

Settlements of the World

Ambershire

Population: Approximately 1,500

Primary Races: Halflings, with small populations of humans and elves

Government: A Council of Druids decides most matters but follows the will of the Archdruid of the Valley of Mists whenever she makes her wishes known

Known For: The Valley of Mists, skilled Druids and Rangers, prehistoric wildlife, hidden trails, and exceptional guides



Ambershire lies deep within the Valley of Mists, a vast forest perpetually shrouded in pale fog. Prehistoric beasts and deadly plant life thrive beneath its ancient canopy, while hidden trails shift or disappear within the mist. Only Ambershire's Druids and Rangers can reliably navigate the valley.

The settlement was founded by halflings who arrived from across the sea nearly three thousand years ago. Seeking refuge from the wars between Barto and Embor, they disappeared into the forest and formed a powerful bond with the valley.

Most outsiders believe the halflings of Ambershire have become feral, never understanding the true nature of their connection to the land. The people of Ambershire are fiercely territorial and hostile toward most intruders. Those who survive the valley's beasts and poisonous flora must still contend with concealed pits, snares, poisoned darts, and halfling hunters who strike from the mist. Only travelers granted a guide can expect safe passage.

Settlements of the World

Barto City

Population: Approximately 3,500

Primary Races: Primarily humans and Orcs, with smaller populations of other races

Government: A brutal hereditary monarchy ruled by the Steeleclaw family, which has maintained control for nearly five hundred years

Known For: Brutal feudalism, Barbarian and Berserker warriors, criminal dealings, mercenaries, open corruption, and the seemingly unnatural strength and resilience of the Steeleclaw bloodline



Barto City is a harsh and violent place where strength carries more authority than law. Its society blends brutal feudalism with the traditions of Barbarian clans and Berserker warbands. Mercenaries, smugglers, thieves, and others unable—or unwilling—to live under Embor's strict ideas of justice often find their way here. Nearly any illegal service or underhanded bargain can be found for the right price.

Humans and Orcs make up most of Barto's population. Orc clans are respected for their strength, courage, and loyalty, with many serving as soldiers or mercenaries. Not everyone in Barto is cruel or corrupt, but decent people quickly learn to remain unnoticed. Open kindness is often mistaken for weakness.

The Steeleclaw family has ruled Barto for nearly five hundred years. Some claim their power comes from dark pacts and forbidden magic; others credit their savage martial skill and willingness to kill any challenger. Whatever the truth, members of the royal bloodline are known for extraordinary strength and an unnatural ability to survive wounds that should have killed them.

Settlements of the World

Biherth

Population: Approximately 3,200

Primary Races: Primarily humans, with a smaller population of dwarves; occasionally, Aasimar are born there

Government: Governed by the priests of Bahamut

Known For: Its isolated island location, crumbling stone wall, earthquake-damaged buildings, numerous abandoned ruins, religious leadership, and the widespread apathy of its people



Biherth stands upon an island that was once connected to the mainland. Long ago, a catastrophic earthquake devastated the town, shattered its walls, and caused the sea to flood the broken land separating it from the continent.

Much of Biherth was never rebuilt. Empty homes, ruined buildings, and fractured streets remain within its crumbling stone wall. The priests of Bahamut govern the town, but despite their efforts, a deep apathy has settled over much of the population. The people endure rather than rebuild, as though the earthquake broke the town's spirit along with the land.

Occasionally, an Aasimar child is born among Biherth's people. These births are considered rare blessings, though no one understands why they occur here. Most of Biherth's Aasimar feel an irresistible desire to see the wider world and leave the island shortly after reaching adulthood. Few ever return.

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Breyford

Population: Approximately 21,000

Primary Races: Primarily humans, with a large population of Tieflings

Government: An absolute tyranny ruled by Ardumman, a powerful sphinx

Known For: Being the second-largest city in the world, its towering skyline, monumental architecture, oppressive laws, and the riddles and cruel judgments of Ardumman



Breyford is the second-largest city in the world, a vast and crowded center of trade dominated by tall towers. These structures rise above densely packed streets and can be seen for miles.

At the city's center stands an immense pyramid from which Ardumman, an ancient sphinx, rules as an absolute tyrant. His laws are strict, his punishments severe, and his judgments are often delivered through riddles or deliberately difficult tests. Those who fail to satisfy him may lose their wealth, freedom, or lives.

Ardumman's masked servitors enforce his will throughout the city. Their faces are never seen, for each wears a perfectly mirrored mask that reflects those standing before them. Impersonating one of these servitors is punishable by immediate death—and somehow, they always know when it has been attempted.

Breyford is also home to a large and well-established Tiefling population. The city's citizens have learned to speak carefully, obey quickly, and avoid attracting official attention. Trade and daily life continue beneath the towers, but fear is never far away. In Breyford, success depends as much upon caution and cleverness as it does upon skill.

Settlements of the World

Caminster

Population: Approximately 25,000

Primary Races: Humans, elves, and half-elves, with a significant Goliath population living among the higher peaks

Government: Governed by a court of aristocrats

Known For: Being the largest city in the world, its mountainous crags, immense stone bridges, aristocratic court, and difficult-to-reach location



Caminster is the largest city in the world, built across a series of mountainous crags surrounded by steep drops and volcanic terrain. Lava flows through caverns beneath the city, keeping Caminster uncomfortably hot throughout the year. Its people favor light, loose clothing suited to the constant heat. Most residents live in homes hollowed directly into the sides of the peaks scattered throughout the surrounding mountains.

A significant population of Goliaths lives among the highest peaks. They are respected as builders, miners, bridge guards, and blacksmiths capable of working under conditions few others can endure.

At the city's heart is an enormous mass of stone suspended above a vast pool of lava. Eight immense stone bridges anchor the central rock to the surrounding peaks and provide the only means of reaching it. Caminster's government buildings and the grand estates of its aristocratic rulers occupy this elevated center, physically separating the city's elite from the people below.

Obsidian is plentiful and commonly used to create blades, spearheads, and ceremonial weapons. Caminster is also home to the finest blacksmiths in the world. The region's natural magic seeps into arms and armor as they are forged, granting even ordinary creations qualities rarely found elsewhere.

Settlements of the World

Defield

Population: Approximately 640

Primary Races: Primarily elves, with a small number of fey creatures

Government: Governed by the priests of Thelisia

Known For: Buildings shaped from living trees, its close connection to the fey, ancient woodland traditions, and devotion to Thelisia

Defield is a secluded woodland settlement where nearly every structure has been shaped from living trees. Homes, gathering halls, walkways, and shrines grow from intertwined trunks and branches, carefully guided over decades without killing or cutting the trees. To outsiders, the settlement appears to be part of the forest itself.

Elves make up most of Defield's population, though several fey creatures openly live among them. The boundary between the settlement and the surrounding wilderness is difficult to identify, and visitors may pass beneath occupied homes without ever realizing they are there.

The priests of Thelisia govern Defield and oversee both its spiritual life and its relationship with the forest. They settle disputes, guide the shaping of new structures, and determine when outsiders may enter. The people protect their ancient traditions carefully, believing that Defield survives only through patience, reverence, and cooperation with the living woodland around them.



Settlements of the World

Embor

Population: Approximately 7,500

Primary Races: Primarily humans, with substantial communities of many other races

Government: A hereditary monarchy ruled by the royal family of Amberdale, whose bloodline is said to descend from Halen

Known For: Stable portals to other major cities, international trade, Ministers of Law, the world's largest temple of Bahamut, a powerful magical guild, and the widespread use of silver weapons



Embor stands along both banks of the River Darvos, its streets and districts spreading outward from the water. The city combines the grandeur and civic order of ancient Rome with the idealized chivalry of Camelot. Although Embor is neither the largest city nor the greatest naval power, it is widely considered the most advanced and civilized city in the world.

The city is divided among four distinct cultural districts. According to legend, when the Great Antimagic Wave swept across the world, four kings attempted to save their people by teleporting their capitals to safety. All four cities arrived in the same place, overlapping and merging upon the banks of the Darvos. Modern Embor grew from their combined remains, preserving elements of each kingdom's architecture, traditions, and customs.

Embor's wealth comes primarily from its stable portals, which connect it to the world's other major cities. These portals have created one of the most active trading environments anywhere in the world. Embor welcomes trade with all peoples it considers just and fair, bringing merchants, travelers, scholars, and craftspeople from many cultures into the city.

Justice is central to Embor's identity. Every person has the right to demand a trial, and traveling Ministers of Law settle disputes throughout the kingdom. Many Ministers are priests of Bahamut, whose largest temple stands within the city. The church's high clergy frequently advise the King and Queen. The Amberdale royal family rules from Embor and claims descent from Halen himself.

The city also supports the world's largest and most influential magical guild. Wizards, Warlocks, ritualists, and students of magical rites eventually find their way to Embor or the Gates of Embor. Theater, music, poetry, scholarship, martial training, and mercantilism are all encouraged, provided they contribute to the well-being of the kingdom.

Silver weapons are common throughout Embor. Werecreatures live beneath the city, within its catacombs, and throughout the surrounding kingdom. Many live openly and peacefully as accepted citizens, but silver remains a necessary defense against those who lose control or choose to prey upon others.

Settlements of the World

Gates of Embor

Population: Approximately 1,500

Primary Races: Primarily humans, with smaller communities of many other races

Government: Governed by the Crown Prince of Embor until he ascends to the throne

Known For: Its colossal river gates, control of passage along the River Darvos, powerful gate-wizards, military defenses, and its role as the guarded entrance to Embor



The Gates of Embor were founded to control access to the River Darvos and protect the route leading upriver to Embor. Every ship seeking to reach the capital must pass through the settlement and receive permission to continue.

The city takes its name from its colossal gates, which stretch approximately 900 feet across the river and rise 250 feet from their foundations, with 100 feet visible above the water. Powerful wizards control the immense mechanisms, opening the gates at sunrise and closing them again at sunset. Ships arriving after the gates close must anchor outside until morning.

The Crown Prince of Embor governs the city until ascending to the throne, giving each future monarch firsthand experience overseeing trade, law, defense, and diplomacy. Soldiers, customs officials, merchants, sailors, and magical practitioners make up much of the population.

Although considered a separate city by some, the Gates remain closely tied to Embor. They serve as its shield, checkpoint, and first point of contact with travelers arriving by sea.

Settlements of the World

Enstead

Population: Approximately 1,220

Primary Races: Primarily humans, with a smaller population of halflings

Government: Governed by Riffin, a male halfling sorcerer

Known For: Its ring of ancient stone monoliths, arcane leadership, and the ghost that haunts its streets at night

Enstead was built around a ring of ancient stone monoliths whose origins and purpose have long been forgotten. The stones predate every surviving record of the village and show no sign of weathering. Strange lights sometimes pass between them, and quiet voices can occasionally be heard within the circle when no one is present.

The village is governed by Riffin, a halfling sorcerer who studies the monoliths and monitors the arcane forces surrounding them. Whether he truly controls their power or merely understands their dangers better than anyone else remains uncertain.

Enstead is also infamous for the ghost that haunts its streets after nightfall. Its identity is unknown, and accounts of its appearance often conflict. Some describe a silent figure wandering between the stones, while others hear footsteps following them through empty streets. Whatever the truth, doors are locked before sunset, windows are shuttered, and few residents willingly venture outside until morning.



Settlements of the World

Oasis of Ker

Population: Unknown

Primary Races: Humans and elves

Government: No unified government; each nomadic people follows its own tribal leaders and traditions

Known For: The nomadic Peoples of Ker, strict codes of honor, rivalry between the human and elven tribes, desert survival, and their willingness to unite against outside threats



The Oasis of Ker is the most important gathering place within the Wastes of Ker, a harsh desert inhabited by two rival nomadic peoples. The oasis itself is sacred neutral ground, where even the fiercest enemies put down their weapons while within its boundaries. Violence there is considered a grave offense by both peoples.

The human tribes are commonly called the **People of Halen**. They travel in guarded caravans and rarely leave Ker without a specific purpose. Honor governs nearly every aspect of their lives, and even an unintended insult can lead to a challenge or bloodshed.

The elven tribes originally entered the desert intending to heal the damaged land. Over generations, they abandoned permanent settlements and became wandering clans. They also possess a strong code of honor, though it differs greatly from that of the People of Halen. Elven raiders freely steal animals and supplies from the human tribes, viewing such acts as tests of cleverness rather than crimes.

The humans find this infuriating but nevertheless respect the elves as worthy rivals and dependable allies against outsiders.

Settlements of the World

Passage

Population: Approximately 300

Primary Races: Primarily humans, with a small number of other races

Government: Governed by an elected village council

Known For: The only doorway through the immense ancient wall separating Embor from Barto, numerous abandoned buildings, surrounding farms, and travelers passing between the two kingdoms



Passage is a quiet settlement built beside the only known doorway passing through the immense ancient wall that separates the kingdom of Embor from Barto. The wall stretches from the lake near Stronghold all the way to the sea, standing approximately 100 feet tall and 50 feet wide across its extraordinary length. No surviving history identifies who constructed it, how it was built, or why Passage contains its only entrance.

The settlement was once home to far more people, but nearly three-quarters of its buildings now stand empty. Abandoned homes and shops line otherwise peaceful streets, leaving Passage with an unsettling sense that its residents simply disappeared. Those who remain rarely speak about the village's decline.

Farms have spread across the surrounding countryside and provide most residents with a dependable living. Traders, tinkers, and other travelers journeying between Barto and Embor must pass through the town, making it an important crossing despite its small population. Passage offers few comforts and even fewer explanations, but the settlement remains quiet—and most residents strongly prefer it that way.

Settlements of the World

Refield

Population: Approximately 6,100

Primary Races: Primarily humans, with smaller communities of other races

Government: Governed by a council of powerful merchants

Known For: Its labyrinth of winding streets, narrow passageways, dark alleys, influential merchant families, and complicated trade dealings

Refield is a crowded city of winding streets, narrow passageways, and dark alleys. Its districts grew without any central plan, creating a maze that confuses visitors and occasionally longtime residents. Shops, homes, taverns, and warehouses press tightly against one another, while covered walkways and hidden courtyards create countless shortcuts known only to locals.

The city is governed by a council of wealthy merchants who treat nearly every decision as a business negotiation. Laws tend to favor trade, property, and those wealthy enough to influence the council. Rival merchant families compete through pricing, political favors, espionage, and occasionally less lawful methods.

Nearly anything can be purchased in Refield if a buyer knows where to look. Legitimate merchants conduct business along the larger streets, while smugglers and unlicensed traders operate from back rooms and concealed markets.

Refield can be profitable for the clever and cautious, but newcomers should remember that getting lost is easy—and not every dark alley leads back to a familiar street.



Settlements of the World

Stronghold

Population: Approximately 5,000

Primary Races: Primarily dwarves, with small communities of humans and other races

Government: A traditional dwarven monarchy advised by the leaders of the major clans

Known For: Its underground realm, master stoneworkers, vast quantities of ale, formidable warriors, colossal mountain doors, and three 500-foot statues guarding its entrances



Stronghold is the ancestral home of most dwarves in the Eastern Realms. Even dwarves born far beyond its mountains can often trace their lineage to one of its ancient clans. The underground realm is renowned for masterful stonework, powerful warriors, vast halls, and enough ale to satisfy even the thirstiest clan gathering.

The mountain entrance is itself commonly called Stronghold and can be seen from miles away. Three 500-foot statues of revered dwarven ancestors stand above the two massive stone entrances. Each ancestor holds a great weapon raised high, while their free hands meet and stack together above the space between the doors. The monument represents the shared strength of the clans and their united defense of the realm.

Beyond the doors, broad passages descend into an immense network of halls, homes, workshops, mines, and breweries. Stronghold's people take pride in fine craftsmanship, strong drink, clan loyalty, and a worthy fight. Visitors are expected to respect all four—especially the ale.

Settlements of the World

Wheypool

Population: Approximately 1,200

Primary Races: Primarily humans and Dragonborn

Government: Governed by the Draconic Senate, a council of ten Dragonborn consisting of one representative from each of the five Chromatic and five Metallic ancestries

Known For: Its primary city floating above the ground and the second city that has gradually developed beneath it



Wheypool is divided between two settlements: an ancient city floating high above the ground and a larger community that has gradually developed beneath it. The lower city surrounds a long-dormant volcanic outcrop. Most of Wheypool's population now lives on the ground, where homes, markets, workshops, and farms continue to spread.

Travel to the floating city is tightly controlled. Guarded magical orbs transport approved visitors between the ground and the city above, but passage requires official permission or the payment of a substantial fee. Draconians can frequently be seen gliding down from the floating city. Most cannot truly fly and must use the guarded orbs to return.

Although most residents live below, nearly all of Wheypool's political power and wealth remain above. The floating city contains the estates of influential families and the chambers of the Draconic Senate. Its ten Dragonborn senators—one from each Chromatic and Metallic ancestry—govern both settlements.

In Wheypool, the city below supports daily life, but the city above decides what that life will be.