

# CASTLES<sup>®</sup> & CRUSADES

## EXPANDED RACES! OASIS ELVES

BY HAL GREENBERG, BRIAN BOONSTRA, AND PETER SCHROEDER



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CREATED AND APPROVED FOR USE WITH  
CASTLES AND CRUSADES<sup>®</sup>

# OASIS ELVES

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# OASIS ELVES

Oasis elves are an ancient race that live tens of centuries. They embody the grace and beauty of the desert's night sky, as well as the fury and relentlessness of desert windstorms. Since they live virtually forever, they have become masters of craft, building and erecting large, beautiful buildings and monuments. Due to their long lives, they are determined and perfectionist; some are said to have spent centuries working on just one room in a building or tomb. They can recite the history of their once-flourishing race like it was an incident that happened yesterday, since for them it has just been a day. Their graceful movements make it appear as they are gliding in between flecks of sand during a windstorm.

**DESCRIPTION:** Oasis elves vary in size and coloration. Generally, oasis elves have coppery skin, although some extremely light and extremely dark hues are seen. At maturity, they average 5 feet 6 inches in height and weigh around 125 lbs. They tend to be thicker than their forest cousins but retain their unnatural elven grace and beauty. These elves have the common thin, sharp facial features and their large, almond-shaped eyes are usually a darker tone in color. Their ears are long and taper to a point at the ends like other elves, and they often wear keffiyeh headpieces to protect themselves from the harsh winds and sands.

**PERSONALITY:** Oasis Elves are a long-lived race whose empire once spanned the deserts. They were a proud and powerful people whose decline has been swift and relentless. In the past—with the help of the elementals with whom they had pacts—they created great works of architecture. Beautiful monuments, grand buildings, and sturdy roads of their creation once crossed the deserts. All that changed a millennium ago when the pact with the elementals was broken.

Without the elementals to help the elves maintain their civilization, it began to crumble. Slowly, cities were abandoned and lost to the desert; others were taken and razed by foes. With their civilization collapsing, the oasis elves themselves had to change. No longer could they rely on others to help make them great: they had to rely on themselves and each other.

The elders still arrogantly cling to ancient traditions, however. They believe they are better than other races, a position mostly based on their own past accomplishments. The younger oasis elves are much more pragmatic. They understand the old ways are gone. This doesn't mean that they don't think themselves as a great race, only that they have to change. They can no longer rely on the elementals to help build their great works. They must do this on their own, with their own skills and abilities.

This outlook on life has slowly changed them as a people. The younger oasis elves were not yet born at the height of their culture. All they know are the ruins and the stories of past glory. The tall and decorated statues have fallen to ruin. The elemental magic once used to create such things has left them. Now they try to build these things themselves. They are up to any challenge and have relentless determination in all they do. They always strive to do better, to improve on what they have learned. This yearning towards perfection makes for beautiful works of arts and other superior structures and objects.

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Their drive to perfection also gives them a fatalistic view of the world. Oasis elves have a deep feeling of never being good enough, that something better could have been done, that they will never again leave their mark on the world. This sometimes is manifested in oasis elves taking great risks to achieve their goals. The greater the risk, the more it will leave its mark on the world. To others, this makes oasis elves seem reckless and illogical.

**RACIAL AFFINITIES:** Most Oasis elves prefer the company of other oasis elves, mostly due to the fact that they do not meet many other races of elves, humans or demi-humans. When they do come into contact with outsiders, they associate well with most other races due to curiosity and a desire to investigate the unknown. The younger ones tend to be more realistic and adventurous.

Oasis elves do not tend to disassociate with any particular race of human or demi-human. Cut off from most other civilizations, they have not known enough of any other race to have preconceived notions. Oasis elves do naturally distrust and dislike all goblinoid races and trolls.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Oasis elves live in settlements around desert oases. In the past, they lived in sprawling cities, but those have been claimed by the desert. These settlements are almost always rebuilt ruins of that bygone era. The reclaimed buildings serve as homes and shops for the oasis elves. There are many artisans and merchants that live there as they are commonly found on trade routes. Occasionally, a sand storm uncovers new parts of the ruin to explore, sometimes unearthing creatures that would have been better left buried.

## RACIAL TRAITS AND ABILITIES

**CAMEL ENDURANCE:** Twice a day, an oasis elf can persevere when in need. The oasis elf's constitution raises by 1d2+1 points for 4 rounds.

**SAND ELEMENTAL EMPATHY:** Small sand elementals tend to congregate around oasis elves, treating them as kin. An oasis elf can telepathically communicate with any small sand elemental within 1 mile. In addition, an oasis elf can summon 1d6 small sand elementals to its location, provided that they are within one mile of the oasis elf. The summoned sand elementals arrive within 2d4 rounds and remain for 1d4 rounds. They will fight to help an oasis elf, but they will not risk their lives to do so, and instead flee when reduced to 1 hp.

**ENHANCED SENSES:** Elvish physiology is blessed with enhanced vision and hearing. Oasis elves can see farther than humans in just about every circumstance, including torchlight, and can see clearly enough to read a road sign or spot a shield device up to two miles distant when outside during the day. They can also hear very well, and receive a +2 bonus to all checks involving listening.

**TWILIGHT VISION:** Even under starlight, moonlight or torchlight, oasis elves have exceedingly good vision. They can distinguish color and detail under these conditions for up to one mile but only if they are outside.

**RESISTANCE TO HEAT:** Hailing from scorching deserts, oasis elves' bodies are developed to resist the harmful effects of environmental heat. Any heat-based damage that the oasis elf would normally suffer is reduced by half. If the effect grants the oasis elf a saving throw and the saving throw is successful, the damage is reduced to ¼.

**SPOT HIDDEN DOORS (Wisdom):** Elvish vision and keen senses allow them to spot secret, hidden and concealed doorways. An oasis elf merely passing within 5 feet of a secret, hidden or concealed doorway is entitled to a wisdom check to spot the door, as if the oasis elf were actively looking for it. When an oasis elf actively searches for such doorways, the bonus to the wisdom check is +2.

**LANGUAGES:** Common, Elf, Dwarf, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Orc, and Terran (sand elementals' language)

**SIZE:** Medium

**MOVEMENT:** 30 feet

**TYPICAL CLASSES:** Bard, Druid, Fighter, Ranger, Wizard

**ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS:** -1 Strength, +1 Dexterity

**ABILITY MODIFIERS:** +2 to find traps, +2 listen, +2 move silent

### OPTIONAL: ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

If your Castle Keeper allows, you may select one of the following alternate racial traits in place of one or more of the standard racial traits above.

**DESERT LORE:** An oasis elf can identify plants and animals with perfect accuracy in deserts. This identification ability allows the oasis elf to determine the species of a plant or animal and the special qualities or abilities of the species. The oasis elf can also determine whether water is safe or dangerous to drink. This racial trait replaces enhanced senses.

**MOVE SILENTLY (Dexterity):** This ability allows an oasis elf to move silently in the desert. The oasis elf can move up to one-half normal speed at no penalty. At more than one-half, and up to the character's full speed, the character suffers a -5 penalty to the check. It's practically impossible (-20 penalty) to move silently while running or charging. This racial trait replaces track.

**SPELL RESISTANCE:** Oasis elves are particularly resistant to spells and spell-like abilities that charm or unnaturally cause sleep. When making saving throws against these types of spells, an oasis elf receives a +10 bonus. Elf spell resistance allows a saving throw against sleep, even though sleep normally does not have a saving throw. This racial trait replaces resistance to heat.

**TRACK (Wisdom):** The oasis elf can successfully track any creature in a desert setting that leaves a discernible trace. They can also determine characteristics about the creature being tracked. With a successful wisdom check, an oasis elf can find and follow a creature's tracks or trail for 5 hours. The oasis elf can also hide tracks at the same level of ability.

When tracking or hiding tracks from humanoids or giants, an oasis elf receives a +2 bonus to the attribute check. The Castle Keeper may apply bonuses or penalties for varying conditions, such as the length of time elapsed since the tracks were made, weather conditions, the number of creatures tracked and whether the tracked creature moved through water or a secret door.

A successful track check may also impart information about the creature(s) being tracked. Once a trail is found, a track check can determine the general number and type of creatures being tracked. The number of creatures tracked should be disclosed to the player by using one of the following categories: individuals (1-6), band (6-30), troop (20-100), or army (100+), and also one from the following categories: beast, fey, giant, humanoid, plant, vermin, or other (aberration, construct, dragon, elemental, magical beast, ooze, outsider, shapechanger, or undead). For many creatures, the oasis elf cannot identify its exact type; only that it is a creature of such nature until some experience has been gained tracking it. An oasis elf can identify specific animal tracks with no effort. After having tracked a particular type of creature several times, the oasis elf can later identify its tracks.

**WEAPON TRAINING:** Oasis elves are taught the ways of combat at a young age, and their long lives allow them to become skilled in weapons favored by their society. Oasis elves begin play with a +1 bonus to hit with one of the following weapons: composite longbow, composite shortbow, longbow, spears or falchion. This racial trait replaces camel endurance.

**SURVIVAL:** In the desert the oasis elf can find shelter, food and water for themselves, start a fire, and determine direction. Also, the oasis elf can start a fire in 1d10 turns by natural means, as long as the needed materials are available. This racial trait replaces enhanced senses.

## SAMPLE CHARACTERS

Typical 1<sup>st</sup>-level oasis elf ranger

**ISISTES** is a 1<sup>st</sup>-level ranger, neutral good oasis elf. His vital stats are 1d10 HD, 9 HP, MV 30 ft. AC 14 (DEX +3, studded leather armor). His primary attributes are dexterity and constitution. His attributes are strength 17, dexterity 18, constitution 13, intelligence 15, wisdom 17, charisma 8. His basic to-hit bonus is +0. He speaks Common, Elf, and Giant languages. He carries a spear and longbow with 20 arrows and wears studded leather armor.

Typical 5<sup>th</sup>-level oasis elf bard

**APOPFIS** is a 5<sup>th</sup>-level bard, chaotic good oasis elf. His vital stats are 1d10 HD, 9 HP, MV 30 ft. AC 16 (DEX +2, leather armor). His primary attributes are constitution and charisma. His attributes are strength 14, dexterity 17, constitution 11, intelligence 8, wisdom 15, charisma 14. His basic to hit bonus is +0. He speaks Common and Elf languages. He carries a dagger and a sling with 20 bullets and wears leather armor.

## ENCOUNTERS WITH OASIS ELVES

Oasis elves can be found in any desert climate. They tend to live in large groups and usually inhabit large cities surrounding oases. Their cities may be in disrepair due to the centuries of time that have passed since the pact with the elementals ended. Ruins of their ancient cities are sometimes found in the deep desert, but are usually abandoned.

A typical oasis elf hunting party consists of 3-6 adults and 2-4 youths. They are usually armed with bows, spears, and falchions, and wear a mix of armor ranging from cloth to leather, studded leather, and sometimes even bone armor.

In a typical medium to large city, adventurers may encounter some of the elite guards and the elders using chariots being drawn by small sand elementals, the last of their kind still in servitude to the oasis elves. These small sand elementals are usually used as horses, guards, and even as pets by some.

A typical smaller city will house 200-500 oasis elves, and have many once-extravagant buildings, most likely in slightly damaged to greatly deteriorated stages. Some of the cities that have been abandoned or almost forgotten are on the verge of collapse, and are rumored to be haunted by the lost souls of oasis elves and elementals.

While small, sand elementals are not created for fighting, but they can fight if needed.

The oasis elves live in the buildings they and the elementals created. The leaders are more than happy to share their rich history but may “forget” that they are currently on a decline and insist that they and the elementals are only separated temporarily and the pact will be renewed again. If asked what pact



was made, they just smirk at the outsiders and shake their head in disbelief. If allowed to enter their buildings, adventurers will see detailed carvings in everything from furniture to silverware, and, if allowed into the upper viewing rooms looking across the city at night, they will see the sheer magnitude and beauty of the city can be breathtaking. Most of the buildings and items are made of stone, but when wood is used, it is of a more grey hue than brown. The oasis elves' bows are also constructed of this type of wood.

Oasis elves tend not to use subterfuge. Their weapons and armor, as well as their daily wear, are decorated with ornate colors and semi-precious gems, with the favored semi-precious gemstone being turquoise. Elders have the most detailed and decorated of arms and armor. Their weapons of choice are bows, spears, and short-bladed weapons like falchions and scimitars. Longsword are rarely found in an oasis elf city. Due to their environment and their love of lore, oasis elves tend to be attracted to the more dramatic and fighter-based classes.

The desert, while deadly on its own, is home to some very hostile foes. One of the most feared are the Sand Trolls. These large tan hued beasts are deadly when encountered. They are rumored to wield giant scorpion tail encrusted clubs dripping with poison, and will wait for days in one spot to trap prey.

## ITEMS OF NOTE

### SPONGE OF LIFE

Once a day this sponge, a gift from the water elementals, emits up to 2 gallons of fresh water when squeezed. [Value: 500 gp.]

### SPEAR OF THE WINDS

These unique spears are highly sought after since the oasis elves no longer have the pact with the elementals, which helped the elves craft them. They are +2, travel 10 feet farther than an average spear, and fly true in any strength of wind or weather. These average looking spears are differentiated by the appearance of a white haze or cloud surrounding the tip. [Value: 4,300 gp.]

### FIRE STONE

This obsidian stone once per day can be put on any flammable material and will immediately ignite that material. The stone always stays cool to the touch. [Value: 300 gp.]

## CREATURES OF NOTE

### CACTIANT

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-4

SIZE: Large

HD: 6 (d8)

MOVE: 40 ft.

AC: 20

ATTACKS: Needle slap (1d8), needle kick (1d8)

SPECIAL: Camouflage, Vise

SAVES: P

INT: High

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

TYPE: Monstrous Humanoid

TREASURE: Nil

XP: 260+6

**DESCRIPTION:** The cactiant is cousin to the treant. It is a large humanoid cactus that waits patiently in the desert for edible prey.

**COMBAT:** When something edible approaches, a cactiant unroots from the sand and lashes out with its spiked limbs.

**BLEND:** A cactiant is virtually undetectable when it is in the desert. It is considered invisible to all but elves, halflings, and gnomes, unless it reveals itself. Elves, halflings and gnomes may detect a cactiant if they succeed at a wisdom check with a challenge level 5.

**VISE:** With a successful attack roll, the cactiant is able to hug an opponent in a vise-like grip. The cactiant's foe is allowed a strength save at CL 2 to avoid being caught in the cactiant's grip. Failing the save, the victim suffers 1d6 damage per round from the pressure and the cactiant's needle being pushed into the victim's body. The victim can attempt to break free of the cactiant's grip during subsequent rounds by making additional strength saves.

### ELEMENTAL, SAND

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-4

SIZE: Special (see below)

HD: See below (d8)

MOVE: 20 ft.

AC: Special (see below)

ATTACKS: Slam (see below)

SPECIAL: Engulf, Sift

SAVES: P

INT: Inferior

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

TYPE: Elemental

TREASURE: nil

XP: 2 HD; 8 HD; 16 HD

**DESCRIPTION:** Composed entirely of rolling, undulating sand, these elementals are most at home in the desert. They can take many forms from moving mounds of sand, tall thin pillars of spinning sand and even humanoid shaped beings who seem to slide across the surface of the dunes. They are rarely found in the mortal realm and those encountered have most assuredly been trapped on the world by ancient Oasis Elves.

1-6 HD 20+2, AC 17. Slam for 2d4 damage.

7-15 HD 8+8, AC 19. Slam for 2d6 damage.

16+ HD 4000+16, AC 24, Slam for 2d8 damage.

**COMBAT:** Sand Elementals attack with a vortex of sand, striking at their intended target. The grains of sand make deep lacerations and abrasive wounds, wearing down their victim to nothing.

**ENGULF:** A sand elemental can rise and crash on top of an opponent, thereby engulfing it. It cannot slam opponents it is attempting to engulf. On a successful dexterity save CL 2, an opponent is pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the sand elemental comes crashing down; failure results in the victim being engulfed. Engulfed creatures automatically suffer the sand elemental's slam every round.

**SIFT:** A sand elemental can sift through sand as easily as a fish swims through water. This ability leaves no tunnel or hole, nor does it create a ripple or other outward signal of the elemental's passage. A move earth spell cast on an area containing a burrowing earth elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, and stuns it for 1 round unless a successful physical save is made.

### TROLL, SAND

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-3

SIZE: Large

HD: 9 (d8)

MOVE: 30 ft.

AC: 16

ATTACKS: 2 Claws (1d6), Bite (2d6), weapon (+3 damage)

SPECIAL: Rend, Darkvision 60 ft., Twilight Vision, Regeneration 2

SAVES: P

INT: Low

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

TYPE: Giant

TREASURE: 9

XP: 1200+9

Trolls are huge, lumbering humanoids that are greatly feared. Sand trolls are things that oasis elves tell their children about so they do not wander out at night.

Sand trolls have long arms and short legs, and their hands and feet are broad, with thick toes and fingers. They tend to be fat, and they are rather lazy. Sand trolls have small, light eyes, almost nonexistent ears, and large tusks that jut from the lower jaw of their wide mouth. They may wear clothes occasionally, usually ragged shorts. They reach heights of 12 feet tall on average, though some grow much larger. Trolls are not particularly intelligent creatures, lusting more after food and drink than anything else. Sand trolls are excellent hunters, their light skin camouflages them in the desert and their ability to bury themselves in the sand makes them excellent predators. Sand trolls are carnivores, and while they eat giant scorpions, they prefer livestock and humanoids. They generally live in caves, or if traveling, they bury themselves in the sand during the day and then hunt and move at night. Since some sand trolls are nomads, they carry very few possessions; they often tote their acquired treasure in sacks they hang from a rope on their waist.

**QUICKSAND:** Sand trolls have the ability to create quicksand, which can be deadly to their prey.

CL 3: It requires a Challenge Level 3 find traps check to locate the quicksand. Creatures stepping in the quicksand must make a (Challenge Level 4, Challenge level 2 with assistance) dexterity save to avoid being stuck; they have 4 rounds to escape, or they may drown once they are below the surface (use the same rules as being underwater).

**COMBAT:** Trolls are fearless creatures that attack ceaselessly. They are always on the hunt and are almost always hungry.

**REND:** If either troll successfully hits with both of its claw attacks on the same opponent, it makes a fierce dig with those claws to rip the victim's flesh. This attack automatically inflicts an additional 1d4+1 points of damage on the victim.

**REGENERATION:** Three rounds after a troll suffers damage, its body begins to repair itself. Trolls regenerate at a rate



of two hit points per round. Trolls cannot heal damage caused by fire or acid. Unless a troll is scorched with flame or dissolved by acid, it is not permanently dead. A troll that falls in battle reforms 3d6 rounds after falling, and continues to fight. Total physical destruction is required; even a fingertip that survives destruction allows the troll to reform at the location of the piece that survived. Note that trolls cannot be “farmed.” If a troll is cut into a dozen pieces, those pieces attempt to rejoin to reform the original troll. However, if those pieces are prevented from rejoining the whole, they simply die, and the largest piece of the troll begins to regenerate into a single troll