

SPACE BARBARIANS

Science Fiction Adventure in a post-Imperial Future

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Space Barbarians is a setting for the X-Plorers science fiction RPG (Copyright 2009 David Bezio & Grey Area Games), inspired largely by Space Viking, written by H. Beam Piper and, to a lesser extent, David Weber's Honor Harrington series, as well as classic Traveller. This is only an outline, not a fully developed and fleshed-out setting. It is expected that the GM will provide most of the details about the history, planets and characters that the PCs will interact with during their adventures. Space Barbarians is only intended to serve as inspiration and a guide, a springboard for your imagination in a science fiction future of pulpy adventure.

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FUTURE HISTORY

Once the Empire (or Republic/Foundation/Federation/whatever) spanned thousands of star systems, controlled tens of thousands of habitable worlds and ruled over hundreds of billions of subjects. But after a period of political instability and social decline, the Empire collapsed, leaving a galactic Dark Age in its wake. In the ensuing chaos entire star systems were engulfed in flame and war. Riots and revolution roiled the known worlds. Interstellar trade slowed to a trickle. Technological advancement came to a screeching halt and soon reason and science began to yield to ignorance, superstition and even the deliberate suppression of science and knowledge.

The lucky worlds managed to hold onto some vestige of their former glory, scraping by on salvaged technology, a little interplanetary trade or through raiding and conquest. The unlucky worlds slipped into a neo-feudalistic state; others descended into complete barbarism. And some outposts were forgotten entirely, their inhabitants slowly dying, waiting for supply ships or evacuation transports that never arrived, or that were never dispatched in the first place.

But no matter what world you live on, whether a peasant laboring for a feudal lord on a backwater planet or an urbane sophisticate from one of the few remaining advanced planets, everyone knows to watch the skies, ever alert for the unmistakable fiery tail of a starship descending from the Heavens. Working starships are increasingly rare, all the more so when few planets still possess the technology or industrial base to build new ones. The arrival of a starship is a momentous occasion for most planets, many of which may not have been visited by off-worlders in years or even decades. Those fiery contrails can also be an ill portent, if the visitors are space barbarians, intent on rapine and plunder.

While there is danger, there are also opportunities for those resourceful and brave enough to pursue them. A laserpack can make one a force to be reckoned with on a backwater Cave Tech planet. A functional fusion generator can bring a king's ransom on a Smoke Tech early industrial planet. Thousands of Imperial facilities, laboratories, bases, space stations and outposts are out there for the taking, remote, lost, forgotten, filled to brimming with salvageable Imp Tech and just waiting for intrepid adventurers to find them and plunder their treasures. Not to mention space pirates to vanquish, barbarian invasions to repel, wars to fight, princesses (or princes) to rescue, villainous scum to hunt down for their bounties, and all manner of intrigues and conspiracies to engage in. Perhaps the PCs will eventually carve out their very own pocket empire.

CHARACTERS

Players create characters for a Space Barbarians campaign as they would for a standard X-Plorers campaign, except for some differences in equipment and prices. However, there is some additional information players should be aware of when they pick a class.

Soldiers: No major difference here. Every human era has had warriors, the post-Imperial future is no different. A character may have learned his (or her) trade as a mercenary fighting for barbarian kings, as a space raiding soldier-of-fortune, or serving in the planetary military of a Nuke or Imp Tech world. A captured soldier might not be afforded special consideration, unless valuable enough to ransom (such as a noble).

Scouts: Scouts are nearly as common as soldiers, their profession being only a little younger than prostitution and soldiering. However, good scouts are worth their weight in silver (nearly literally), particularly for their piloting and security skills. Where a captured soldier might be killed out-of-hand, a captured scout is more likely to be pressed into service by his captors, or sold into slavery to someone who can use him. Many Scouts hail from low tech planets and then acquire their advanced piloting skills working for a raider or merchant.

Scientists: Scientists are the least common class in the Space Barbarians universe, in part because there is little demand for their services and in part because there aren't many places left where one can get a decent scientific education. Scientists are valued for their medical skills, and to a lesser extent their computer and science skills; less so for their sociology skills (though a canny space trader may be able to put them to good use). A captured scientist would be of greatest value on a Smoke or Nuke Tech planet. Most scientists learn their trade from Nuke or Imp Tech planets.

Technicians: Technicians are the people who keep things running, especially all that old Imp Tech, so their skills are very valuable and in high demand. A trained technician is worth his weight in gold (literally); a great technician is worth his weight in platinum. Captured technicians will almost always be pressed into service by their captors, or sold into slavery. Technicians likely learned their trade from a Nuke or Imp Tech planet, though they may also have learned it in service on a barbarian raiding ship or a traveling merchant ship.

ALIENS

Like X-Plorers, Space Barbarians is human centric. It is assumed that the Old Empire was dominated by humans, especially politically. This does not preclude the existence of aliens in your campaign. In fact, alien species could make excellent 'space barbarians' themselves, raiding human worlds of the Old Empire. It is left to individual GM's to decide how aliens are implemented, if at all.

PSIONICS

As with aliens, it is left to individual GM's to decide whether to allow psionics in their Space Barbarians campaign. If the GM does implement psionics, here are some things to keep in mind: most primitive planets will tend to view open use of psionics as 'magic' and 'witchcraft'. Psionic characters will be considered 'wizards', 'witches', or perhaps as being possessed by demons and evil spirits. Those with more subtle powers, such as clairvoyance or divination, may be seen as wise prophets or great oracles, sought out for advice or for a cryptic glimpse into the future. Advanced worlds will tend to be more accepting of psionics. Some Imp Tech planets may even have psionic research and breeding programs.

MONEY

The Imperial Credit is still the most common means of comparing value for goods and services in interstellar trade. However, the specie of interstellar commerce has changed. The Old Empire used a form of electronic virtual currency on most worlds, and gold alloy coins on newer colonies. Those coins are still held in high regard by spacers, but quadrillions worth of virtual credits just disappeared, practically overnight, when the Empire collapsed.

There isn't nearly enough old Imperial coinage to facilitate all interstellar commerce in the post-Imperial era, even in its vastly reduced state. Now most trade is conducted using precious metals (silver, gold and platinum), as well as gemstones and sometimes jewelry. Some planets mint their own coins for smaller transactions, making them about the same size as old Imperial coins (though worth fewer credits). Large transactions are conducted in bullion or gemstones. Some Nuke and Imp Tech planets may use virtual currency on their own planet (or, in some cases, paper or plastic specie), but such currency is useless for interstellar trade and is usually converted to precious metals and gems or used to purchase goods for trade off-world.

GEAR

Spacers may have a functional FTL starship, but they often draw on varying levels of technology, depending on which world they are currently visiting, or last visited. It's entirely possible a space-faring adventurer could be armed with a steel cutlass and a revolver, wearing advanced combat armor, using a magnifying eye-glass hand-built on a Smoke Tech planet, with a fossil-fuel ATV in his cargo hold picked up from the last Nuke Tech world he visited. While at that planet he may even have picked up a several crates of automatic rifles and ammunition to sell to a warlord on the next Cave Tech planet in exchange for a load of gold and jewels (mined by the warlord's slaves, no doubt).

The listed Tech Level is the minimum planetary tech level required for that item to be available for purchase. One could still purchase a sword from a high tech world, but you very likely couldn't purchase a laser weapon from a Cave or Smoke Tech planet (unless it was salvaged from old Imperial facility or some such). Common sense on the GM's part should prevail. For example, a Percussion Cap Revolver purchased on an Imp Tech planet is likely a reproduction collector's item, and may even be more expensive than an 'authentic' one purchased on a Smoke Tech planet.

ADVENTURE GEAR

Gear	Cost	Tech Level
Riding Kit	50	Cave Tech
Climbing Kit	100	Smoke Tech
Tool Kit	150	Smoke Tech
Survival Pack	50	Nuke Tech
Waterworld Kit	1,000	Nuke Tech
Base Camp Kit	1,000	Nuke Tech
Medical Kit	500	Nuke Tech
Mechanics Kit	500	Nuke Tech
Sensor/Survey Kit	1,000	Nuke Tech
Scientific Kit	500	Nuke Tech
Portable Computer	2,000	Nuke Tech
Space Suit ¹	1,000	Nuke Tech
Environmental Suit	1,500	Imp Tech
Micro Computer	3,000	Imp Tech

¹Space suits are bulkier, less advanced versions of Environmental Suits. They have 24 hours of life support. It has no base AC, but Mesh Suits may be worn under it.

ARMOR CLASS TABLE

Armor Type	Armor Class	Cost	Tech Level
None	10	-	Any
Leather Jack or Hide	12 (10) ¹	30	Cave Tech
Chainmail	14 (10) ¹	50	Cave Tech
Cuirass	16 (10) ¹	100	Smoke Tech
Mesh Suit	12	300	Nuke Tech
Reflect Armor	14	600	Imp Tech
Combat Armor	16	1,200	Imp Tech
Battle Dress ²	18	10,000	Imp Tech
Force Screen	+1	1,000	Imp Tech

¹Primitive armor has a base Armor Class of 10 against firearms and high tech weapons

²Battle Dress is enclosed powered armor; counts as an environmental suit. Has built in communicators and vision enhancements. Power servos provide +2 Physique (maximum 18). Power pack good for 24 hours continuous operation.

RANGED WEAPON TABLE

Ranged Weapon	Damage	Ammo	Range	Cost	Tech Level
Bow, Simple	1d6-1	Arrow	30	25	Cave Tech
Bow, Composite	1d6	Arrow	35	35	Smoke Tech
Arrows (20)	-	-	-	5	Cave Tech
Crossbow	1d6+1	Bolt	40	75	Cave Tech
Crossbow Bolt (20)	-	-	-	5	Cave Tech
Sling	1d6	Stone	20	10	Cave Tech
Stones (20)	-	-	-	-	Cave Tech
Blunderbuss	2d6	Shot (1)	15	100	Smoke Tech
Musket	1d6+1	Shot (1)	40	90	Smoke Tech
Shot (20)	-	-	-	10	Smoke Tech
Percussion Cap Revolver	1d6+2	Cartridge (6)	20	120	Smoke Tech
Percussion Cap Rifle	1d6+2	Cartridge (1)	50	150	Smoke Tech
Shotgun, Breechloading	2d6	Cartridge (2)	20	140	Smoke Tech
Cartridge (20)	-	-	-	15	Smoke Tech
Cast Iron Grenade	3d6	-	15	20	Smoke Tech
Revolver	2d6	Bullet (6)	30	150	Nuke Tech
Shotgun, Pump	3d6	Shell (8)	20	250	Nuke Tech
Pistol, Automatic	2d6	Bullet (10)	30	200	Nuke Tech
Rifle, Automatic	2d6	Bullet (30)	100	300	Nuke Tech
Sub-machinegun	2d6	Bullet (30)	50	275	Nuke Tech
Shotgun, Automatic	3d6	Shell (20)	20	350	Nuke Tech
Machinegun ¹	3d6	Bullet (100)	100	500	Nuke Tech
Bullets or Shells (100)	-	-	-	50	Nuke Tech
Rocket Launcher	Varies	Rocket (1)	100	500	Nuke Tech
Rocket, HE (1)	6d6 ²	-	-	50	Nuke Tech
Rocket, AP (1)	4d6 ³	-	-	100	Nuke Tech
Grenade Launcher	Varies	Grenade (1)	100	300	Nuke Tech
GL, Multi-shot	Varies	Grenade (6)	100	400	Nuke Tech
Smoke Grenade	-	-	15	20	Nuke Tech
Frag. Grenade	5d6	-	15	30	Nuke Tech
Molotov Cocktail	3d6	-	15	10	Nuke Tech
Laserpack ⁴	4d6	Battery Pack	100	600	Nuke Tech
Laser Pistol	1-3d6	20 EU Clip	50	600	Imp Tech
Laser Carbine	1-4d6	100 EU Clip	75	750	Imp Tech
Heavy Laser Rifle	1-5d6	100 EU Clip	100	1,000	Imp Tech
20 EU Clip	-	-	-	50	Imp Tech
100 EU Clip	-	-	-	250	Imp Tech
HVM Launcher ⁵	10d6	HV Missile	1,000	10,000	Imp Tech
HV Missile (1)	-	-	-	1,000	Imp Tech

¹ Machineguns use belts of 100 rounds and fire in 10 round bursts.

² High Explosive (HE) Rockets fill a 10x10 meter area; successful Agility save for only 3d6 damage.

³ Armor Piercing (AP) Rockets subtract 1 from rolls on the Vehicle Hit Table.

⁴ A laser rifle with a flexible cable that connects to a large power pack, usually worn on the back in place of a backpack. The pack holds 100 EU; each attack uses 5 EU; damage level cannot be adjusted. The pack can be recharged.

⁵ Hyper Velocity Missile Launchers fire anti-grav kinetic warheads at a decent fraction of the speed of light. They fill a 50x50 meter area; successful Agility save for only 5d6 damage; subtract 2 from rolls on the Vehicle Hit Table; HVMs inflict 1d6 damage against starships flying in low atmosphere.

MELEE WEAPON TABLE

Melee Weapon	Damage	Cost	Tech Level
Axe	1d6+1	15	Cave Tech
Club	1d6	-	Cave Tech
Dagger/Knife	1d6-1	10	Cave Tech
Halberd/Pole Arm	1d6+1	40	Cave Tech
Mace/Warhammer	1d6	30	Cave Tech
Spear	1d6	20	Cave Tech
Staff	1d6	10	Cave Tech
Straight Sword	1d6	30	Cave Tech
Cutlass	1d6	40	Smoke Tech
Katana ¹	1d6+1	100	Smoke Tech
Utility Knife ²	1d3	40	Smoke Tech
Survival Knife ³	1d6	40	Smoke Tech
Sonic Dagger	1d6+1	100	Imp Tech
Sonic Mace	1d6+2	200	Imp Tech
Sonic Sword	1d6+3	300	Imp Tech
20 EU Melee Clip	-	20	Imp Tech

¹ For a functional, non-ornamental sword of no historical value (Old Earth katana blades are considered valuable works of art)

² Essentially a Swiss Army knife.

³ The handle is hollow and contains various survival implements, such as fishing line and hook, compass and waterproof matches.

VEHICLES

Vehicle	Armor Class	Cost	Tech Level
Wagon/Carriage	11	500	Cave Tech
Riding Beast	Varies	200	Cave Tech
Draft Beast	Varies	100	Cave Tech
Pack Beast	Varies	50	Cave Tech
Dirigible	12	10,000	Smoke Tech
Steamboat	14	10,000	Smoke Tech
Ground Cycle	16	2,000	Nuke Tech
Ground Car	14	4,000	Nuke Tech
Explorer/APC ¹	16	25,000	Nuke Tech
Tank ²	18	100,000	Nuke Tech
Transport Helicopter	14	50,000	Nuke Tech
Helicopter Gunship ³	16	100,000	Nuke Tech
Propeller Cargo Plane	13	100,000	Nuke Tech
Jet Cargo/Transport Plane	14	250,000	Nuke Tech
Jet Fighter ⁴	18	250,000	Nuke Tech
Skimmer Cycle	17	5,000	Imp Tech
Air-Car Skimmer	16	50,000	Imp Tech
Skimmer APC ¹	18	100,000	Imp Tech
Grav Tank ²	20	250,000	Imp Tech

¹ APCs are usually armed with machineguns. Explorers might also be equipped with machineguns.

² Tanks are armed with large caliber cannons (from 90mm to 120mm) and Grav Tanks with big laser cannons. Both also have co-axial and turret mounted machineguns.

³ Helicopter gunships are armed with rocket pods and machineguns, sometimes light 20mm-30mm auto-cannons

⁴ Jet Fighters are armed with Air-to-Air and/or Air-to-Surface missiles, bombs, and auto-cannons (mainly for aerial dog fighting)

Vehicle Hits: If a vehicle is hit by a heavy weapon (usually a rocket launcher or HVM launcher), roll 1d6 on the Vehicle Hit Table; subtract 1 for each subsequent hit until the vehicle can be properly repaired:

VEHICLE HIT TABLE

d6 Roll

1-2	Explosion! The vehicle explodes in ball of fire. Occupants are allowed an Agility save to bail out in time.
3-4	Severe hit. The vehicle will no longer move. If it's a flying machine, it's going down. If it's a ship, it's sinking.
5-6	Non-critical hit. The vehicle has taken minor, mostly cosmetic, damage but is still fully operational

ROBOTS

On high tech worlds robot use is still fairly common, especially luxury models. On low tech worlds robots are less common, there being a surplus of people and a surfeit of technology and know-how. However, specialized robots that can perform tasks beyond the capabilities of the locals are highly prized (e.g. a medical robot). Also, there were no compunctions about using combat robots (combots) during the Old Empire, but in the post-Imperial era it's usually more cost effective to hire a bunch of disposable mooks and give them automatic rifles than it is to maintain an advanced combat. However, occasionally a salvaged combot turns up for sale in some seedy barbarian port-o-call, or is pressed into service by resourceful adventurers.

Use the AI Robot types from the X-Plorers rulebook but with the following addition for combots:

- **Combot Chassis:** AC +2, HP x2, ST +2, MV +2, Initial Programs +0, Cost: x2; combots may fit multiple weapons as upgrades (see weapon charts above – ranged weapons are most common); combots start with +1 THB, but may spend Program slots to increase this, one slot per +1 THB at a cost of 2,000 Cr each

STARSHIPS

Starships are exceedingly rare. The number of newly constructed ships in any given year is usually not enough to replace the old hulks that are lost through accidents, piracy, space battles, misfortune and plain old wear-and-tear brought on by neglect and/or the inability to properly maintain a ship. As starships are marvels of engineering, highly resistant to the sturm and drang of ordinary space travel, a properly maintained ship will last for centuries. But eventually time, neglect, ignorance or fate catches up with them.

Given the rarity and incredible value of starships, space battles are fairly rare. Provided one has the proper equipment, it is surprisingly easy to detect other ships and to escape before becoming trapped. Unless they have no other choice, captains will flee a fight when the odds are stacked against them. And aggressors prefer to capture a starship instead of just blowing it out of the universe, usually by laying devious traps and ambushes for the unwary and then storming aboard the ship and taking it in a risky boarding action. If things go poorly, they can always break away and jump for safety, deserting the unfortunate boarding party in the process...but then there's plenty more desperate scum where that lot came from.

Mishaps: Older starships are prone to malfunction when placed under stress, including (but not limited to) emergency FTL jumps, high G acceleration, emergency maneuvers or descending/ascending too rapidly through planetary atmosphere. Anytime an older ship is placed under such stress, roll 2d6: if the result is a 12, there's been a mishap. Roll 1d6 on the following Mishap table.

If a mishap occurs, the crew will have to make repairs to get the system online again. At the GM's discretion this may require specialized replacement parts, or the ability to manufacture those parts in the ship's machine shop, in addition to skill checks. Ship crews like to stock up on spare ship parts whenever they get the chance.

Note: Ignore these rules if the player characters are fortunate enough to get their hands on a relatively new starship (not older than a few decades, and well maintained). Likewise, if the players expend the time and money to give an older ship a major overhaul, the GM may allow them to avoid mishap rolls for a year or so.

1d6 Starship Mishap

- 1 Power plant offline. The ship is operating on emergency power for 4d6 hours (less if the crew is using up lots of power). Once emergency power is gone, all other ship functions will fail. This also means artificial gravity will fail, imposing further difficulties. The ship cannot FTL jump until main power is back online.
- 2 Engine failure. The ship is dead in space and can only maneuver on thrusters. If beginning an FTL jump, roll 2d6: 2-5 = Mis-jump! The ship is hurtling off course; 6-11 = The jump fails to initiate; 12 = Engines explode, causing 1d6 per size level damage to the ship. If entering or leaving planetary atmosphere, engine failure will likely lead to a catastrophic crash landing.
- 3 Life support failure. A critical life support sub-component blows out from the stress. The crew has 2d6+12 hours before they asphyxiate and/or freeze to death.
- 4 Computer failure. Automated functions on the ship shut down. The ship cannot FTL jump. Any function requiring the ship's computer has a -4 penalty, or might even be impossible.
- 5 Hull breach! The strain on the ship causes a hull breach. The section may seal automatically, or it may need to be sealed manually, depending on the condition of the ship. Cargo and/or crew may have been sucked through the breach into the cold, inky void of space.
- 6+ The hull groans ominously, but she keeps flying. You better get that checked out next time you make planet fall.

WORLDS & CIVILIZATION

The Empire boasted a highly advanced level of technology. Laser weapons were standard issue for the military. Artificial gravity was a well established technology, anti-grav vehicles a common mode of planetary transportation. Fusion generators provided abundant and cheap energy, even on remote planets. Faster-than-Light (FTL) space travel was common and most citizens could expect to travel off their birth world at least once in their life. Medical and genetic sciences had cured most diseases and extended life by decades; the wealthiest could afford new prolong gene therapies that promised to extend life (and youth) for centuries. Sophisticated robots performed hazardous jobs, fought wars, and were even kept as exotic pets. Even remote or newly colonized worlds enjoyed a fairly high standard of living.

Now most of that is gone. Almost every planet of the old Empire has experienced a technological regression, though some more severe than others. The least developed planets regressed most dramatically, lacking the population, knowledge and industrial bases to maintain their technology levels. Amongst the more developed planets, technological regression is less pronounced but still noticeable. A bare handful of worlds, many of them the seats of small pocket empires, are able to maintain a technology level roughly equivalent to that of the old Empire.

Of course, the distribution of technology on a world is not necessarily uniform. Even if a planet is considered Cave Tech, some relics from the Imperial era may yet remain in hidden caches or in the hands of the ruling elite. Likewise, advanced technology is highly desired on any world, provided you can find the right buyer.

Dead Worlds: Technically speaking, the vast majority (99+%) of planets in the space volume of the Old Empire are dead worlds...barren or hostile planets incapable of supporting human life, and too difficult and expensive for the Empire to have bothered terraforming. However, there are also some worlds that were once Eden planets, home to millions or billions of people, that were so utterly devastated by atomic bombardment or poisoned by biological warfare as to be incapable of supporting life on a large enough scale for civilization to flourish. A few savage barbarians may survive in less contaminated areas, but it will take centuries or millennia before anything resembling civilization ever rises on these worlds again, if it ever can. Such worlds are usually covered with ancient Imperial ruins.

Cave Tech: The term generally applied to a planet that has regressed to a barbaric or savage state, roughly equivalent to Stone Age technology. It is also a derisive term applied to other low tech planets that have lost gunpowder and steam power technology. Such worlds are backwards, superstitious, highly religious, and typically ruled by autocrats, warlords, clan structures or have a feudal political system in place. Virtually all are balkanized, with many baronies, city-states, kingdoms or factions, usually in constant conflict with one another. Cave Tech worlds may also be planets that were once highly advanced but were bombed into a primitive state at some point in the past, either by external attackers or from internal atomic warfare.

Most Cave Tech worlds have forgotten that the Empire ever existed, or it may have receded into myth and legend.

Smoke Tech: Describes planets that have retained at least gunpowder, and probably steam technology as well. These worlds tend to have more sophisticated forms of government, including early nation-states. While still superstitious and highly religious, they tend to also have a greater appreciation for reason and science, particularly amongst the social elite. Balkanization is still common, as are wars and conflicts, but the beginnings of international cooperation and institutions may also be found on such planets.

Smoke Tech worlds will have a greater appreciation for higher technology items. They've also generally done a better job of maintaining their history, so they may be aware of their Imperial heritage. Smoke Tech planets are the most commonly raided, providing the best ratio of risk to return.

Nuclear (Nuke) Tech: Fairly rare planets, ranging from an advanced industrial stage of technology and industrial/economic development (roughly equivalent to WWII) to early space flight and/or non-FTL interstellar travel. These planets are characterized by having retained at least a theoretical, if not working, knowledge of nuclear technology. In addition to fission reactors, early laser weapons may be available on such planets, as will early computers, simple robots, hydrocarbon powered vehicles, fixed and rotor wing aircraft and the like.

These worlds almost certainly remember their Imperial heritage and are keenly aware of what they have lost since the fall of the Old Empire. They may be balkanized, though they are more likely to be united under a single planetary authority, as war on Nuke Tech planets could potentially result in atomic holocaust (thus reducing the planet to Smoke or Cave Tech status).

Imperial Technology is highly prized on these worlds, primarily with the hope of reverse engineering and replicating the technology at some point. Nuke Tech planets are very lucrative for raiders, but are also far more dangerous to raid.

Imperial (Imp) Tech: A bare handful of these worlds still exist. They've managed to retain a level of technology equivalent to that of the old Empire. In particular, they've retained at least a theoretical knowledge of FTL interstellar travel, even if they lack the facilities to build new ships. However, Imperial Technology depends on a massive, highly specialized industrial and economic base to survive. Without such a base, it is all a world can do to maintain what Imperial Tech they have. They may still be able to produce some relatively simple items, such as advanced lasers and body armor, or similar gear, but more complex technology might be beyond their means to replicate. Some parts of the planet, or some portions of the population, may effectively have only a Nuke Tech standard of living.

Starship production, in particular, is very difficult, being more art than industrial science. Only a handful of ships are built each year by specialized trade guilds, which hold their shipwright secrets closely. Needless to say, new starships are extremely expensive and highly prized.

Imp Tech worlds are always ruled by a single planetary authority, and are often the seats of power for small pocket empires (the largest of which only span about a dozen nearby star systems). While Imp Tech planets are not completely

immune from space barbarian raids, they are the most difficult nuts to crack, so raids against them are uncommon and massive when they do occur.

POPULATING THE GALAXY

GM's may populate their game universes any way they see fit. Some GM's may be content to present an abstracted universe, describing worlds in relation to one another in only general terms. Other GM's may prefer more concreteness, which the following rules attempt to address.

Sector Maps: The galaxy may be represented on a hex-based map. You may want use a map with numbered hexes to help keep track of worlds and notable locations. It may also be helpful to break your galaxy into more manageable chunks, developing it one section at a time as needed.

Assume each hex is 3 to 5 light years across. As per the X-pplorers core rules, assume it takes an FTL starship one day to travel one light year, so crossing a hex would take 3 to 5 days, depending on the hex distance you're using.

To determine whether a hex has an interesting star system, roll 1d6. If the roll is a 5 or a 6, there is a star system in the hex that has a habitable Earth-type planet (or, at least, had such a planet at one time—it may be a Dead World now). It is assumed that most star systems have only one interesting, habitable Earth-type planet. Other planets in the system, consisting of hostile or barren moons, hothouses, ice rocks, asteroid belts and gas giants, may have (or once had) facilities of their own, but only the primary world is important enough to record. The remaining planets in the system are left to the GM to develop in as much detail as needed.

Note that hexes without interesting star systems are not necessarily empty. They may have star systems with no habitable planets, or perhaps a secret deep-space space station, or some other anomaly. Star systems without habitable planets are rarely worth visiting; most have been visited only once, by the initial survey crew centuries ago during the Old Empire era. But they can sometimes serve as exotic, remote locations for adventures (such as hidden barbarian or pirate bases, for example). These are left to the GM's imagination to detail.

World Generation: Generally speaking, the vast majority of planets the PCs visit will be Earth-type, similar in size, gravity and water content to Old Earth. These were the only planets worth colonizing, and there were enough of them to accommodate human expansion into space. Some worlds are near Earth-type, many of which were eventually terraformed during the Old Empire period into more habitable planets.

GM's are, of course, free to make up worlds as they see fit. Generally speaking, however, Imp Tech worlds should be the rarest, followed by Nuke Tech and Dead worlds, then Cave and Smoke Tech planets.

If a random world is preferred, roll on the following charts. Note, these charts are not meant to be authoritative or exhaustive. Individual GM's are encouraged to expand upon or revise these charts as they see fit.

CHART 1: WORLD TYPE

1d20 World Type

1-2	Dead World
3-9	Cave Tech World
10-17	Smoke Tech World
18-19	Nuke Tech World
20	Imp Tech World

CHART 2: INTERESTING THINGS

1d20 Interesting Things

- 1 **Pangaea** - The planet is a single Pangaea-style super-continent
- 2 **Terraforming Failed** - The planet is a very harsh place to live
- 3 **Violent storms** - The planet has frequent, violent storms, quite disconcerting for visitors
- 4 **Volcanic activity** - The planet has numerous volcanoes. Eruptions and earthquakes are frequent
- 5 **Imperial Ruins** - The planet is dotted with the ruins of Imperial era settlements and installations
- 6 **Debris Field** - The planet is globed by an orbital debris field, detritus from an ancient space battle
- 7 **Floating Cities** - The height of Imperial technology; GM's discretion whether they're still floating
- 8 **Lunar Fortress** - One (or more) of the planet's satellites is a fortified base; possibly recent, possibly Imperial era
- 9 **Giant Stone Sculptures** - Carved out of pillars of rock or cliff faces, perhaps by the locals or perhaps by aliens
- 10 **Slag Pits** - Massive, city-sized pits scar the surface; perhaps mining pits or possibly natural phenomenon
- 11 **Beanstalk** - A massive space elevator reaches to the heavens; may or may not be operational
- 12 **Prehistoric Sky Drawings** - Large figures carved into flat terrain, only visible from high altitudes
- 13 **Habitable Moon** - The planet is actually a habitable moon orbiting a larger celestial body, such as a gas giant
- 14 **Domed Cities** - The world is a rare non-Earth-type planet that managed to survive, covered in domed cities
- 15 **Magnetic Interference** - Normal electronic devices do not work probably; only specially designed devices work
- 16 **Impact Crater** - The planet bears scars from a relatively recent impact crater from a meteor or an orbital strike
- 17 **Imperial Beacon** - Ancient Imperial satellites orbit the planet, broadcasting cryptic warnings to travelers
- 18 **Orbital Minefield** - The planet is surrounded by an orbital minefield, a legacy of the Old Empire
- 19 **Imperial Starbase** - An old Imperial starbase still orbits the planet
- 20 **Alien Ruins** - The planet was once home to an advanced alien race, their ruins visible on the planet surface

CHART 3: INTERESTING PEOPLES

1d20 Interesting Peoples

- 1 **Indigenous Aliens** - A indigenous alien species calls this planet home, possibly living alongside humans
- 2 **Famous Oracle** - People travel great distances, even from other planets, to speak with the oracle
- 3 **Barbarian Haven** - There's a space barbarian/pirate base here, where they can relax and refit between raids
- 4 **Nomadic Horde** - A horde of fierce nomadic savages roam the planet, raiding civilized settlements
- 5 **Charismatic Leader** - An inspirational leader is creating a paradigm shift in power/technology/society
- 6 **Warlord** - A powerful warlord attempts to unite the planet, making other leaders wary and nervous
- 7 **Inquisition** - A religious or ideological movement sweeps away all opposition with fire and terror
- 8 **Mighty Empires** - The planet is divided between a few powerful empires contending for dominance over all
- 9 **The Church** - A powerful religious order holds sway over the entire planet; other religions are not well tolerated
- 10 **Cannibalistic** - Cannibalism is an accepted practice on this world; be wary of accepting invitations to dinner
- 11 **Rigid Castes** - Society is ordered by a rigid caste system; off-worlders must be careful who they interact with
- 12 **Pocket Empire** - The planet is administered by a governor general, possibly against the local's wishes
- 13 **Slavery** - Slavery is an accepted and legal practice on the world; slaves may outnumber free citizens
- 14 **Matriarchy** - Many (all?) polities on this world are dominated by women
- 15 **Xenoarchy** - An alien species has somehow come to rule the planet; humans are subjects or slaves
- 16 **Anarchy** - There are no governments or polities; lawlessness and anarchy prevails over this world
- 17 **Mutants** - Due to atomic or biological warfare many inhabitants developed grotesque & debilitating mutations
- 18 **Utopia** - All inhabitants live in peace on a near perfect Eden planet; violence and crime is virtually unheard of
- 19 **Human Sacrifice** - Human sacrifice is an accepted religious practice; outsiders should be especially wary
- 20 **Neo-Luddites** - A militant anti-technology movement has swept, or is currently sweeping, across the planet

Planetary Events (Optional): When PCs arrive at a star system, roll 1d6: on a roll of 6 an event occurs as they arrive, occurred recently before, or will occur shortly after the PC's land on the planet.

PLANETARY EVENTS

1d20	Event
1	Pirate Raid – Space pirates attack the PC's ship, or are attacking another ship near the primary world
2	Great Prophet – A great prophet inspires the people, to the consternation of established authorities
3	Meteor/Comet – A meteor or comet is heading towards, or near, the planet; they might need help diverting it
4	Earthquake – A powerful earthquake hits the area shortly after the PCs land
5	Holy War! – A religious or ideological dispute breaks into open warfare; the fighting is savage
6	Xenophobic Riots – Riots breakout out targeting non-human aliens or off-worlders
7	Solar Storm – A powerful solar storm disrupts communications and stellar navigation for several days
8	Plague – An aggressive plague sweeps across the land
9	Revolution! – A local or planet-wide revolt against the regime breaks out shortly after the PCs land
10	Powerful Storm – A powerful hurricane, typhoon or monsoon hits the area the PCs are visiting
11	Planetary Raid – Space barbarians are raiding, or shortly will raid, the planet
12	World War – A global conflict engulfs much of the planet; entire nations are mobilized for total warfare
13	Regional Conflict – A small but brutal conflict rages through the region the PCs are visiting; opportunity knocks
14	Economic Crash – The planetary or regional economy has crashed
15	Latest Craze – Beatrixian Fingbats (or some such) are all the rage; everyone has one, get yours now!
16	Coup de Tat – The regional or planetary government is toppled by a military coup
17	Scandal – A leader or celebrity is caught engaging in scandalous or corrupt behavior; intrigue abounds
18	Economic Boom – The regional or planetary economy is going through a boom cycle; cash in while you can
19	Class Riots – The lower classes are rioting (again); someone needs to put them in their proper place
20	Holiday/Festival – The PCs arrive in the middle of a major holiday or festival

PLUNDERING THE STARS

So, just what do space barbarians like to plunder? Raiders prefer high volume-to-value loot, given the limited cargo capacity of their ships.

Precious Metals and Gemstones: These are by far the preferred loot of most raiders, since precious metals and gemstones are the currency of interstellar trade. Even primitive Cave Tech planets will likely have enough gold, silver and gems stockpiled to cover the expense of the raid. Generally, raiders don't want to bother chasing loose change (unless it's a stash of old Imperial coinage), preferring instead to steal gold, silver and platinum by the bar.

Artwork and Historical Relics: The common misconception of a space barbarian is that he or she is an uncouth savage, unappreciative of the finer aspects of civilization. This is certainly not the case, as most raiders are appreciative enough of fine art and historical relics, if only for their trade value. A cargo hold filled with paintings, sculptures, antique furniture, Old Earth relics, ancient books and documents, and the like, probably has as great a value as a similar volume of gold and silver. The problem, of course, is finding an appreciative buyer, which usually requires a trip to a Nuke or Imp Tech planet.

High Tech Equipment: After gold and valuable artwork, high tech equipment possesses the greatest volume-to-value ratio. This includes robots, vehicles, machinery, mining equipment, munitions and the like. Manufactured consumer

goods may have a decent value, depending on their utility, though finding a good market for them can be trickier (cavemen have little use for virtual gaming consoles).

Ores and Minerals: Certain industrial metals bring a high value on Nuke and Imp Tech planets, especially fissionable metals and rare earth minerals used in the construction of FTL drives. Common ores, such as copper and tin, have almost no value, not even on a Cave Tech planet. A growing Smoke Tech planet might have a high demand for refined steel or other alloys that are difficult for them to produce locally.

Luxury Goods: Luxury goods, such as furs and pelts, exotic feathers, spices, narcotics, alcoholic beverages, ivory, jade, alabaster, marble, silk, tobacco and sugar, can have a fairly high volume-to-value ratio. The trouble comes in matching the good to the market. Bastarian Ale may be in great demand on one planet, and not any others. Phrixian Winterpelts are the height of fashion on one Imp Tech world, but no one else wants them. Thus, it may take longer to unload luxury goods.

Slavery and Kidnapping: Slavery is common enough in post-Imperial space, on a planetary level, but there is no large scale interplanetary slave trade. If someone wants to enslave a bunch of low-skilled or unskilled laborers, they usually need look no further than their own planet. However, there is a small trade in individuals that possess scarce technical skills. Technicians are in greatest demand, followed by scouts and scientists. Kidnapping for ransom is somewhat more lucrative, if you can get your hands on a valuable person, such as a noble. Slaving and kidnapping are typically crimes of opportunity arising from a planetary raid or space piracy.

SPACE MERCHANTS

Planet raiding space barbarians aren't the only travelers amongst the stars. Honest (mostly) space merchants also ply the void between worlds. Some worlds have built up trade empires, claiming entire planets as their sole trade partners, defending them by force against raiders and rival merchants alike, when necessary.

Following are simple trade rules for players who want to try their hand at interstellar trade and speculation. These rules are not intended to be a realistic economic model. If you prefer something more...concrete...by all means come up with your own rules. Or ignore these rules completely and just wing it. These rules can also be used when PCs try to sell their plunder after a planetary raid.

Base Cr/Ton: This is the base credit value for each good, per ton. This base value is further modified by a roll on the Actual Value Table below.

Tech Level Available tells you at which tech level the good becomes available for purchase at an economically viable level.

Finding a buyer/seller: To find a buyer or seller for a good the player makes a Presence save, applying the indicated supply/demand modifier for the appropriate tech level, indicated in the chart below. Naturally, you can't purchase a good if it's not available at the planet's tech level (excepting special circumstances, such as two space merchants visiting the same world and trading between one another). Searching for a buyer or seller requires one week of game time. However, players may search for buyers/sellers for multiple goods in the same week, if they like.

SUPPLY & DEMAND

Good	Base Cr/Ton	TL Available	Cave Tech	Smoke Tech	Nuke Tech	Imp Tech
Furs/Pelts	3,000	Cave	-2	0	+1	+1
Ivory	4,000	Cave	-1	-1	0	+1
Crystals	10,000	Cave	+2	+1	0	0
Livestock	1,500	Cave	+2	0	+1	+0
Spices	5,000	Cave	+2	+1	0	-1
Narcotics	10,000	Cave	+1	+1	+2	+2
Alcoholic Bev.	5,000	Smoke	+1	0	-1	-1
Rare Woods	2,000	Smoke	-2	+1	+2	+1
Steel	3,000	Smoke	+1	+2	0	-2
Coal	2,000	Smoke	-1	0	-1	-2
Agricultural	1,000	Smoke	-2	0	+1	+2
Textiles	2,000	Smoke	+1	0	-1	-2
Polymers	5,000	Nuke	NA	-2	+1	0
Aluminum	5,000	Nuke	-4	+1	+2	0
Petrochemicals	20,000	Nuke	-4	-1	+1	+2
Radioactives	30,000	Nuke	NA	-4	+2	+1
Rare Earth Minerals	70,000	Nuke	NA	NA	+2	+3
Firearms	50,000	Nuke	+1	+2	0	-1
Machinery	100,000	Nuke	-4	0	-1	-1
Electronic Components	70,000	Nuke	NA	-4	+1	0
Appliances	60,000	Nuke	-2	-2	+1	0
Mechanical Components	50,000	Nuke	-4	-3	0	-1
Pharmaceuticals	100,000	Nuke	0	+1	+2	+1
Robots	150,000	Nuke	-4	-2	+1	+1
Processed Foods	40,000	Nuke	-2	-1	0	+1
Refined Fuel	30,000	Nuke	-4	0	+2	-2
Rare Earth Alloys	500,000	Imp	NA	NA	+3	+4
Lasers	200,000	Imp	-2	0	+1	0

Quantity Available: Next, roll 2d6 to determine total available supply or demand for the good, in tons. The result is multiplied by x0.5 for Cave Tech worlds, x1 for Smoke Tech worlds, and x2 for Nuke and Imp Tech planets.

Actual Value: The **Base Cr/Ton** column is the starting value per ton for a good. To determine the actual value of the good when purchased or sold, roll 1d6 and apply the indicated modifier for the technology level of the world. Players are never forced to sell or buy at the resulting price; they may try to find new buyers/sellers, requiring another week of searching.

d6 Roll	Actual Value Modifier
1 or less	40% Base Value/Ton
2	60% Base Value/Ton
3	80% Base Value/Ton
4-5	100% Base Value/Ton
6	120% Base Value/Ton
7	140% Base Value/Ton
8	160% Base Value/Ton
9	180% Base Value/Ton
10+	200% Base Value/Ton

Brokers: Players may opt to contract the services of a professional broker to help sell their cargo. A broker expects a 10% commission based on the final value of the cargo when it is sold. The broker doesn't get paid until the cargo is sold, to the PCs may decline the offer if it is too low. Hiring a broker provides a +2 to Presence saves to find a buyer. In addition, add +2 to the roll to determine total quantity demanded (before modifying for tech level), and add 1 to the Actual Value roll.

Example of Trading in Play: The PC crew of the *Medusa's Gaze*, a small merchant ship, is on a Smoke Tech planet. They want to pick up some cargo before they lift off and head to their next destination, which will be a Cave Tech world. In this particular situation, the good with the best value-to-volume ratio, and the best supply/demand modifiers, is alcoholic beverages. Their most charismatic party member has a +2 Presence modifier, and is level 3. This means they need to roll 11+ on a d20 to find a seller (13+ base ST, +2 for Presence modifier, +0 for Supply/Demand modifier on a Smoke Tech planet). The player rolls a 10, so they can't find a seller that week. They decide it's better to wait a week than fly with an empty hold, so they try again next week. This time the player rolls a 15, finding a buyer. The GM rolls 2d6 and gets 5 (x1 for a Smoke Tech planet), meaning 5 tons of alcoholic beverages come up for sale.

Alcoholic beverages have a base value of 5,000 per ton. The GM rolls 1d6 to determine the actual sale price, getting a 3 (+0 for Smoke Tech planet), for 80% of base value. This means the players get a good bargain and purchase the cargo for 4,000 credits/ton, instead of 5,000 Credits/ton. They jump at the opportunity, paying a total of 20,000 Credits (in gold or silver specie) for the 5 tons of booze.

This doesn't fill their hold, so during the same week they're looking for someone selling alcohol, they also look for some Textiles to purchase. They need an 11+ for Textiles as well (same modifiers as the booze), and roll a 19. The GM rolls 2d6 getting 7 (x1 for Smoke Tech planet), for 7 tons of Textiles. Rolling actual value for the sale price, the GM gets a 5 (+0 for a Smoke Tech planet), meaning the players can purchase the textiles at 100% base value, or 2,000 Credits/ton. This isn't a great bargain, but it's not a horrible price either. Not wanting to spend another week on this primitive world, they purchase the textiles for a total of 14,000 Credits in gold and silver.

Satisfied, they burn atmo and head for their next destination, a Cave Tech planet. They find a decent sized city and land outside the city limits. After the locals are reassured that the PCs aren't raiders come to pillage the city and ravage their women-folk, they come out to trade with the party, or at least to gawk at their shiny space ship.

First the party looks for a buyer for the booze. They need a 10+ on a d20 (13+ base ST, +2 for Presence modifier, +1 for Cave Tech modifier). But they only roll a 7. Amazingly, their first week there they can't find a willing buyer in this large city.

During the same week they try to find a buyer for the textiles. They need a 10+ on a d20 (13+ base ST, +2 for Presence modifier, +1 for Cave Tech modifier). They only roll a 9. They aren't having much luck that week.

Suspecting the natives may still be suspicious of them, they engage a local merchant to act as a broker to help find buyers. The merchant wants a 10% cut off the top for his services. Some of the PC crew grumble at this, but it will be more than worth it if they can get a good price for their goods, so they agree. And if they can't get a good price, they can just look for different buyers the following week. The broker isn't paid until the deal is done, even if it takes weeks.

Selling the alcoholic beverages, they need an 8+ to find a buyer (13+ base ST, +2 for Presence, +1 for Cave Tech modifier and +2 for using a broker). They roll an 8, barely making it (and would have failed without the broker). Rolling for the total demand that week, the GM rolls 2d6 and gets 7. Tons available or demanded are halved on Cave Tech planets, so the actual result would be 3.5 tons demand. However, the broker adds 2 to the demand roll, so the result is $9/2 = 4.5$ tons. The GM mercifully rounds this up to 5 tons, meaning they can sell the full load in a single transaction.

Rolling actual value for the purchase price, the GM gets a 5. This is modified by +1 for Cave Tech demand, and +1 for using a broker, getting a total result of 7. The buyer will purchase the booze for 140% of base value, or 7,000 Credits/ton (5,000 Base x 1.4). That's a total of 35,000 Credits. The broker gets 3,500 Credits for his services, so the party's revenue is 35,000 – 3,500 = 31,500. Their gross profit is 31,500 – 20,000 = 11,500 Credits (before other expenses). That probably covered the costs for this trip, and then some.

Next they try to sell the Textiles. They need an 8+ to offload them (13+ base, +2 Presence, +1 Tech modifier, +2 for a broker). They roll a 13, easily finding a buyer this time. The GM rolls 2d6 for number of tons demanded, getting a 4. Adding +2 for the broker, and dividing in half for a Cave Tech world, that's a total of 6/2 = 3 tons of Textile demand. Rolling actual value, the GM gets a 5, adding +1 for tech level demand and +1 for a broker, for a total of 7. Again, the buyer is willing to pay 140% of base value, but only wants 3 tons of textiles. The PCs can decide to pass up this opportunity if they want to, but opt to sell what they can and seek out another buyer for the following week.

They get 2,800 Cr per ton (2,000 base x 1.4), or a total of 8,400 Credits for all 3 tons. The broker receives 840 Credits for his services. The party's revenue for those 3 tons is 8,400-840 = 7,560 Credits. Their gross profit is 7,560 – 6,000 = 1,560 Credits. Not great, but better than nothing. While they look for a buyer for the other 4 tons, they'll inquire about more lucrative work. There's a rumor that a local noblewoman needs some off-world mercenaries for a dirty job, and she's paying in Imperial coins...

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