

# A BLADE FOR ALL SEASONS

## Gifts of the Forge

**A** SQUIRE BENDS HER KNEE AND holds a scabbard up to her knight, who unsheathes a brand new longsword.

**A** PERSISTENT ROGUE, TIED UP, wriggles to reach what's secreted away in her boot: a freshly sharpened dagger with which to cut her bonds.

**A** BENT WIZARD CUTS UP mandrake root using a freshly oiled and sharpened knife; the same knife she'll end up stabbing an attacking goblin in the face with.



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Adventurers of all shapes and sizes wield blades. They are some of the most common tools in an adventurer's arsenal, and are cherished by hulking warriors and tiny thieves alike.

As such, blades make inspired gifts. Whether it's a hunting knife given as a simple gift of appreciation, or a heavy sword gifted as a rite of passage, blades are perfect gifts for your fellow adventurers this holiday season.

This article provides a set of rules for creating custom blades by providing blacksmiths with all the required supplies and ingredients.

## CUSTOM MADE BLADES

Blacksmiths can be found in most settlements, from small villages to bustling metropolises. While every blacksmith charges different rates based on their level of experience, most make a point of charging half the cost of the blade in question to forge a custom version of it. For example, a novice blacksmith forging a dagger (2 gp) charges 3 gp for a custom dagger, plus the cost of any special materials.

## SMITHING EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Blacksmiths come in three levels of experience: Novice, Adept, and Expert. Large cities generally have 1d6 Expert level blacksmiths within their walls. Smaller settlements tend to only have one or two blacksmiths, and their level of experience is random. When the player characters encounter a new blacksmith, roll 1d4:

- ▶ A roll of 1 means the blacksmith is a **Novice**.
- ▶ A roll of 2–3 means the blacksmith is an **Adept**.
- ▶ A roll of 4 means the blacksmith is an **Expert**.

## Novice Blacksmith

*"Make a sword? I mean, I think I can. I mostly do horseshoes, but...how hard could it be?"*

- ▶ **Fee:** Cost of the weapon + 50% its cost for labor + cost of special ingredients.
- ▶ **Proficiency:** +1 to rolls on the Smithing Table.
- ▶ Novice blacksmiths often work in rural areas of civilization (use **commoner** statistics) or with nomadic tribes (**tribal warrior**) that wander the wilds. Their skills are passable at best, as they are most used to forging items most needed in their environment: horseshoes, farming tools, arrowheads, and barrel hoops. Many novice blacksmiths relish the chance at forging blades for combat, though few possess the know-how to craft a professional looking blade. Still, what they lack in skill they often make up for in enthusiasm.

## Adept Blacksmith

*"Swords, daggers, spears, even the odd mace. Weapon orders are second nature to me!"*

- ▶ **Fee:** Cost of the blade + 100% its cost for labor + cost of special ingredients.
- ▶ **Proficiency:** +3 to rolls on the Smithing Table.
- ▶ Adept blacksmiths are most often found working in border towns and larger cities (use **guard** statistics)—places where soldiers, guards, and sellswords are most common. They are well-versed in forging blades, as many spend a number of years as a monarch's retainer, forging blades for their soldiers. An adept blacksmith forges weapons that are serviceable and nondescript, often having to forge these weapons in great quantities. Many enjoy the challenge that a custom order represents.

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## Expert Blacksmith

*“War is my resume, and blades are my craft. Every piece of sharpened steel I forge is a masterpiece!”*

- ▶ **Fee:** Cost of the blade + 200% its cost for labor + cost of special ingredients.
- ▶ **Proficiency:** Has a +5 to rolls on the Smithing Table.
- ▶ Expert blacksmiths are skilled artisans who have been working the forge for most of their lives (use **veteran** statistics). They are masters of their craft whose work is beyond that of mere blades. Most often expert blacksmiths make their living forging ceremonial weapons for royalty, clergy, and people of tremendous importance. They are the most likely to refuse uninteresting work, and will often need to be sold on the idea of a sword before they’ll accept forging it.

Forging a custom blade requires a blacksmith to roll on the Smithing Table (below). Their result determines how long it takes them to forge the blade, and what condition it is in when it’s finished. For reference:

- ▶ A dagger takes a day to forge.
- ▶ A shortsword or longsword takes two days to forge.
- ▶ A scimitar or rapier takes 1d4 + 1 days to forge.
- ▶ A greatsword takes six days to forge.
- ▶ Adding a special component to the blade takes an additional day.

### SMITHING TABLE

#### 1d20 Smithing Result

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 1-4    | <b>Complication.</b> The blade is finished on time, but hasn’t turned out right. It looks right, but it is exceedingly fragile. It breaks on a natural 1 roll. |
| 5-9    | <b>Behind Schedule.</b> The blade is finished one day later than scheduled, requiring more work.   |
| 10-17  | <b>Ordinary.</b> The blade is finished on schedule. No problems.   |
| 18-20+ | <b>Excellent.</b> The blade is flawless and completed one day ahead of schedule. It will not rust, and cannot be corroded by nonmagical means.                 |

## SPECIAL FORGING COMPONENTS

Blades can be improved and customized using a variety of rare and strange ingredients during the forging process. Some of these ingredients are sprinkled amid the flames in the forge, some are added to the metal ingots as they are hammered into the shape of a blade, others are used to quench the blade once it is shaped and readied.

All of these components create small changes to the appearance and handling of the blade. It’s important to note that these blades are not considered magical weapons; their additions make them unique and sometimes more powerful, but not in the same way that a +1 *longsword* is considered powerful.

For Game Masters who want to encourage their players to have custom blades forged for each other, consider having the following components appear in your campaign as found treasure or loot dropped by monsters. These components can possibly be used on their own to provide a one-time use of their properties, but are more valuable when forged into blades. Effects that require a saving throw or ability check have a DC equal to the Blacksmithing check used to create the weapon.



Special Forging Components		City Cost	Rural Cost
Ancient Golem Fragments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The fragments of ancient war machines, untarnished by time.</li> <li>▶ The blade has a cobalt blue shine. Constructs recognize this metal as being the same as them, and must make a Charisma saving throw. On a failure, they cannot attack the original wielder except in self-defense, even if it goes against their master's orders.</li> </ul>	300 gp	600 gp
Barbarian Spit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The hearty, viscous phlegm of a northern-born berserker.</li> <li>▶ The blade is imbued with a kind of strange luck. Once, and only once, when you roll a natural 1 using this weapon you can choose for it to be a natural 20 instead.</li> </ul>	—	200 gp
Evil Tear Oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Despite having so many eyes, certain aberrations rarely cry.</li> <li>▶ The blade shimmers an eerie green under moonlight, and beasts that see it at night must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they are frightened of you as long as you hold it.</li> </ul>	500 gp	—
Carbon Blend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Iron with a very specific amount of carbon left in.</li> <li>▶ The blade is smooth and shiny. The added carbon gives it a flexibility not found in most blades. If you miss a creature with an attack using this blade, and your roll is one less than the creature's AC, you deal 1 point of damage anyway.</li> </ul>	250 gp	500 gp
Cold Blood Crystals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The congealed, crystallized blood of ancient and regal beasts.</li> <li>▶ The blade is blood red in color and doesn't reflect light. It deals an extra 1d6 damage to creatures that aren't aware of your presence.</li> </ul>	250 gp	500 gp
Dwarven Kindling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A blade is only as good as the fire it was forged in.</li> <li>▶ The blade takes on a darker finish, like tinted glass. Many dwarves, particularly dwarven smiths, respect your fine taste in blades. You have advantage on Charisma checks with these dwarves.</li> </ul>	100 gp	200 gp
Ectoplasmic Residue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Phantasms leave behind a gooey substance; evidence of their undead presence.</li> <li>▶ The blade makes a sound when it clangs with metal that's almost like screaming, and can harm ghosts as if it was a magic weapon.</li> </ul>	300 gp	600 gp
Elvish Pearl Gel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Elves of the land have a deep respect for the elven blacksmiths of the sea.</li> <li>▶ The blade looks white and pearly, catching the light. The blade now looks far more valuable and regal than its metal and make would suggest. When selling this blade, the buyer must make a Wisdom (Insight) check. On a failure, they are willing to pay three times the amount of gold it cost to make this blade.</li> </ul>	130 gp	260 gp
Fairy Fat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Most fey creatures are tiny, so collecting their fat takes time.</li> <li>▶ The blade smells of honeysuckle and forest dew. While wielding this blade fey creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against you, and you have disadvantage on Charisma checks with Good and Neutral fey.</li> </ul>	—	500 gp
Glow Dust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Phosphorous material collected in the bowels of the earth.</li> <li>▶ In darkness the blade shines brightly, as the <i>light</i> spell. This cannot be turned off, but can be concealed.</li> </ul>	200 gp	400 gp

**Special Forging Components**

		<b>City Cost</b>	<b>Rural Cost</b>
Lodestone	▶ Bits of strange metal from ancient boulders and mountains.	100 gp	200 gp
Shavings	▶ The blade appears ordinary, but has a slight magnetism about it. When holding this blade, it pulls you slightly in the direction of true north, and grants advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to avoid getting lost.		
Troglodyte Pheromones	▶ The potent musk of a repulsive lizard creature. ▶ The blade projects a pungent aroma. While unsheathed, beasts and humanoids within 5 feet of you must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they are poisoned while within 5 feet of you.	100 gp	200 gp
Merfolk Scale Powder	▶ The powdered scales of a merfolk's tail, prized by sailors and pirates. ▶ The blade smells of algae and salt water. Aquatic beasts, humanoids, and monstrosities are drawn to this blade when it is submerged in bodies of water, and must make a Wisdom saving throw or exclusively attack the wielder of this blade.	250 gp	500 gp
Umbral Shards	▶ The broken pieces of a blade forged in the Shadowfell. ▶ The blade is the color of the sky at midnight. Those who wield it can see through magical darkness, but not natural darkness.	300 gp	600 gp
Pristine Snowball	▶ A snowball brought from the highest mountaintop at great expense, used to quench the blade. ▶ The blade appears ordinary, but glistens as if wet. The blade feels unnaturally cold to the touch.	200 gp	400 gp
Residuum	▶ The sparkly powder left over when magic items are disenchanting or destroyed. ▶ The blade appears ordinary. When you score a critical hit with this weapon, roll once on the sorcerer's Wild Magic table.	300 gp	600 gp
Snake Tincture	▶ Literal snake oil used to help quench the blade. A perfect addition to a gift for your enemies. ▶ The blade appears ordinary. The Snake Tincture creates numerous invisible flaws and imperfections in the blade. When the wielder rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll with it, the blade snaps in two.	50 gp	100 gp
Starmetal Ore	▶ Smelted ore made from a meteorite that fell from space. ▶ The blade has a gunmetal finish. The blade is stronger than steel, but legends say blades forged from stars are destined for greatness. When it is forged, its wielder chooses a creature type. If this blade is used to defeat a creature of this type that is CR 10 or higher, this weapon instantly becomes a <i>rare</i> , <i>very rare</i> , or <i>legendary</i> magic weapon of the GM's choice.	500 gp	1,000 gp
Wispy Thoughts of Madness	▶ Silvery strands of memory extracted from the criminally insane. ▶ The blade rests slightly crooked in its hilt, looking off. If an enemy fights you for 5 rounds or more while you wield this blade they must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they gain a type of Long-Term Madness.	250 gp	500 gp
Wyvern Tailbone Powder	▶ The hardest bones in one of the hardest and most resilient draconic creatures, ground into a fine powder. ▶ The blade has a dark green shine to it. Half of the damage dealt by this weapon is poison damage.	200 gp	400 gp