Overland Travel

The following rules are modifications to the standard rules and guidelines relating to overland travel laid out in the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide*. They are intended for play groups that wish to make long distance, overland travel a more meaningful part of their adventures.

Rations and Long Rests

These rules assume characters don't automatically regain all their health and half their hit die over a long rest.

In order to regain hit points and hit die over a long rest, a character must consume additional food and water beyond the normal day's worth of rations.

> ### Variant Encumbrance Rules
> In order to to make the amount of rations players choose to carry with them a meaningful choice, it is recommended you use the variant encumbrance rules on page 176 of the PHB

Regaining Hit Die

For every pound of food and gallon of water consumed throughout the day, the character can regain 1 hit die over their next long rest, up to a maximum of half their total character level.

Regaining Hit Points

Characters still must consume a baseline of 1 pound of food and 1 gallon of water to avoid exhaustion effects as stated in the PHB. However, if a character wishes to regain hit points over a long rest, an additional 1 pound of food and 1 gallon of water must be consumed for every 1/4 of the character's maximum hit points that is restored (rounded up).

Travel Activities

The following rules are a change to the navigation and foraging activities described in the DMG.

Navigation

If the players are attempting any sort of overland travel in which they don't have an obvious path to follow, such as following a road or river, at least on of the characters must take up the activity of navigation in order to prevent the players from becoming lost.

One Wisdom (Survival) check is made per day by one of the party's characters to determine whether they stay on course or get lost. The DM makes this roll in secret at the end of each day of travel, and the DC is determined by the type of environment the group is traveling through.

If the party traveled the whole day at a slow pace, add +5 to the result rolled. If the party traveled at a fast pace at any point during the day, apply -5 to the result rolled. If the party has an accurate map of the area, make this check with advantage. On a success, the group successfully makes travel progress towards their destination, and the process repeats until the players reach their destination.

Becoming Lost

If the party fails their Wisdom (Survival) check to navigate, the DM randomly determines the direction the party traveled in, with the players unaware that they are lost. It is possible the party will happen to travel in the correct direction, in which case they continue to make progress towards their destination.

This process is repeated at the end of each day of travel, and if the player's are lost, they won't realize it until they pass another Wisdom (Survival) check, or they notice inconsistencies in their journey with what they were expecting. If they pass their Wisdom (Survival) check while lost, the DM can inform the players they are lost either at the end of their day of travel or at the beginning of the next day.

Discovering they are lost this way does not necessarily mean the players now know where they are. If there are visible landmarks that are consistent with their knowledge of the area, the players may be to reorient themselves, or at least make an educated guess as to where they ended up.

In any case, a group that realizes it is lost can attempt to set a new course, repeating navigation the process described above. Options for setting a new course could include backtracking until they are back on route, or traveling in the direction of a known landmark so as to reorient their location. If the players drew a map as they traveled, then this can be used to provide advantage on their navigation checks when backtracking.

Foraging

A foraging check should be made once per day by any character participating in the activity, using Wisdom (Survival) as stated in the DMG.

In order to add more challenge to managing resources while traveling, change the results of a successful forraging check to provide 1 pound of food and 1 gallon of water on a success. For ever 5 over the foraging DC the character rolls, an additional pound of food and gallon of water is harvested.

Foraging is best done when the party is traveling at a slow pace. If the party travels at a medium pace, checks to forage are made with disadvantage, and if the party is moving at a fast pace, foraging is impossible

Random Encounters

The DMG contains guidelines on rolling for random encounters while the players are traveling, including how often the DM should roll to determine if there's a random encounter based on how much activity is in the area. The following rules define more specific guidelines for how DMs can determine when to roll for random encounters while the players are doing long stretches of overland travel.

Environment Danger Rating

When the players are traveling through an environment where they may run into a potentially hostile or hazardous encounter, set that environment's danger rating on a scale of 1 to 5 to determine how likely running into such an encounter is.

1: Civilized Territory or Empty Wasteland

Environments such as these are ether primarily occupied by non hostile creatures that maintain it, or they are so empty players aren't likely to run into many hostile forces. Rural farmlands and trackless deserts would be examples of such environments. In such environments players should have an average of 1 encounter per day.

2: Mundane Wilderness

These environments are typically uncivilized frontiers that have a relatively low amount of hostile creatures or hazards. Most mundane forests and mountain passes would be examples of such environments. In such environments players should have an average of 2 encounters per day.

3: Hostile Wilderness

These environments are typically filled hostile inhabitants and hazards that make them dangerous to cross. Jungles, fetid swamps, and forests with an unusually high number of predators would be examples of such environments. In such environments players should have an average of 3 encounters per day.

4: Enemy Territory

These environments are typically filled inhabitants that will actively hunt the players should their presence be detected, or they are supernatural locations, often on other planes. A forest home to goblin tribes, a haunted moor riddles with ghosts, or an enchanted forest in the Feywild could all be examples of such an environment. In such environments players should have an average of 4 encounters per day.

5: Extremely Hostile Territory

These environment either represent the most hostile locales in the multiverse, or they are places under the control of a hostile force that is actively hunting the players. The lower levels of the Abyss or the territory of a hobgoblin nation state that's actively hunting down the players could both be examples of such an environment. In such environments players should have an average of 5 to 6 encounters per day.

When to Roll for An Encounter

As per the DMG, how often the DM rolls for a random encounter depends on how active the environment. You can use the table below to match the environment's danger rating with how much time in it should warrant a random encounter roll.

Random Encounter Rolling

Danger Rating	Number of Hours Per Roll
1	12
2	8
3	6
4	4
5	2

To roll for a random encounter, roll a **d20**. If the result is **11 or higher**, a random encounter occurs.

Deviation from the DMG

The DMG states that a random encounter occurs on a roll of 18 or higher. This was changed to make random encounters more common, and thus more impactful

Alternative Encounter Rolling Rules

If you would rather roll for encounters the same number of times per day, regardless of the environment, this alternative rule will provide a similar amount of encounters per day for any given environment.

For every 4 hours the players spend in a given environment, roll a d6. If the result is less than or equal to the environment's danger rating, roll for a random encounter.

Encounter Tables

The DMG provides guidelines for using random encounter tables and creating your own for any given environment. If you are creating your own, it is recommended that the encounters be almost entirely potential threats or hazards so that the random encounters appropriately reflect the danger level of the environment. For rules on determining when the players come across potentially positive encounters and opportunities, see the following section.

Random Opportunities

The random encounter tables assume the players will be encountering hostile or hazardous forces during their travels. If you wish to include potentially gainful encounters in the players travels, you can roll for those separately and even create a separate table for such encounters to roll on.

Opportunities differ from traditional encounters in that they can often provide a positive benefit to players. If they pose a threat, facing that threat is optional, and there is usually a reward in store for those who face it successfully. Random opportunities can range from encountering traveling NPCs to discovering abandoned ruins.

Because they are not inherently detrimental to the players, the likelyhood of running into a random opportunity is independent of the danger rating of an environment. For example, in civilized farmland, encounters are unlikely, but the players are likely to run into many potentially helpful traveling NPCs.

Rolling for Random Opportunities

Rolling for random opportunities can be done in the same way as rolling for random encounters. If you wish to customize the likelyhood of the players encountering a random opportunity to a given environment, you can give it an "opportunity rating" in the same way you give it a danger rating, and then roll for opportunities accordingly. If you don't have a rating in mind, 3 makes for a good default.

Opportunity Tables

Opportunity tables should mostly include non-hostile NPCs and interesting landmarks that help reinforce the narrative of the land the players are traveling. These encounters help break up the monotony of travel, and NPCs and landmarks can also aid players in their navigation.

However, these tables should also contain opportunities for the players to pursue the occasional side quest on their travels. This could include an NPC asking for aid, or some interesting ruin off in the distance. These opportunities are the most likely to provide significant rewards to the players but come at the cost of side tracking them from their journey. These sorts of opportunities should also make up the minority of those found on your table, resulting in them only coming up an average of every one or two days of travel.

Modifications to Player Options

The following are rules modifications to player class features, background features, and spells that would otherwise trivialize much of the challenge of overland travel. While the players will certainly gain access to powers as they level that will greatly reduce the burden of traversing large dangerous lands, the abilities are available to players at such a low level, that they have the potential to almost entirely remove the challenge of overland travel from the beginning of the game. The following changes are meant to keep the abilities useful while preventing from nullifying travel challenges entirely.

Class Features

Ranger Feature: Natural Explorer

You are particularly familiar with one type of natural environment and are adept at traveling and surviving in such regions. Choose one type of favored terrain: arctic, coast, desert, forest, grassland, mountain, swamp, or the Underdark. When you make an Intelligence or Wisdom check related to your favored terrain, your proficiency bonus is doubled if you are using a skill that you're proficient in.

While traveling for an hour or more in your favored terrain, you gain the following benefits:

- Difficult terrain doesn't slow your group's travel.
- You have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to navigate the terrain
- Even when you are engaged in another activity while traveling (such as foraging, navigating, or tracking), you remain alert to danger.
- If you are traveling alone, you can move stealthily at a normal pace.
- When you forage, add a +5 to the result of your Wisdom (Survival) check.
- While tracking other creatures, you also learn their exact number, their sizes, and how long ago they passed through the area.

You choose additional favored terrain types at 6th and 10th level.

What Changed?

Rather than never becoming lost, Rangers just have advantage on their navigation checks, and rather than finding double rations when foraging, the essentially find an extra person's worth.

Background Features

Outlander Feature: Wanderer

You have an excellent memory for maps and geography, and you can always recall the general layout of terrain, settlements, and other features around you. As a result, you are treated as always having a mental map of any area you've been before, giving yourself or an allied navigator advantage on checks to navigate such terrain. Additionally, you have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to forage for food and water in wilderness environments.

Spells

Create or Destroy Water

1st level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V S M (a droplet of blessed water worth at least 1g if creating water which the spell consumes, or enchanted dust worth at least 1g if destroying water which the spell consumes)
Duration: Instantaneous

You either create or destroy water.

Create Water. You create up to 10 gallons of clean water within range in an open container. Alternatively, the water falls as rain in a 30-foot cube within range, extinguishing exposed flames in the area.

Destroy Water. You destroy up to 10 gallons of water in an open container within range. Alternatively, you destroy fog in a 30-foot cube within range.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, you create or destroy 10 additional gallons of water, or the size of the cube increases by 5 feet, for each slot level above 1st.

CREATE FOOD AND WATER

3rd level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: : V S M (a pound of the food that you wish to replicate, a cup of water, and piece of silverware worth at least 5g all of which the spell consumes)
Duration: Instantaneous

You replicate up to 45 pounds of nonmagical food and 30 gallons of nonmagical water on the ground or in containers within range, the magical food is enough to sustain up to fifteen humanoids or five steeds for 24 hours. The food spoils if uneaten after 8 hours and is no longer nourishing. The water is clean and doesn't go bad.

GOODBERRY

1st level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (A sprig of mistletoe worth at least 1g, which the spell consumes)
Duration: Instantaneous

Up to 5 berries appear in your hand and are infused with magic for the duration. A creature can use its action to eat one berry. Eating a berry restores 1d4 hit points, and the berry provides enough nourishment to sustain a creature for one day.

The berries lose their potency if they have not been consumed within 8 hours of the casting of this spell.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the spell creates one more berry for each slot above 1st.