## Alchemy

Though the world of Bostonia has a level of technology similar to that of medieval Europe, there are several areas where the Bostonians are more advanced. One of the fields in which Bostonians excel is the field of alchemy. Part science and part magic, alchemy allows those who know its secrets to create potions. These potions range between mundane dyes and cures to magical elixirs of flight and strength.

### Alchemy Skill

The alchemy skill allows characters to identify, analyze and create potions. Alchemy can be a very powerful skill. The alchemist can heal and kill, as well as produce any number of “magical” effects. However, the practice of alchemy is expensive and difficult and requires specialized equipment and lots of time. The uses of the alchemy skill are detailed in the sections below.

#### Identifying Potions

Identifying a potion requires only a small amount to be used. Generally after identification, enough of the original potion is left to remain potent. The alchemist takes the test sample and sniffs it, tastes it, adds various chemicals to it and notes the reaction of the sample.

Identifying a potion can take anywhere from a few minutes, to several days. The DL for the skill test, and the time required to complete the identification are based on the commonality of the elixir. A successful test will tell the alchemist the use of the potion and its affects when applied or consumed. However, it will not tell the alchemist how to manufacture the potion.

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| **Commonality** | **Base Time** | **Identify DL** |
| Very Common | 10 minutes – 2 Hours (1d12x10 minutes) | 8 |
| Common | 1-6 Hours (1d6 hours) | 12 |
| Uncommon | 2-24 Hours (2d12 hours) | 16 |
| Rare | 1-6 Days (1d6 days) | 20 |
| Very Rare | 2-12 Days (2d6 days) | 24 |

#### Analyzing Potions

Alchemists can learn new recipes by studying recipes they find or acquire through trade. In addition, when an alchemist finds an unknown potion, he can study it, learn its ingredients and ultimately the secret of its creation.

Analyzing a potion takes several days, and unless sophisticated equipment is used, destroys the entire potion. The DL of an analysis test is the same as the DL for creating the potion, with an additional +2 to the DL because the alchemist is not working from a known recipe. A successful test means the alchemist can add the recipe to his list of known recipes and create the potion in the future.

#### Creating Potions

Each potion has a recipe, which is the list of reagents, processes and time required to create it. In addition, each potion has a DL. Given the mage has the reagents and equipment required to make the potion, a successful alchemy test creates the potion.

##### Beginning Recipes

A beginning alchemist will know a number of recipes based on his starting alchemy skill level. The recipes known can be determined in any fashion the GM and player can agree upon. During play, alchemists can buy, sell, trade, steal and analyze potions to get new recipes.

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| **Alchemy Level** | **Recipes** |
| 7 or less | 2 |
| 8-10 | 3 |
| 11-14 | 4 |
| 15-17 | 5 |
| 18-20 | 6 |
| 21+ | 7 |

In addition, certain character templates have extra recipes to start. See Talents for more details.

### Alchemical Experimentation

Though alchemy is a fairly well developed craft, it is still as much an art as it is a science. The literature on alchemy is filled with symbols, tables of reagents and their properties and scientific formulas. However, it is also steeped in mysticism and many of its processes are not well understood by even experienced alchemists. Because of this, alchemical formulas are rarely exact, and often allow much room for experimentation. Alchemists can alter existing recipes, making them more or less effective, or even create new recipes with unique effects.

#### Altering Potion Recipes

Invariably, there will be a time when an alchemist needs to make a potion, but lacks all the proper ingredients or a critical piece of equipment. Alchemy is not an exact science and so most recipes are subject to a little creative interpretation. This section contains guidelines for dealing with these situations. In all cases, the GM is the final arbiter as to whether an alteration is valid or not.

##### Substituting or Adding Ingredients

In general substituting ingredients is fairly straightforward. The alchemy list has several ingredients that indicate possible substitutions. Troll blood and giant blood are interchangeable in many recipes, as are lead and gold. In cases where there is a stated, or obvious (GM’s discretion) overlap of reagent properties, the substitution should produce the same type of potion with no penalties to the alchemy roll. In cases where the GM feels the substitution is stretching the similarity between reagents a –1-4 penalty should be applied to the alchemy roll, if the substitution is permitted at all.

In any case, the potion created will have the same type of effect, but of a different magnitude or duration. The direction of the change depends on whether the reagent used is of higher or lower quality than what is called for by the recipe.

**Example of Substituting Reagents**: Davross is creating a potion of Protection. He has no giant’s blood and no adventurers are willing to scrounge some up with him. He decides to substitute troll’s blood instead. This is a fairly common substitution so there will be no penalty. However, since the troll’s blood is of a lesser quality than what is called for, the GM rules that the potion created will have a duration half that of the original.

**Example of a “Stretch”**: Needing a potion of See Invisible, but having no grunj or cat’s eye, Davross decides to attempt to make the potion with the eye of a bird. He rationalizes this decision with the thought that birds typically have good eyesight, even if they do not see invisible things. The GM allows this, but determines that the substitution will cause Davross to have a –3 penalty to create the potion and that the resulting elixir will last only 10 minutes.

In addition, some potions benefit by adding reagents. Specifically, most potions will gain a slight increase in duration if ancient stone is added to the mix. Other effects are possible at the GM’s discretion.

##### Substituting for Processes and Equipment

Many recipes require one or more processes to be performed to prepare the potion. In most cases, these processes are necessary and the potion cannot be made without them. However, if the alchemist can think of a clever replacement, and the GM agrees, then the potion can be made with the substitute “process”. Magical spells are a good substitute for some alchemical processes and mundane devices can sometimes fill in for their alchemical counterparts.

**Example of Substituting for an Alchemical Process**: Davross is attempting to create a Detect Gold potion. The recipe calls for electrification, but Davross is away from his alchemy lab and does not have such a machine available. Fortunately for Davross, he is traveling with Jules Stormbringer who happens to be a mage. Jules possesses the Hand of Lightning rune and has several spells that allow him to produce an electrical spark similar to that required by the recipe. The GM rules that this is a valid substitution, but that the alchemy test to make the potion will be at a penalty, since Jules cannot control his lightning to the degree normally permitted by the electrifier.

Generally, substituting will mean a penalty to the alchemy skill test. This penalty will range from +1 to +4 to the alchemy DL, depending on how closely the substitute matches the items called for in the recipe. The GM should use his discretion and allow alchemist characters to be creative.

#### Creating New Recipes

Creating new potion recipes is a long and expensive process. Alchemical reagents are expensive and experimentation often takes several failures before producing a useful result. Generally, only the lucky, rich or well-funded alchemists can afford the materials and effort such research requires. However, creating a new and unique recipe can be rewarding as well. Many alchemists will pay or trade a great deal for proven recipes and they will pay a great deal more if the recipe is unique.

To create a new recipe, the alchemist must start with a desired effect. The GM will work with the player to determine a suitable reagent list based on the potion’s effects. The cost of these reagents determines the base cost of the recipe.

Once the cost of the recipe is determined, the alchemist must spend experience to purchase the talent Unique Recipe. Each free check spent on the talent represents one week of research and a cost in materials equal to the base cost of the potion. Once the talent is purchased, and the requisite time and money is spent, the alchemist can add the potion to his list.

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### The Traveling Alchemist

Alchemy is a difficult profession, as it requires quite a bit of cash, obscure reagents and lots of immobile equipment. Traveling (and this means most PC) alchemists have a particularly hard time since they do not have reliable access to a laboratory. However, that does not mean that alchemy is a useless skill for PCs to have. This section contains some guidelines and ideas for GMs on how to make PC alchemists viable and interesting characters.

##### The Traveling Bag

Generally, an alchemist on the road will not have a need (or the ability) to manufacture potions. However, finding mysterious reagents, residues and elixirs is a fairly common occurrence while adventuring. Analyzing such finds on the spot can be helpful to the success of an expedition or investigation.

The traveling bag is a minimal set of alchemical equipment that will permit an alchemist to use his skills to analyze and preserve samples while adventuring. Though the exact contents of such a bag varies from alchemist to alchemist, it will likely include a miniature analyzer, a minimal amount of glassware and tools, a supply of distilled water and/or alcohol and a supply of consumables used for testing. The total cost of such a bag is around 1500p – steep, but much less so than a stocked laboratory (and more mobile too).

##### Barter and Exchange

Alchemy is an advanced art in the world of Bostonia. Because of the mental and financial requirements, alchemists are not common. However, all of the major cities have one or more practicing alchemists, as do several large towns. Also, it is not uncommon for nobles to maintain court physicians. Many of these study alchemy for the benefit of their lord.

Most alchemists see others of like profession as sources of information and materials. Thus, a traveling alchemist can often barter goods, services or recipes in exchange for reagents and laboratory time. For instance, a shop-owning alchemist could hire a PC alchemist to gather rare or dangerous reagents; he could need some skilled help for a set of experiments, or just desire any new and interesting recipes known by the character. In exchange, the PC alchemist could receive potions, reagents or new recipes. More importantly, the PC could trade for access to the shop’s equipment for a few days, giving him the ability to practice and restock his potion supply.

Below are some suggested exchange rates. These will vary from shop to shop and based on circumstance and the trading skill of the shopkeeper and character.

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| **Bartered Item** | **Possible Return** |
| Normal reagent that is fairly common and not dangerous to obtain | Market value of the reagent |
| Rare reagent, dangerous or difficult for the shop alchemist to obtain | 1-5x market value of the reagent |
| Potion that the shop alchemist can make or easily obtain | ½-1x manufacturing cost of the potion |
| Potion that the shop alchemist cannot make or easily obtain | 1-3x manufacturing cost of the potion |
| New recipe | 5-10x manufacturing cost of the potion created by the recipe |
| 300-500p or two weeks of free labor | One week of lab time |