# The Complete Beginner’s Guide To Starting A Druid In D&D

[We’ve already looked at starting Wizards](https://geekandsundry.com/the-complete-beginners-guide-to-starting-a-wizard-in-dd/), so today we’re going to talk about Druids. Just like last time, we suggest you check out [great tips for new RPG players](http://geekandsundry.com/new-rpg-players-everything-you-need-to-know-about-character-building/) to help setup your character and those articles are a great place to start as they will help you get the most out of your new roleplay experience and get you thinking about your back story and how you want your Druid to play. This article is going to focus on filling in your stat sheet and deciding what spells you should take, instead of [your backstory](http://geekandsundry.com/5-steps-to-writing-a-killer-rpg-character-backstory/) (which is REALLY important).

**LET’S GET STARTED!**

Before jumping into the meat, I want to take a moment to describe what a Druid in D&D actually is. I would rather you choose the Druid with a full understanding of what that means, and not expect to have some crazy forest ninja who leads from the front (those are Rangers) like I did the first time I played. Don’t let the armour fool you!

At their core, Druids are nature wizards. They have the same amount and breakdown of spell slots as a Wizard does, with the only exception being that wizards learn one additional cantrip and have a much larger pool of spells to choose. What do druids get? All of their magic is focused on nature and life. Unlike wizards, druids can learn healing spells, can wear up to medium armour, carry a shield and even have some pretty cool weapon proficiencies (despite the fact they will not wear armour or use shields that are made of metal).

**STATISTICS**

Statistics in D&D represent how your character interacts with the world and what they can (and cannot) accomplish. Work with your DM to ensure you are generating your statistics the same as the rest of your group and whatever method chosen, you will generate 6 different numbers; 1 for each attribute. When you have your numbers, it’s important to prioritize your statistics to get the most out of them. First, take the highest statistic and use it for your Wisdom score. As you are able to wear medium armour, you want to make sure you are maxing your AC (how hard it is for creatures to hit you in combat) at a +2, which means giving it a 14 or 15, if you have it available. Finally, constitution should be one of your higher stats. This gives you more hit points every time you level and makes it harder for your character to die. Follow this as a good how to:

**Wisdom -> Dexterity (max 15) -> Constitution -> Charisma (trust me) -> Intelligence -> Strength**

**SPELLS**

At level 1, a Druid knows 2 cantrips and a number of level 1 spells equal to their level (1) + their Wisdom modifier. For the purpose of this article, let’s assume you have 5 spells and we’ll walk through some great choices.

For your starting cantrips, I recommend Shillelagh and Thorn Whip. I like Shillelagh at early levels because you can turn the club or quarterstaff (one of the starting weapons you should choose) into a magical weapon that does D8 damage. This is why you can treat Strength as a dump stat. The spell allows you to use your spell attack modifier for melee attacks and does a blanket D8. Keep in mind that you still add your spellcasting ability to damage rolls so as you level and that as it gets better, it will start adding some more damage. Thorn Whip is a typical ranged attack cantrip that has the bonus of being able to pull the affected target towards you, so make sure you are always hanging out at your maximum 30 feet (you are still a somewhat squishy nature Wizard).

You have healing spells, so ALWAYS take them. Your two first spells should be Healing Word and Cure Wounds. This gives you versatility to heal a target at range with Healing Word, or use the much more powerful Cure Wounds if you are close enough to touch the target. Do not run past the big angry melee monster to heal a party member unless you don’t mind getting punched but trust me when I say that you absolutely do mind being punched. Cure Wounds when it is safe to do so, Healing Word the rest of the time. Next you should look for a combat focused spell and unfortunately Druids only have Thunderwave to choose. Remember, Thunderwave can hurt your friends, so don’t kill the ox pulling your party’s wagon, like I did. I recommend Entangle next as it allows you to restrain an enemy, making all of the fighters in your group have advantage when attacking the target.

The last thing I will mention about Druid spells is that, unlike a Wizard’s spellbook, you’re not stuck knowing these spells forever (except cantrips, you break it, you bought it). During any long rest, a Druid can swap out their spells, so feel free to play around with all of them and see what you like.

**DRUID CIRCLE**

Playing with only the Player’s Handbook (as there are additional options in supplements and [Unearthed Arcanas](http://geekandsundry.com/tag/unearthed-arcana)), you have two choices; Circle of the Land or Circle of the Moon. Druids of the Circle of the Land embrace spellcasting and truly become nature Wizards. You learn a new cantrip, bringing your totals in line with those of Wizards, and at different levels you will learn new spells that do not count towards your limit and you always have prepared. The lists in the Player’s Handbook are cumulative so at 9th level, you will know all of them, all the time.

Druids of the Circle of the Moon focus on their shape shifting abilities. They can transform into larger creatures and at a much earlier level. Eventually, their beast attacks will count as magical and you can even turn into an elemental. Keep in mind that you don’t have to be a brown bear all the time and you can still provide a lot of use to the party in your non-Beast form by casting spells and using cantrips. Of course, it never hurts to have an emergency bear on stand by. No one expects an emergency bear.