

d12 Monthly

DESERT & BADLANDS
ISSUE

Issue 20
February, 2023

**HOT
& DANGEROUS**

ADVENTURING IN THE
BADLANDS

**DESERT
CARAVANS**

**DESERT
CRITTERS**

ARID BEASTS

Desert Oasis: An new adventure locaton

DEAN SPENCER

d12 Monthly is a helpful resource for fantasy roleplayers.

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The Desert & Badlands

Issue

Just a heads up that **d12 Monthly** will no longer be using the OGL from WotC.

What does this mean moving forward?

Not too much difference. I will still be producing content for fantasy TTRPGs and most of what I produce can easily be adapted and used in whatever system you play. This zine is really about sparking your creativity and inspiring you - I hope it will continue to do that.

With that out of the way, this issue is all about the harsh desert and the dangerous badlands.

Find new monsters, spells, and knowledge on how to survive travelling in these harsh lands. Have fun with it.

And, as always, happy gaming!

- Russ from YUMDM

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About Me

I have been roleplaying for over 30 years and DMing for most of those. I have played over 50 different roleplaying games, but my first love is fantasy - it's like coming home.

Other TTRPGs I like: WEG D6 Star Wars, Feng Shui RPG, & Warhammer FRP.

Thanks to my Patrons

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... for making this zine as good as it is.

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(Tiers are available to receive a physical copy each month).





Knowing The Land

Types of Deserts

Most people think of deserts to be long stretches of sand, but there are many types, from sandy to rocky to stony. The big difference however, is the reason they form in the first place, which varies greatly.

Technically, a desert is any area that gets less than 10 inches (25 centimetres) of precipitation each year. But, as you will see, there are a variety of deserts that exist because of the location they are in.

Below are the types of deserts, with information to help you place them in your own campaign world so that they make some sense.

There are five basic types of deserts, based on geographic location: subtropical, coastal, rain shadow, interior, and polar.

The last one - polar - we won't cover in this issue as arctic regions were covered extensively in Issue 19.

Subtropical Deserts

Subtropical deserts tend to be very hot and dry in the summer, and cooler and dry in the winter.

Geography: Subtropical deserts are found in the subtropical zones of your campaign world. In ours, it's between 15° and 30° north and south of the Equator.

Temperatures: The average temperature found here can be as low as 50°F, and as high as 90°F or more in the summer season.

Rainfall: Rain generally falls in short bursts. Some never reach ground level.

Flora & Fauna: The flora found here are heat-resistant varieties that are good at water-retention - mostly a variety of shrubs and small trees.

Animals are more active at night, when it is cooler, and consist of small mammals and reptiles.

Examples of subtropical deserts in our own world: Mojave, Sonoran, Chihuahuan, the Sahara, the Great Victoria Deserts, Patagonian desert, Iranian desert, Gobi desert, the Tanami desert.

Coastal Deserts

Coastal deserts can be found in cool to warm zones along a western coastline, which have cold ocean currents running alongside them.

Fog Clouds: In winter, the cooler air flowing off the ocean causes clouds of fog to form, which then rolls over the desert.

The fog is characteristically damp with moisture in an arid environment that sees very little rain.

Verdant Oasis: When these fog clouds are trapped by mountains or caught in valleys, they can feed an abundant source of life and green verdant oases form.

Geography: Coastal deserts are usually located on the west coasts of continents between 20° to 30° latitude.

Temperatures: Coastal deserts have brief, cool winters and long, warm summers. Temperatures range from as low as 25°F in winter, to temperatures up to 95°F in summer.

Rainfall: An average of 5 inches of rainfall is known to occur annually.

Flora & Fauna: Many plants and animals make use of the fog that rolls over the arid surface, but many more survive in this harsh environment all year round.

Some plants have adapted by growing various leaf types: one to extract the moisture from the fog, and another used normally.

Black sage, salt bushes, and rice grass are typical examples.

Animals include beetles, snakes, lizards, moles, and larger animals like coyotes, and antelopes. Birds include eagles, bustards, and horned owls.

Examples of coastal deserts in our world: Namib Desert in Africa and the Atacama Desert in Chile.

Rain Shadow Deserts

Rain shadow deserts exist on the leeward side of mountain ranges (the side that gets little rain).

When clouds hit one side of the mountain range, they tend to deposit most, if not all, of their rain on the windward side, leaving the opposite side much drier.

Geography: These deserts can form in any zone, on the leeward side of a mountain range that lies parallel to moist, coastal areas.

Temperatures: In summer, like most deserts, temperatures range from high in the day (temperatures up to 120°F/49°C), before cooling during the night (as low as 90s°F/mid-30s°C).

In winter, these deserts are much milder during the day, and can reach freezing overnight.

Rainfall: Rainfall in rain shadow deserts is usually less than 2 inches per year.

Flora & Fauna: Flora is dominated mostly by various tough, thorny shrubs.

Examples of coastal deserts in our world: Death Valley, in the United States.

Interior Deserts

The interior of large land masses, like continents, get little moisture-laden winds, and so become interior deserts.

Geography: These deserts can form almost anywhere in the interior of large land masses.

Temperatures: During the day, interior desert temperatures can rise to an average of 100°F (38°C). At night, desert temperatures fall to an average of around 25°F (-3.9°C).

Rainfall: Usually fewer than 10 inches per year.

Flora & Fauna: Interior deserts usually only support ground-hugging shrubs and short woody trees. Most animals are small nocturnal carnivores. There are also many insects, arachnids, reptiles and birds.

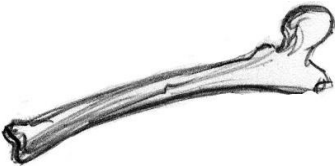
Examples of coastal deserts in our world: The Gobi Desert, in China and Mongolia.

Magical Deserts

Of course, in fantasy, there is always the chance of some magical source for a desert forming. In this case, a desert could form anywhere. Use the table below to see how the magical desert was formed.

Table: Magical Desert Formation

D6	Reason for Magical Desert
1	A genie is trying to control the surrounding lands
2	A portal to the Sphere of Earth has been opened up
3	Powerful earth elemental was summoned & is influencing the world around it
4	A magical artefact, a millennia old, has been found and used. It is causing chaos!
5	A god has died and lays at the centre of the desert
6	The nature deity is displeased with a whole nation



We Took A Wrong Turn

Understanding the Badlands



Badlands are a dry land that forms when softer rock is eroded over millions of years. It features steep slopes, minimal plant-life, and a lack of loose soils and debris.

They are difficult to navigate, as they feature a twist of ravines, gullies, buttes, hoodoos and similar geologic formations. They are unsuitable for agriculture of any type due to the lack of soil and moisture, and are usually uninhabited.

Badland Geologic Features

Some geologic features found in badlands.

Ravines

A ravine is a landform that is narrower than a canyon and is often the product of water erosion. Ravines are typically larger than gullies, and smaller than valleys. They have either active or intermittent streams flowing along the channel.

Gullies

A gully is a landform created by running water. Gullies resemble large ditches or

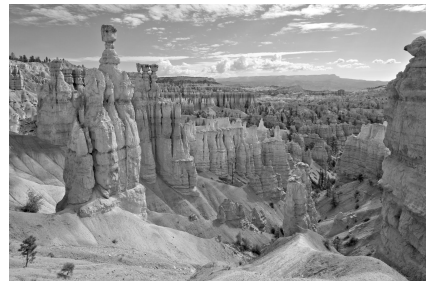
small valleys, and can be metres, to tens of metres in depth and width.

Buttes



Buttes are an isolated hill with steep, often vertical sides and a small, and relatively flat top, formed by weathering and erosion.

Hoodoos



Hoodoos are tall, thin spires of rock formed by erosion. They can range in height from an average human to heights exceeding a 10-story building.

Climate & Weather

Badlands typically get around 16 inches of rainfall annually, which falls during the warmer months. Temperature is hot and mostly clear in summer, and the winters are freezing and windy. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from -11°C to 33°C (12°F to 91°F).

It's A Long Road

Adventuring in the Desert & Badlands



Survival

Surviving in a desert or badlands environment is extremely difficult.

In the desert, one litre of water is not enough. The typical consumption is one gallon (or 4 litres) a day. And this is just for a single person. Horses and other animals require significantly more.

Fortunately, camels and stonebeaks (see the *Desert Rats* article in this issue) can survive up to 4 days without water.

This is why travelling along established trade routes is so important (see *A Journey of A Thousand Nights* article in this issue for more information on this).

Badlands are a little better than the desert, but not much.

Some watercourses flow through badlands, which allow travellers to hunt the animals attracted by the water and fill their waterskins, but this also leaves them susceptible to monsters who want to hunt and eat them.

Hazards

Many hazards exist in the dry, hot lands of deserts and badlands.

Heat

Heat can kill as easily as any monster can.

Note: Deserts and badlands can drop to freezing temperatures at night in certain seasons. You will find information on how the cold affects characters in *Issue 19 of d12 Monthly*.

To simplify matters, heat has been defined below into bands. Each band has its own save modifier associated with it.

Table: Heat Bands

Temperature	Band	Save Penalty
41-90F	Moderate	-
91-110F	Hot	-1
111-140F	Severely hot	-2
141F+	Extremely hot	-4

Moderate: There are no adverse effects at this temperature.

Hot & Above: Unprotected characters need to make a saving throw versus CON/Death each hour of travel or suffer a level of fatigue.

Healing Heat Damage

Fatigue from heat stroke cannot be recovered until a character cools down.

This can be done at night, by being doused in water, or by magical means.



Dehydration

As the body loses fluid from heat and excursion, the character will quickly succumb to dehydration if that fluid is not replaced, usually through drinking water.

The hotter the temperature, the quicker characters will need to make CON checks in order to stay fit and healthy.

Table: Dehydration

Band	Duration Between Checks	Save Penalty
Moderate	1 Day	-
Hot	12 Hours	-1
Severely hot	6 Hours	-2
Extremely hot	3 Hours	-4

Make checks if the character is not getting enough water.

For each failure, the character gains a level of fatigue.

Treatment

Treatment requires 24 hours of care and double the amount of water is required.

Note: See article *It's A Dry Heat!* In this issue for fatigue levels and penalties applied.

Sandstorms

Sandstorms are dangerous weather conditions that are a feature of deserts.

While they cannot bury a person alive (sand is not moved in quantities needed that quickly), it can cause issues with damage, slowing travel, and getting lost.

A sandstorm will have the following effects:

- D4 non-lethal (temporary) damage per hour
- Ranged attacks are impossible due to wind speed and visibility
- Tiny creatures are blown away, while small & medium creatures are knocked down. Larger creatures are unaffected by the wind speed
- Increased chance of getting lost - add a significant penalty to any lost checks



Equipment

Some specialised gear is needed to survive the desert and badlands.



Waterskins

And plenty of them.

These are essential to survival and many must be carried - usually on mounts.

Mounts

Travelling in the desert or badlands without mounts for faster travel or to carry your essential equipment would be folly.

Horses and **mules** can be used but they do require great quantities of water. They are usually used for shorter trips.

Camels and **Stonebeaks** (see the *Desert Rats* article in this issue) make much better mounts as they require less water (each can survive 4 days without drinking) and camels can carry much more than horses and donkeys (see the article *A Journey of A Thousand Nights* in this issue for more information).

Clothing

Having the correct clothing helps significantly in hot, dry environments.

Light robes that cover the body prevent losing moisture through evaporation. Parasols and similar can also lower the temperature, keeping you in shade.

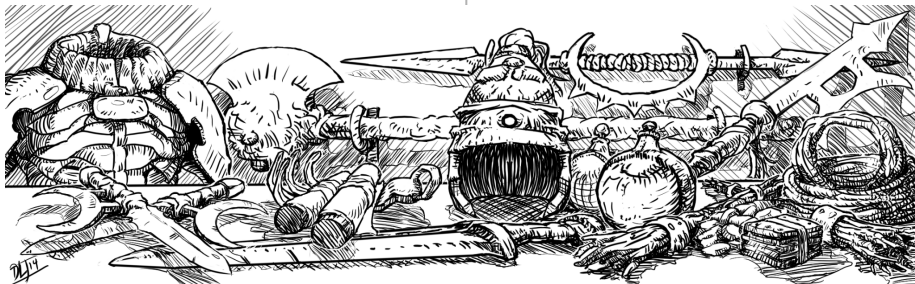
Desert Clothing gains a +1 to any heat or dehydration saving throw

Parasol or similar shade-giving devices gain a +1 to any heat or dehydration saving throw.

Alchemy

Alchemists have developed a salve which helps protect the user from heat damage.

Sunguard Salve: When covering the user's skin, the salve gives a +1 bonus to any heat or dehydration saving throws.



Dangerous Grounds

Encounters in the Desert and Badlands



Below are two random encounter tables - one for the desert and another for the badlands. Use these as needed.

Table: Badlands Encounter Table

D12	Result
1	D4+2 Hyenas
2	Ancient Monument
3	Herd of Stonebeaks
4	Giant Snake
5	Small Village
6	D3 Giant Scorpions
7	D6+6 Raiders
8	Druid
9	Bandit Camp
10	D6 Skeletons
11	Giant Rock Lizard****
12	Wyvern

Table: Desert Encounter Table

D20	Result
1	Desert Animal: lizard, snake.
2	Wandering monk*
3	Carcass or skeleton of large dead creature
4	Caravan of D20+10 camels and half as many men
5	Small village around a well
6	Ancient obelisk
7	Herd of Stonebeaks****
8	D6+1 Desert Goblins**
9	D3 Giant Scorpions
10	D6+4 Bandits
11	Giant Lizard or Snake
12	D20+5 Desert Nomads
13	Old dry oasis & camp
14	Oasis
15	Giant Trapdoor Desert Spider
16	D6+4 Mercenaries from the Demon-Queen***
17	Ruins of forgotten settlement
18	Stone Dragon****
19	Sandstorm
20	Giant Sand Worm****

* See article *Fathers, Sons & Daughters* in this issue for more information.

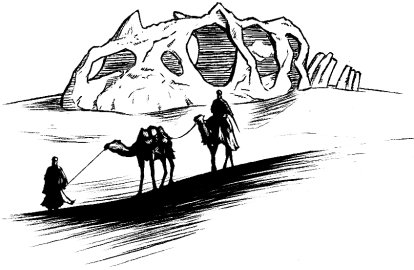
** Desert Goblins are like regular goblins but are resistant to heat, and ambush from sand pits.

*** See *Adventure Location* in this issue.

**** See monster article in this issue.

A Journey of A Thousand Nights

Desert Caravans



Caravans are a number of travellers who band together for safety as they cross the harsh desert sands on camels or horses.

They could be small - a handful of people and double the number of camels, to huge - 1,000-5,000 camels and hundreds of people.

And depending on the size of the desert, it could be up to a three-month journey along routes that are no more than a string of oases separated by long stretches of bare desert.

The trips across the desert are usually led by native guides who know the area well and know how to navigate the desert easily.

Without guides, a person who travels the desert can face certain death (although those travellers with survival skills will be useful).

Desert Guides

Led by a leader, the guides were usually a group of locals from the same tribe, which

would include labourers, scouts, healers, and a priest, plus some warriors for protection.

The leader was responsible for guiding the caravan through the desert and interacting peacefully with the various tribes along the way - who could turn on travellers quickly.

Oasis

Oases were crucial.

They were resting places where the caravan could resupply. And were situated every 7-10 (D4+6) days along the trade route.

An oasis could be as simple as a few dwellings surrounding a well, while others were luxuriant places filled with greenery and life. Date palms, lemon and fig trees, even wheat and vines could be growing.

Unfortunately, over time, some oases would dry up and disappear, or get subsumed by sandstorms.

Stopping at oases could also be costly, each one asking for a tax or fee for using their resources or even passing through their territory.

Travel

Travelling during the hottest part of the year was rarely done, and so usually the two cooler seasons during the year saw the most traffic.

Travel was avoided during the hottest part of the day, travelling at first light, resting during the middle of the day, and then

continuing in the afternoon, well into the night.

Animals

Camels, horses, and donkeys are used to cross the desert, but it is the camel that is truly the best animal for longer journeys.

Table: Animal Travel & Weight Limits

Animal	Travel per Day	Carry Capacity
Camel	30-mi	530-lbs
Horse	25-mi	130-lbs
Donkey/Mule	20-mi	200-lbs

Note: These are travel times across the desert.

The other benefit of camels is they live longer. A camel's life span is roughly 50 years, much more than that of a donkey (30-40 years), or a horse (25-30 years).

Camels can also come in two breeds: one a much faster camel useful for messenger services (this breed could travel up to 40-mi per day), and a slower camel that could carry more weight (listed above).

Trade

The whole point of these large caravans was to transport trade goods from one place to another.

You could have any number of goods crossing your campaign's deserts, but here is a list of those in our own world to get you started.



Table: List of Trade Goods

Salt	Precious and semi-precious gemstones
Glazed pottery	Cowrie shells
Luxury vases	Copper wire & ingots
Oil lamps	Horses
Incense burners	Fine clothing
Beads	Coral
Dates & raisins	Glassware (cups, goblets, and perfume bottles)
Kola nuts	Ostrich feathers
Perfumes	Tobacco



Fathers, Sons & Daughters

The Monks of the Desert



Small religious communities are present in the desert sands, which are ruled over by one of the Desert Fathers: wise leaders who give knowledge and wisdom to all who seek it.

Desert Fathers

Born out of the hot desert sands came the first Father: a monk of great wisdom who brought with him knowledge and sage-like advice for all those who would hear his message.

Soon, other Fathers were made in his image: disciples of the First Father. Four in total, and these new Fathers set out to the four winds (east, west, north, and south) to bring knowledge and wisdom to other areas.

These monks - known as Father of the East, Father of the North, etc - live as hermits and ascetics, and only entangle themselves with daily life when they deem it necessary.

Around these four Desert Fathers, communities grew. And these Fathers took on apprentices: who became known as the Desert Sons and Daughters.

Desert Sons & Daughters

Instructed by one of the Desert Fathers, these apprentice monks try to live up to the ideals of the Desert Fathers. They learn as much as they can and then impart that to their communities.

The Sons and Daughters one day hope to take over from the Fathers, to become Fathers and Mothers of the Desert.

Fighting Art

The monks practise A form of martial arts that was born from the desert sands, emulating the winds and dunes.

Each Father teaches a slightly different form, but it is fundamentally the same.

Design Notes: You could easily flesh this out, creating one style, or four different styles; or you could simply give generic

benefits like +1 to hit when fighting in a hot and sandy environment.

You could also reconfigure the monk class to have more desert-related abilities.

Appearance

The monks dress in long robes of varying colours that show their status within the order.

They start with dull colours and move up to brighter colours as they progress (see the monk progression table).

Table: Monk Progression

Level	Robe Colour	Title
1-2	Grey	Initiate
3-4	Brown	Son or Daughter
5-6	Tan	Low Son or Daughter
7-8	Yellow	Mid-Son or Daughter
9-10	Orange	High Son or Daughter
11+	Red	Father or Mother

Design Notes: Robe colour and title could not hinge on level at all, but instead, be based on status or reputation, if you have these in your campaign.



Sand & Dust

Heat Magic



Arcane Spells

Conjure Sandstorm

Summoning level 7

Duration: Number of hours equal to the caster's level.

This spell creates a huge sandstorm that will hammer an area the size of a number of square miles equal to the caster's level times 10.

Hordar's Husk

Necromancy level 4

The mage syphons off the moisture from a single target they touch. The target must make a save versus CON/Spell or start to lose moisture, drying them out. If they succeed, there is no effect. If they fail, they take D4 CON damage, which translates as temporary hit points to the caster.

Fodan's Bury foe

Alteration level 2

The caster causes the sand around a single target to start swallowing them. The target must make an initial saving throw versus DEX/Spell: if they are successful, then the spell has no effect. If they fail, they will be consumed by the desert in D4+1 rounds. Pulling the target free requires a STR test (at -caster's level or versus the DN 10 + the caster's level).

Sand Whirlwind

Summoning level 2

The caster creates a sandy whirlwind roughly 6-ft tall which will cause wind gusts for 20-ft around the whirlwind itself, which will extinguish all torches and lanterns. The mage can move the whirlwind as a standard action up to 30-ft per action. If a creature is in the same space as the whirlwind they need to make a save versus STR/Spell or take D6 damage and be flung 10-ft in a random direction, landing prone. If they successfully save, they only take the damage.

Summon Sandblight

Summon level 3

The caster summons D4 spirits in the form of small sandmen. They shift shape as they move at 30-ft per action and they will attack any creature chosen by the caster. Each Sandblight is a 2 HD monster with two attacks causing D4+1 damage with hard rocky fists.

Existing Spells

Existing spells that may help in the hot desert and badland regions:

Endurance - Boost your CON for those important saving throws.

Endure Elements - increasing your resistance to the heat.

Etherealness - Become ethereal to offset the harshest periods of the day and perhaps move long distances much faster.

Leomund's Secure Shelter - builds a shelter which remains at a comfortable temperature.

Major Creation - See *Minor Creation*.

Minor Creation - Create objects that you may need.

Mount - Create a mount to carry you or your equipment.

Resist Elements - See *Endure Elements*.

Rope Trick - Get away from it all.

Unseen Servant - Have the servant do jobs for you to keep your exhaustion levels low.



It's A Dry Heat!

Armour in the Desert

Extreme heat can make wearing heavy armour impossible.

Overheating is a problem with heavy plate armour in the best of conditions, but in the desert, it can be lethal.

Those who wear any armour, can suffer fatigue as listed in the table below.

Table: Armour Worn in Hot Temperatures

Temp	Amour Type:		
	Light	Medium	Heavy
105 (40)+	CON	CON (-2)	CON (-4)
95-104 (35-39)	-	CON	CON (-2)
85-94 (30-34)	-	-	CON

The table above shows the temperatures in fahrenheit (and celsius), as well as when a Constitution check is needed (CON).

These CON checks (with penalties applied) need to be made every hour and, if failed, the character gains a level of fatigue.

It takes two hours of complete rest (one hour if the armour is removed) for one fatigue level to be removed.

Animals need to make the same check if barding is being worn.

Table: Fatigue Levels

Fatigue Level	Effects
1	All abilities suffer -2 penalty
2	All abilities are halved
3	Speed is halved
4	-4 to all attacks and damage rolls
5	Max HP are halved
6	Dead

All effects for fatigue are cumulative.

Dressing for the Desert

In dry heat conditions you are better to wear light clothing that protects you from water loss via evaporation.

This does not offer much in the way of protection from attack, however.

Some communities in hot environments have combined silk and thin metal strands to form a material that acts as light armour (AC +2) while not overheating the wearer.

Known as silkarm, it can be made by any desert people within your campaign world. It is rare, however, it is sold to outsiders, so the price will be extremely high - perhaps even gold, plus a favour or mission.



Desert Rats

Monsters of Sand & Rock

Many strange and dangerous creatures lurk in the rocks of the badlands, or the sands of the desert.

Fog Creeps

Looking like fish-men, with bulbous eyes and large fanged mouths, these scaled marauders climb out of the seas in coastal deserts, using the fog to keep their moist skin dry, and kidnap any who they come across, dragging them back to the deep oceans from whence they came.

They attack by grappling a victim and then biting them with their poisonous fangs. They then drag the victim into the ocean, where they drown.

Fog Creeps

Large Animal

Armour Class: 14 (Natural armour + DEX)

Hit Dice (HP): 2 (10)

Move: 20-ft (9") + Rush

Abilities: S 14 C 14 D 10 I 7 W 10 Ch 8

Attacks: 2 x Claws or 1 x Bite

Damage: D6+1 or D8+2

Morale: High

Alignment: Chaotic

Special Abilities:

Amphibious: Fog Creeps can survive on land only within the moist fogs that flow over

the coastal deserts. They dry out and die within D4 minutes without being in the sea, or the fog.

Poisonous Bite: If bitten by a Fog Creep, the victim must make a CON/Vs Poison save or be paralysed for D4 minutes.

Giant Rock Lizard



Giant Rock Lizards are lumbering, carnivorous lizards who prey on any animal it can trap in its powerful jaws.

Making its home in rocky areas of the badlands, it uses its speed burst to surprise victims who stray too close, crushing them between their strong jaws.

They are a brown colour with grey spots over their tough hides.

Giant Rock Lizard

Large Animal

Armour Class: 18 (Natural armour + DEX)

Hit Dice (HP): 6 (36)

Move: 20-ft (9") + Rush

Abilities: S 18 C 14 D 6 I 2 W 10 Ch 8

Attacks: 1 x Claws or 1 x Bite

Damage: D6+3 or D12+3

Morale: Very High

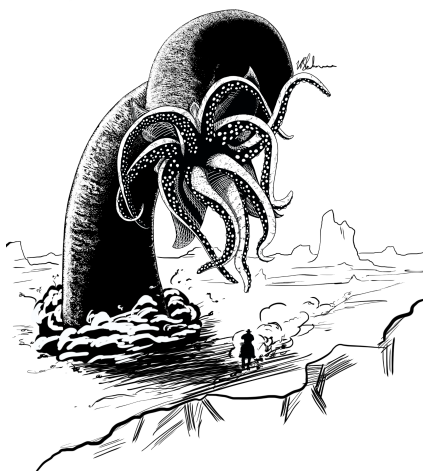
Alignment: Chaotic

Special Abilities:

Rush: The lizard can run at a target with tremendous speed, moving 100-ft in one action, and make a charge attack at the end with their jaws. They can only do this once per encounter.

Powerful Jaws: The jaws of this creature can tear and crush metal as easily as bone and flesh. Any armour worn will automatically be damaged (see *Issue 3* of **d12 Monthly** for rules on weapon and armour damage).

Giant Sand Worm



These large predators are one of the great dangers of the desert. It moves throughout the soft desert sands, eating whatever moves on the surface.

Giant Sand Worm

Gargantuan Beast

Armour Class: 19 (Natural armour + DEX)

Hit Dice (HP): 16 (88)

Move: 20-ft (9”), Burrow 30-ft (12”)

Abilities: S 24 C 20 D 4 I 1 W 8 Ch 8

Attacks: 1 x Bite or D4 Tentacles, 1 x Sting

Damage: 2D8+12 and D12+6+poison

Morale: High

Alignment: Neutral

Special Abilities:

Grapple: Each round, D4 tentacles can attack, automatically grappling a victim. The next round they will be placed near the mouth for a bite attack.

Swallow Whole: An attack that beats the number needed by 5 or more, will mean the purple worm swallows the victim whole. The victim will die in D4+CON in rounds and must make a CON/Death save each round or die before the time is up.

Poison Tail: If the tail sting hits, then the victim takes the damage listed and must make a CON/Poison save or lose 2D6 STR.

Ground-Sight: The purple worm can feel tremors of any being touching the ground within 120-ft. This allows them to “see” perfectly, even invisible creatures.

Stonebeaks

These flightless, desert birds are aggressive, but also make good mounts, if domesticated.

They have webbed talons which help them run quickly across the sandy deserts.

They have brown-tan bodies but their wings have silver and gold feathers (which are used extensively for decoration and writing), and their long necks support a large head with a large stone-like beak (hence their name). The beak is used for smashing rocks and the hard carapaces of prey.

The beak of the Stonebeaks can be used as an axe or mallet head quite easily. The gold and silver quills are used by mages to write scrolls.

Stonebeak

Large Beast

Armour Class: 12 (Natural armour + DEX)

Hit Dice (HP): 3 (15)

Move: 40-ft (15")

Abilities: S 12 C 12 D 12 I 2 W 9 Ch 9

Attacks: 1 x Peck

Damage: D8+1

Morale: Moderate

Alignment: Neutral

Special Abilities:

Survival: Stonebeaks can survive days in a desert environment, much like a camel.

Stone Dragon

Stone Dragons inhabited badlands and cooler deserts. They are highly territorial, and like to shadow prey who enter their land, watching them before finally striking when their guard falls.

They are long and slender, and have small wings. They are usually a reddish-brown in colour, matching closely that of their environment.

Stone Dragon

Huge Dragon

Armour Class: 18 (Natural armour + DEX)

Hit Dice (HP): 10 (60)

Move: 40-ft (15")

Abilities: S 22 C 16 D 8 I 16 W 12 Ch 16

Attacks: 2 x Claws and 1 x Bite

Damage: D8+4 and D12+6

Morale: Very High

Alignment: Chaotic

Special Abilities:

Camouflage: They gain a +4 bonus to any stealth or hide checks (surprise on 1-3 on D6).

Rock Breath: Stone Dragons breath stone and rock shards at very high velocity. It causes 10D6 damage to any who fail to make a DEX/Vs Breath Weapon save (taken half damage).



Deadly Oasis

Adventure Location

Deep in the sandy deserts there lives a demon-queen who can change into a giant centipede at will.

She has her loyal followers shower her with riches from passing caravans and settlements, while her oasis in the sand attracts victims for her to consume.

Oasis

The oasis has been here for centuries, fed by an underwater aquifer, which bubbles up water into the waterhole.

Before the demon-queen arrived, the oasis was controlled by a large bandit gang, who forcibly took it from a group of monks (who the Blind Seer was a member of).

Using the Oasis

You can use this as a simple location the PCs stumble upon, or the PCs could be hired by the locals of one of the communities raided by the mercenaries, which will eventually lead the PCs back here.

This could lead to a full-blown battle between the PCs and the Demon-Queen's soldiers and mercenaries, which you could play out using battle or skirmish rules, especially if the PCs have their own allies in the form of able locals.

Demon-Queen

The Demon-Queen plans on expanding her territory as she brings in the forces needed.

Unbeknown to anyone but her and the Blind Seer, she is making a pact with a greater demon who will supply her with enough demonic warriors to conquer the whole desert (in exchange for the many souls of those who live in the desert).

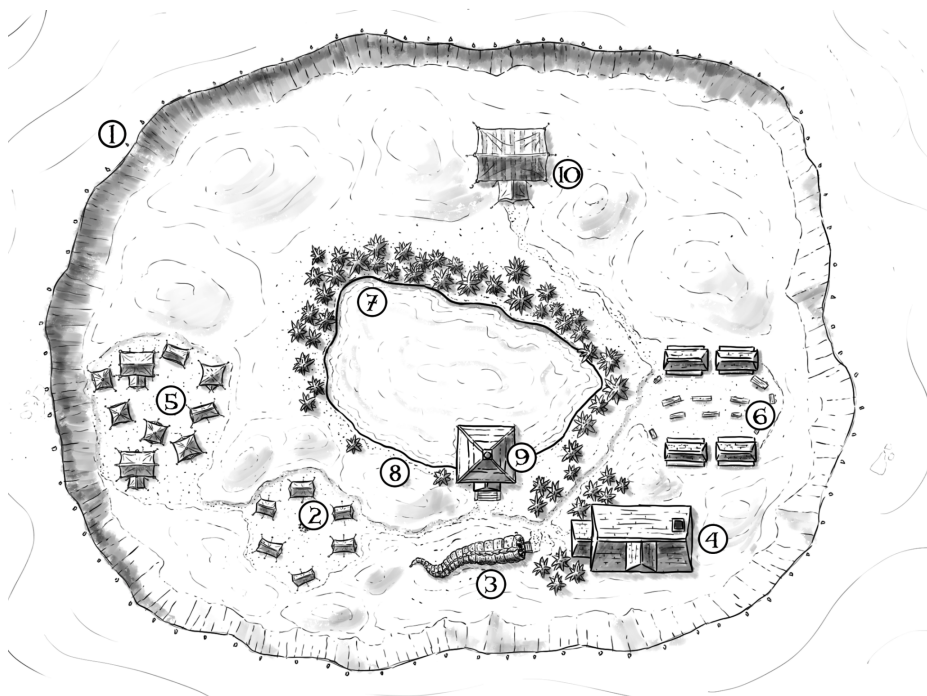
Henchmen

Currently, she has approximately two-dozen fanatical followers (soldiers for the most part) and another dozen or so mercenaries who she pays.

She uses her soldiers to defend the encampment, and the mercenaries to raid nearby settlements and caravans.

The fanatical soldiers will fight to the death for their demon-queen, while the mercenaries will be subject to the usual morale checks.





Oasis Areas

The demon-queen maintains a number of people here - some locals and others brought in from surrounding areas - although all are desert people.

They survive on a diet of red meat from killed beasts, fish, caviar, dates, coconuts and milk (from coconuts and goats); as well as foodstuffs from raided caravans.

1. Cliff & Ramp

The oasis sits in a depression and is protected from much of the winds and sandstorms that are frequent in the desert. Four soldiers patrol the upper edges of the

cliffs at all times. A ramp leads up from the hollow to allow access.

2. Stables & Animal Tenders

Horses and camels are kept here. Tended to by two hostlers.

There are 6 camels and 8 horses here at any time. All are tied up to various posts driven into the ground.

A dozen or so semi-domesticated goats also wander the oasis.

3. Giant Tail Carcass

This was the tail of a Giant Sand Worm that the mercenaries hunted and brought back

to camp for food. It is currently being hollowed out by the butcher: a large, bald man who wields two meat cleavers adeptly. The seer took the blood of the beast for his foul potions and ceremonies.

4. Demon-Queen's Quarters

This large, open building is home to the demon-queen. She lays here, either in human form or a hybrid human-centipede (although the latter usually when eating or intimidating potential business partners), and conducts her affairs.

Her abode is awash with coloured silks and thin cloth netting which drapes down from the ceiling, concealing hidden guards and the Demon-Queen herself. Her bed is a series of large silk-covered pillows on a raised dais (she always likes to look down on her hires and food).

5. Mercenaries

The mercenaries that the demon-queen hired, house themselves here. There are 12 standard mercenaries (all F1), led by a captain (F5) and his lieutenant (F3). The latter two each have their own tents.

The demon-queen uses the mercenaries to commit raids on passing caravans and other travellers for up to two days' ride from the oasis. Each day there is a 3-6 chance that all the mercenaries are here, otherwise they are D4 days away.

6. Barracks

These wooden and reed buildings house the 24 soldiers (all F1) - 6 in each building - who are fiercely loyal to the demon-queen.

7. Grove

Along the northside of the lagoon grow date and coconut palms. These are tended by an ageing local who lives under the palms, sleeping on a hammock.

8. Waterhole

This waterhole is large enough to sustain this encampment, and has done so for centuries. Silverback flat-fish make their home in the lagoon, and deposit their eggs in the sandy banks under the palm trees.

Both the fish and the eggs (in the form of caviar) are good to eat.

A local fisherman and explorer looks after the lagoon and has done so all his life (he was a slave of the bandit gang). He is quite knowledgeable about the desert.

9. Stores

This building houses all the stores for the encampment. It is filled with barrels of water, crates of dried dates, and sacks of coconuts; as well as other foodstuffs they have taken from caravans.

Two soldiers stand guard outside the stores at all times.

10. Blind Seer

The demon-queen uses the services of a blind seer, using his talent to see into the future to her advantage.

Recently, he has seen her downfall and this has made the demon-queen rather anxious and paranoid (the visions are not always clear and she does not know how).

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