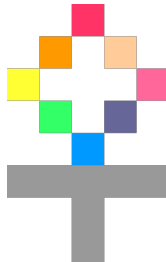


# Minima

**An homage to the 8-bit Ultima series  
for PICO-8**



**A Guide to Miskatonia  
as relayed by Feneric the Wanderer**

# Foreward

The land of Miskatonia has a long and storied history. It has seen cities come and go over the centuries as the unstoppable forces of both nature and economy have shaped the land and its people. For the most part its inhabitants have lived together in peace, and lively trade both by land and by sea has kept even its most remote communities from growing too distant.

Recently a darkness has invaded the land. An evil being known only as “Faxon” or “The Faxon” with skills in necromancy has decided to conquer Miskatonia. Together with the help of some daemons and local warlocks of an evil disposition, Faxon has been training sorcerers to be necromancers, raising the dead to attack the living, and driving orcs, goblins, trolls, and even more horrible creatures out into the countryside to prey on the peaceful population of Miskatonia.

Miskatonia is in need of a hero to cure it of this blight. Can you be that hero?

## The Land of Miskatonia





A traveler journeying through Miskatonia needs to be prepared for many difficulties. This was always so even in the time prior to Faxon. There is great variation in temperature, rainfall, and

elevation across the land, and this naturally leads to many different kinds of vegetation and wildlife.

Traveling through the plains 🌾 is easy, low scrub 🌳, desert 🏜️, and tundra ❄️ harder, dense forests 🌲 harder still, and foothills 🏔️ and mountains 🏔️ yet more difficult. Each takes progressively more time to cross. The occasional mountain peak makes travel slower still. Crossing bodies of water 🌊 cannot be done on foot; it will require some sort of ship. Even then, one must always watch out for natural dangers like whirlpools 🌪️. Swamps 🌿 are neither fully land nor fully water and while they can be crossed they can have a detrimental impact to the health of the crosser.

Wildlife like serpents, sea serpents, giant rats, giant spiders, giant snakes, giant squids, giant scorpions, and even krakens have always posed challenges to travelers, too. Additionally the numbers of thieves, cutthroats, pirates, bandits, and other types of rogues who would prey on the stray traveler have increased since Faxon has appeared. Travel in Miskatonia has never been safe and easy; it is now just much more difficult and dangerous.

# The People of Miskatonia

The people of Miskatonia mostly live in towns , castles , and villages . The occasional shrine  still stands from long ago, but such structures are small and no longer centers of civilization.

Many honest occupations are common, ranging from merchants to fighters to smiths to grocers to shepherds to mages to medics to jesters. Of course different types of communities favor different types of occupations; while food and drink may be found in virtually every kind of community no matter how small, hospitals and shops of a more industrial nature are far more commonly found in larger communities.

The unit of currency in Miskatonia is the gold piece, and all shops and services in all communities accept it as payment.

Individuals scattered throughout the communities may have information that will help defeat Faxon; likewise the bars and pubs of Miskatonia are good places to listen for scuttlebutt and rumors.

## Weapons & Armor

Many communities in Miskatonia are known for their fine armor and/or weapons.

Common weapons include daggers, clubs, axes, and swords. Each is significantly more lethal than the prior, and every fighter quickly tries to earn the gold required for a sword. Rumors persist of still stronger one-of-a-kind magical weapons.

Common armor types include cloth, leather, chain mail, and plate. Analogous to the weapons, each offers far greater protection than the prior, and conservative warriors will not dare tread into the deepest depths of dungeons without wearing at least chain mail.

The beginning adventurer should seek to obtain a weapon and armor as soon as possible. Even just a dagger and cloth are far better than bare hands and naked back. An unprepared traveler will quickly fall prey to monsters, villains, and wildlife.

Combat effectiveness is not just governed by armor worn and weapon wielded; the strength, dexterity, and level of the combatant can be even more significant. The best warriors strive to improve all of these in addition to acquiring the best armor and weapons.

## **Magic**

The adept of Miskatonia will become versed in six spells of varying power and purpose.

There are three spells related to healing. They are *cure*, *medic*, and *savior*. *Cure* will get rid of poisoning or illness, and is a little harder to cast than *medic*. *Medic* and *savior* both heal injuries; *Savior* is much harder to cast but far more effective. It gains its name because it can be a savior to the caster during battle.

There are two spells related to causing damage to a foe. They are *attack* and *wound*. *Attack* launches a small short-range magical missile at an opponent while *wound* launches a far larger ball of fire. *Wound* is far harder to cast but also far more effective.

The final spell is *exit*. Who among even the greatest of warriors has never gotten lost, or even worse, trapped down in the bowels of a dungeon? *Exit* provides an immediate escape, regardless of depth or situation.

Effective spell casting is based upon both the intelligence and level of the caster. The wisest mages strive to improve both of these to increase the power of their spells.

## **Monsters & Villains**

Since the scourge of Faxon has landed upon Miskatonia, many new monsters have appeared. There even appear to be organized communities

of them now living in dungeons 🏰 and towers 🏰 scattered across the landscape.

Some are relatively weak like goblins and kobolds. Their bigger relatives orcs are worse, and still bigger and more dangerous are hobgoblins, bugbears, and trolls. Ettins are rare but worse still.

Evil humans susceptible to the draw of gold also patrol the countryside causing mischief. In addition to the regular rogues, cutpurses, and pirates that have always been found, there are now Faxon's own sorcerers, warlocks, and necromancers. There are also occasional assassins and even ninja specifically looking to eliminate challenges to Faxon's authority.

Undead including skeletons, zombies, wights, ghouls, phantoms, ghosts, and wraiths have all been raised by Faxon and Faxon's necromancers.

Daemons and even devils also fly across the land. They serve as Faxon's generals and check on the chaos being caused. They are fast and strong and lethal to ill-equipped travelers.

There are also other rarer creatures that now plague our landscape. There has even recently been talk of dragons.

Miskatonia needs a hero *now*.

# Controls

Minima makes use of virtually all the standard controls available in the PICO-8 environment. Whereas the old-school Ultimas used most of the keys on the keyboard for dedicated commands starting with the respective letter like *(a)ttack*, *(c)ast*, *(e)nter*, *(k)limb*, *(d)escend*, *(b)oard*, etc., in the PICO-8 environment only a handful of keys are supported so our commands are a little more contrived and we need to batch them together.

Still other commands are provided through the game menu.

## Minima Keyboard Commands

Use the cursor keys for movement.

**a:** attack

**c:** cast spell

**d:** dialog, talk, buy

**e:** enter, board, mount, climb, descend

**p:** pause, bring up game menu

**f:** fountain drink; force chest

**s:** sit & wait

**w:** wearing & wielding

**x:** examine, look (repeat to search)



For commands with options (like casting or buying) use the first character of the desired item from the list, or anything else to cancel. To make this a little bit more clear, when a first character is needed it will be shown in a larger font than the following characters.

The game menu provides the ability to save and load games in addition to an in-game command reference. Note that due to PICO-8 restrictions saving is not absolute; character statistics and general wandering monster locations will be saved, but monsters will restore to full strength, communities will restore to their original conditions, and parked ships will be lost after saving and reloading.

Note too that on the PocketC.H.I.P. the keyconfig command will likely need to be run prior to playing Minima in order to ensure that the keys line up as listed above as PocketC.H.I.P. defaults differ from a regular keyboard.

## **Copyright Notice**

While it should be obvious, I will further state plainly here that no ownership or copyright is claimed over anything related to Ultima. This is a fan creation that exists as an homage to the original wonderful 8-bit creations of Richard Garriot (a.k.a. Lord British) as ported to the

Commodore 128 with the help of folks like Chuck Bueche (a.k.a. Chuckles) and David Shapiro (a.k.a. Dr. Cat) along with music by Ken Arnold. I believe that as of this writing all of the Ultima games and associated trademarks are owned by Electronic Arts, and I make no adverse claims here otherwise.

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This Minima Guidebook to Miskatonia was originally written in September of 2018.