides that a barbarian wears. Although such is not always the case, since some barbarians just wear whatever's available to them and attach no special significance to it, they often will only wear the furs of animals killed on particularly momentous hunts. Hides from tribal ceremonies such as the Rite of Manhood or Rite of Initiation are often used as clothing for this reason. In these cases it is almost always the outermost layer of furs, such as a cloak or mantle.

The type or color of the hides and furs often indicates a barbarian's tribe, much like human heraldry. In some cases, barbarians that follow animal or nature totems never wear clothes made from their given animal. Others wear the fur of their particular animal as the primary component of their garb, seeing it as honoring their totem to do so. Every tribe and individual barbarian has their own view on this, and many barbarians do not follow the way of any particular animal totem at all. To some, it is the color or combination of colors that is significant, not the animal the hide is from, so they use any fur of that color, or simply dye it.

Out-of-Game Costuming Hints

The easiest way to represent yourself as a barbarian is to go to your local fabric store and buy three yards of the fur-like fabric of your choice. This will be enough to make yourself a tabard, a set of bracers or arm-wraps, and a set of grieves or leggings. This fur will most likely represent the bulk of your costume, so make sure to pick a color or pattern that you really like.

Making a tabard is simple. Mark off the edges of your shoulders and neck, and cut the fabric into a rectangle with a hole for your head in the middle. The most important things to keep in mind when cutting out your tabard are the size of the neck hole, its overall length, and making sure the neck is exactly in the middle. You do not want the hole to be too small and constrict your throat, but it should not be too big either and constantly fall off your shoulder. You want it to be long enough so that with the hole in the middle, it comes down to at least the middle of your thighs. Any higher than that and you won't be able to belt it down and it will fly around as you run and fight. Once you have the basic shape cut out and you can wear it easily, it is a good idea to cut up the outer edge of the tabard at odd angles. This adds to your rustic, primitive appearance, as well as making it look more like actual animal fur than artificial, store-bought fabric.

Coverings for your forearms and lower legs can usually be made out of the unused material from your tabard, if you want them to be of the same color or pattern. If you prefer, you could get one or two yards of different material. Either way, the easiest way to make forearm and shin coverings is to take the piece of uncut fur, wrap it around the area it will be covering and mark where to cut on the back. You may want to sew your forearm and shin covers together so that they keep their shape and stay on better, but this is more time consuming and difficult. Or, you can simply cut small holes down the inside edges of the coverings and lace leather straps or cords through them.

Body markings such as war paint, tattoos and branding are common among most barbarian tribes. The significance of one's markings is generally determined by the symbol, picture or pattern as well as its location.

Markings placed on the chest, or abdomen usually have a spiritual or magical significance. Accordingly, it is common for symbols representing one's totem or ancestor spirit to be found on the breast or sternum. Sometimes this is a direct representation such as a detailed picture of their totem animal or a portrait of their ancestor. The markings could be an abstract representation as well, such as runes or pictograms depicting their name.

Facial markings (most commonly war paint as opposed to permanent tattoos or scarring) are usually either of the tribe’s own symbol, such as an image of its totem animal or the heraldic symbol of their founder, representing the individual’s pride in his or her people. Alternatively, facial markings can be of a profane, evil symbol meant to intimidate and instill fear in one’s enemies.

The upper arm is often decorated with tattoos depicting the image or name of lost loved ones and brothers at arms. Tribal scars and brands are also commonly placed here during Rites of Manhood and Initiation. It is also common to tattoo or brand the name of one’s spouse onto the upper arm as part of a blood bonding, or marriage ceremony.

Use of Language

Barbarians often sound primitive and uncultured to the more civilized races, causing the untrue stereotype that barbarians are stupid or ignorant. It’s true that barbarians speak in a different manner than typical humans or elves, but that’s not because they lack the ability to speak like humans, or are for some reason ignorant of advanced syntax and vocabulary. In all things, barbarians are a simplistic and utilitarian people. This is evident in their dress, their tools, and their speech as well.

Most barbarians will attempt to say things in the most basic, direct way possible. The flowery tongue of diplomacy used in the high Elven and Human courts would be completely lost on a barbarian. Barbarians typically make use of a much smaller vocabulary than an average human, because they tend to use already existing words to describe new things they find instead of making up new words for them. For example, most barbarians would never use the words “rapier,” “man gauche,” “katana,” “scimitar,” and “flamberg.” Instead, they would simply describe the different types of swords as they saw them, such as “thin stabber,” “small, thin stabber,” “curved slasher,” “small curved slasher,” and “big slasher.”

Things that barbarians encounter frequently often have commonly shared descriptions. Usually, the most commonly encountered variety of a given creature or object will have the least descriptive name. As such, orcs are called “green skins,” goblins are called “little green skins,” and trolls are called “big-nose green skins.” Barbarians usually name things based off of the way they look, but sometimes use other characteristics as well. Below is a list of common barbarian words:

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Skinny: elf | Head rag: bandanna |
| Squat: dwarf | Horse blanket: tabard |
| Rock-eater: negative connotation for a dwarf | Stabber*: Spear |
| | Blocker: Shield |
| Rock-kisser: drae | Slasher*: Sword |
| Cave skinny: drae | Chopper*: Axe |
| Green skin: orc | Big chopper*: Pole arm |
| Little green skin: goblin | Crusher*: Mace, hammer or bludgeon |
| Green vermin: goblin | Big crusher: Two-handed blunt |
| Big-nose green skin: troll | Big slasher: two-handed sword |
| Bull man: minotaur | Poker: dagger |
| Bad mojo: celestial magic, also a generic term for bad luck, and any supernatural, magical, or unexplained | Little chopper: Hatchet or short-axe |
| | Shank, or shanker: dagger |
| | Shooter*: Bow or crossbow |

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| curse or affliction | Floppy wood: paper |
| Horned skinny (sometimes horny skinny): mystic wood elf | Writing wood: paper |
| | Writing stick: pen or pencil |
| Bird face: Biata | Cooking box: stove |
| Food stabber: fork | |
| Food scooper: spoon | |
| Food cutter: knife | |
| Face wiper: napkin | |
| Snot (or booger) wiper: handkerchief | |

Belief Systems

Barbarians are a very superstitious people, whose lives are very much influenced by portents from animals, plants and the natural world, as well as from their shamans' ancestral lore, magical vision and insight. Many barbarians believe that various animals represent higher spirits that each adheres to a particular code of conduct and lifestyle, called Animal Totems or Spirit Totems. Most barbarian tribes with this type of belief system devote themselves to one particular Animal Totem that everyone in the tribe follows. Other barbarians base their belief system on their ancestors and have a strict bloodline hierarchy. These tribes usually have elaborate traditions, ceremonies, and passed on legends about the dead and burial, because they place such an importance on their ancestors' spirits and family honor. The most common examples of barbarian beliefs are their Rites of Manhood that signify one's passing from childhood into adulthood, Rites of Initiation that formally induct one into a particular tribal caste or occupation, and superstitions relating to good or back luck.

Many totem-based tribes have Rites of Manhood that involve a ceremonial hunt of their patron animal. This is often the case in tribes dedicated to non-predatory animals such as deer or buffalo, but its been known for carnivorous animal tribes to hunt their totem as well. It is more common for tribes devoted to predator animals to engage in a hunt for an animal that is traditionally their totem's prey as well. In some of the more violent, brutal tribes the object of the quest is not an animal that's hunted by their totem, but another barbarian of that animal's tribe! The stories of Rites of Manhood such as this have helped give barbarians their savage reputation amongst the civilized kingdoms.

Common Rites of Manhood from ancestor-based tribes are quests that reenact famous deeds done by their patron. Often this begins by traveling to a sacred grove, hilltop, mountain or cave where their patron is believed to have accomplished some legendary feat. Sometimes they will meditate at this location for a certain amount of time, or until they receive a portentous vision. It's common for the performer to ingest a hallucinogenic alchemical substance prepared by the tribal shaman or apothecary to facilitate this vision. Alternatively, the tribe's shaman can cast the Dream Vision formal magic spell onto the subject, depending on the traditions of the particular tribe.

If the ancestral patron of the tribe is famous for having slain a particular monster or animal, the object of the quest is often another monster or animal of the same type, and usually must be done with the weapon he or she used in the tribal legend. In warlike groups that constantly clash against other tribes or civilized kingdoms, the subject will have to hunt and kill a traditional enemy of their people. Like the more violent quests undergone by members of animal totem tribes, these are far from common occurrences. It

is more common to take the form of a symbolic ceremonial dance, chant or song that acts out their progenitor's legend, done in the presence of the tribal elders. The time, date and location of the ceremony are usually determined by the performer's birthday, their patron's birthday, the anniversary of their patron's famous deed, or the anniversary of his death. The degree of skill in the performance is usually held to determine how much fortune lies in their life as a full-fledged adult.

A Rite of Initiation for joining the Warrior caste is often a ceremonial honor combat against the elder of that caste, or sometimes one the performer's parents. These ritualistic battles are seldom to the death, and it is not always necessary for the performer to actually defeat their opponent, only the willingness to fight to their last breath. When the performer has received enough wounds to render him unconscious, the Rite of Initiation is usually over. They are healed and declared a full tribal warrior from that moment forth. Many tribes also have group warrior initiations that take the form of large annual tournaments.

To show their tolerance for pain as well as their devotion to their tribe and the way of the warrior, many times a Rite of Initiation will involve ceremonial scarring or tattooing, forever marking the performer as a true warrior of their tribe. The meaning of various tribal markings is described in detail in the Garb and Markings chapter.

To show their ability to fulfill the role of interpreter of omens from the spirit world and performer of tribal rites and ceremonies, prospective shamans usually have Rites of Initiation that involve diving a portent from the spirits and conducting the appropriate ritual, all under the scrutiny and supervision of an elder. Once completed to the elder's satisfaction, the other shamans of the tribe gather together to complete the initiation in a communal ceremony. This final ritual is sometimes done immediately upon the performer's completion of their quest, but in some cases can only be done on a specific date, as defined by the tribe's traditions. As with initiations into the warrior caste, ritual painting, scarring or tattooing is commonly a part of these ceremonies.

Finding a sick or dying animal (of your totem) is considered bad luck and/or a bad omen. In some tribes, bringing the animal to a tribal shaman to be healed is the only way to ward off the curse. Others will kill the animal and burn the body, then perform a ceremonial dance or chant.

Many barbarians believe that dreams involving animals or spirits are visions from the supernatural world and have specific significance. The meaning of various dream symbols differs between tribes, but there are some generally accepted interpretations for certain frequently recurring images. An image of the person's totem animal standing still and gazing at something is interpreted as a quest to seek out the object of the totem's view. If the animal is walking in the dream, this signifies that the place or object is one step in a journey that will continue on. Seeing the totem animal sick or wounded in a dream, just as seeing such while waking, signifies bad luck to come, but the other images surrounding the animal indicate what the danger or unlucky event is related to.

Burning incense on in front of a statue dedicated to one or more ancestor is considered to bring good luck, while not doing so will anger them. The type of herbs or incense burned, as well as the time and date when these ceremonies are performed, and the significance of the ritual are all determined by the specific beliefs of the tribe. Important dates in the history of the tribe are usually occasions for incense-burning ceremonies such as the anniversary of legendary victories to bring good luck, legendary

defeats to ward off misfortune, and the birth or death of famous ancestors to gain their attention and aid.

A bad omen for most ancestor-based tribes is to encounter an animal or monster that killed one of their patrons. Much like the beliefs held by totem-based barbarians about seeing a wounded or sick animal of their tribe, a specific ritual is usually required if one of these misfortune-invoking creatures is encountered. Certain specific visions or portents can indicate either good or bad luck if such omens were received by the tribe's legendary patron before a famous victory or defeat. For example, if the tribe's founder saw a circle of fire in the sky (actually a natural phenomenon of the weather) before being slain in battle, such a vision would likely be considered cursed from then on. As such, intimate knowledge of the myths and legends related to their tribal ancestors' history is of paramount importance for the tribe's shamans, who must interpret these signs for their people.

Male-Female Interactions

Barbarian tribes vary on the relative dominance and influence of the two sexes quite a bit from tribe to tribe. For many of the more violent and brutish tribes, the males strongly dominate the females and relegate them to strictly domestic roles. Often in tribes where food and land is abundant, with little competition with other tribes and outsiders, the females make more decisions and are more influential. In other tribes, particularly the more nomadic ones, both sexes contribute equally and have equal say, with each member's personal worth determining their role and status in society, not their gender. Obviously, the male-to-female ratio will also contribute significantly to the relative position of the sexes in a given tribe. This will be included in the description of each of the individual tribes.

Sometimes courtship and marriage is done just as it is in most human cultures, where any two members of the tribe can engage in a relationship and eventually marry. Sometimes marriages are determined by magical visions and spiritual omens such as in shaman-oriented tribes, while sometimes a ritual honor combat is conducted as is common in warrior-based societies. In many tribes, marriage is for life and involves only two partners, however some tribes are more promiscuous and allow multiple spouses through the course of one's life, or even having several spouses at one time.

Inter-Racial Interactions

Barbarians usually react best with races that place a high value on strength, the earth and nature. Conversely, they usually disdain races they view as weak, or favor celestial magic. Generally, barbarians look most favorably upon Biata, Half-Ogres, Half-Orcs, Scavengers and Wild Elves. They are neutral towards Amani Elves, Dwarves, Gypsies and Humans, and tend to dislike Drae, Quentari Elves, Mystic Wood Elves, Sarr and Stone Elves.

Biata have always been considered kin to the barbarians, and because of this the two races are often found in close company. Aside from any hereditary relationship, whether its in fact real or imagined, barbarians and Biata have much in common, the foremost being their distrust of celestial magic and their difficulty in learning how to read. After Biata, barbarians feel most close to the tribal Half-Ogres and Half-Orcs whose culture is very similar to theirs. The culture of wild elves is similar to that of barbarians

as well, though because of the physical weakness characteristic of all elves they are favored less than the races mentioned above. Though anatomically the least similar, the wild, untamed nature of the animal-like Scavengers appeals to the barbarians' lifestyle. Sometimes animal totem-based tribes will greatly favor Scavengers of their totem's species and view them as sacred, however this is not always the case.

Barbarians respect the martial prowess, strength and natural link with the earth that is possessed by the dwarves, however they are still a "civilized" race so although the two are similar in many ways, their cultures are too diverse for them to be on as friendly as the Biata or other tribal races. Likewise, the barbarians are usually able to look past the perceived frailty of the Amani elves because of their respect for nature. The nomadic gypsies seem very much alike the herd-following barbarians, except that the former travel from town to town, while the latter go from forest to forest. The most varied of all the races, humans are usually taken on a case-by-case basis. Various barbarian tribes have both supported whole-heartedly and fought viciously against human kingdoms throughout the course of history, just as many individual barbarians and men have been either stalwart friends or relentless enemies.

Although traditionally mortal enemies themselves, the Drae and Quentari elves both have a characteristic arrogance and attitude of racial superiority that the barbarians detest. Along with their alabaster-skinned cousins the stone elves, the barbarians dislike these elven cultures because of their highly civilized lifestyles and their frequent use of celestial magic. While not as orderly and refined as these elves, the Mystic Wood Elves and the Sarr are also looked at as civilized races so barbarians are usually prejudiced against them as well. Though generally unassuming and inoffensive, barbarians usually feel strong contempt towards the ever-peaceful Hobblings, due to their race's utter lack of warriors, as well as their own physical weakness.

Crafts

Personal strength, independence, and self-sufficiency are all fundamental underpinnings of the barbarians' lifestyle, as well as their superstitious and spiritual nature. This is evident in their tools, in their weapons and armaments, in their clothes and their common, household items.

Unlike the dwarves and humans, obsessed with invention and creation, they do not often build tools or devices for the sake of convenience. To rely on machines would be to relent that your own personal strength is not enough to keep you alive. While they still employ a useful array of tools, these are almost always of a strictly utilitarian design. Barbarians prefer to do as much as they can by hand, or with simple, self-powered tools. Most barbarians also prefer tools made of renewable resources such as wood, or animal bone and hide rather than stone or forged metal, especially since these materials are much easier to use and repair.

Weaponry is the one area where barbarians most often go out of their way to make use of the most advanced methods and items available. Keeping with the utilitarian mentality, barbarians collect and employ the weapons and armor of their fallen enemies, just as they harvest the hide, meat and bones from the animals they hunt. Sometimes this means that groups of barbarians will be encountered with newly forged, well-made steel weapons and armor, such is not commonplace. While barbarians have access to any

technology they can gain through trade or conquest, it is far more difficult for them to maintain and upkeep this equipment once it's captured. Often a given group of barbarians will have one or two new, fully functional and unspoiled weapons, several travel-worn and beaten up weapons, and several self-made primitive weapons, with the same mix of armor and other miscellaneous equipment. Barbarian-made weapons and armor are usually made of the same materials used in the other types of goods, such as bone, chiseled stone, and wood. The prominence of forged steel weapons and armor will vary quite a bit based on how frequent and intimate the contact with civilization was in a given tribe's past. Some particularly advanced barbarian groups of fame were every bit as well equipped as the royal or imperial soldiers they fought – and defeated.

It's common for some barbarians to carry a spare weapon made from the bone of a specific animal, or one that's coated with a certain metal, bears mystical symbols or has special fetishes attached to it. This is to protect against evil spirits and supernatural creatures that they believe can only be hurt or slain by specific weapons. In some cases the superstitions are true, such as monsters that are only affected by silver or iron, and in some cases they are completely fabricated. Either way, they believe it whole-heartedly, as evidenced by these archaic items that seem so odd to the mainstream civilization.

Magic

Barbarians strongly favor the Earth school of magic, and since the majority of their society's scholarly pursuits are in that area, their shamans are known to be quite learned, wise and powerful. Conversely, the Celestial school is foreign and relatively unknown to most barbarians, so they hate and distrust it. Naturally, Celestial wizards are all but unheard of in barbarian tribes, and are seen as somewhat of an anathema. The reasons for barbarians' natural distrust and dislike of Celestial magic vary just as all elements of their culture and belief systems do.

Political Involvement

As with their belief system, the barbarians' political system is usually based off of a hereditary hierarchy, or the code of beliefs represented by their animal totem. Whether they are nomadic or settled, as well as their level of contact with technology and civilization are also influential factors in their internal relations. The dominance of a particular occupation in a given tribe contributes significantly to its culture as well.

In tribes that have a social hierarchy based on a structured, ancestral lineage, there is usually one central leader or house, and an individual's social position is determined by his or her genealogical proximity to the leader. The amount of involvement by the central leadership varies from tribe to tribe, usually with the more settled folk being more closely administered by the chieftain, while their nomadic brethren are largely left to manage their own concerns. In both cases the chieftain's duties include presiding over holidays and tribal ceremonies, and settling disputes with members both within and outside the tribe. The input of other members of the tribe into the management of the tribe's affairs is usually weighted by their position in the hereditary social hierarchy, with those most closely related to the leader having the most say, and those most removed from the central bloodline being heard the least. In some groups the rules that govern decision-making are loose and vague, while some have strict parliamentary procedures often

borrowed from their civilized neighbors. The latter is more frequent in tribes with a higher level of influence from human, dwarven, and elven society.

In tribes that follow the tenets of a particular animal totem, the social structure is most often determined by the teachings of that totem. Communalistic animals such as wolves and lions often favor a council-based, democratic political system, while individualist animals such as bears tend towards a single central leader, such as a chieftain or high shaman. Tribes devoted to aggressive, predatory animals have a more militaristic outlook, so are quicker to go to war and engage in personal honor duels. Tribes that follow more peaceful, herbivorous animals like deer, and buffalo also have political attitudes in keeping with the general temperament of their totem, tending towards diplomacy over war, and peaceful restitution instead of violent honor combats.

Codes of Behavior

A barbarian's code of conduct is usually determined by his tribe's spiritual beliefs, the code adhered to by their occupation or caste, their ancestral founder's credo, or a combination thereof. More than any other aspect of their lives, a given barbarian's tribal traditions set what codes of behavior they follow.

The warrior caste usually follows a code dedicated to the principles of defending their people and tribelands, the defeat of their tribe's enemies, bravery, physical strength, and martial skill.

Shamans typically obey a code of spiritual discipline, and adherence to their totem or ancestor's precepts, as well as the responsibility of counseling and healing the tribe.

Craftsmen, hunters and gatherers often live by simpler guidelines and often don't strictly follow the tenets of their patron animal or founder, but instead devote themselves to their occupation and its role within the tribe.

General Facts About Barbarians

Lifespan

On average, barbarians have a comparable lifespan to humans. In many cases, the barbarians' earth-centric way of life tends to grant them increased longevity due to their focus on natural medicines and curative magic, as well as usually having healthier diets and engaging in more physical exercise than their civilized counterparts. However, barbarians have a much more prominent tendency to engage in wars and individual physical conflicts, making death by violence more common than in a human society and thus lowering the average lifespan. Honor combats between individuals and groups of barbarians are a frequent and accepted occurrence in their culture, though not as common or socially important as those in Half-Ogre societies. Violence is seen as a justifiable recourse to mostly any offense, and does not carry the sense of impropriety and vulgarity that it does amongst the more civilized, peaceful races such as humans, elves and hobblings.

Strengths

With their strong tendency towards a militaristic lifestyle, barbarians usually have a greater warrior-to-civilian ratio than civilized races. This makes them able to engage and defeat civilized peoples with a greater total population, as those groups produce less warriors to defend their land with.

As mentioned above in the Crafts section, barbarians do not have the benefit of laborsaving devices and machines created by civilized people, nor do they want them. Because of this, they get much more physical exercise and tend to be healthier and better able to withstand punishment from battle and the environment.

Weaknesses

The barbarian's greatest disadvantage stems from their cultural mistrust of Celestial Magic, making them unable to take advantage of that school's ability to create protective eldritch barriers or its more versatile and effective battle spells. While able to stockpile magical potions and alchemical elixirs to preserve their warriors, they are unable to scribe battle scrolls to hurl bolts of elemental energy at their opponents, forcing them to rely on the far less effective archery, or the more expensive poison gas globes for a ranged attack. Because of this most barbarians favor a straight-forward rush across the battlefield to engage in hand-to-hand combat as quickly as possible, which puts them in more direct personal danger. This is often the cause of very high casualties at the onset of an engagement, as the barbarian warriors are exposed to their enemies' ranged spells while closing into melee without having scrolls or celestial casters of their own to counterattack with.

Their social weakness is their difficulty in learning scholarly skills, due to their mostly oral culture. The civilized kingdoms of the humans, elves and dwarves are firmly based in the institution of written records and communication, which puts barbarians and other less literate races at a disadvantage when attempting trade or diplomacy with them.

This also makes efforts towards unifying barbaric peoples much more difficult, as the greatly varied histories and beliefs of the multitudes of tribes have diverted so drastically due to the individual development of their separate groups. With the standard of written records to pass on their history and cultural beliefs, civilized kingdoms come from more of a common ground than the greatly contrasting barbarian tribes.