

CAIRN Adventurer's Guide

Moduar Rules and Procedures for Cairn RPG by Adam Hensley. Text licensed under CC-BY-SA 4.0

This document lists some optional, modularly-designed rules and procedures for Cairn. They're designed to be plug-n-play, so just grab what you like and discard the rest. They aren't critical to the structure of the game and are completely optional.

Note: L is used in reference to player level. Example: A level 2 player would see Ld6 and roll 2d6.

Credits and Inspiration: "Dungeon Procedurs" by Skerples (Many Rats on Sticks) Necropraxis, Failure Tolerated, The Luminescent Lich, Ten Foot Polemic, Xenio in a Bottle)

NPC Reactions

When the PCs encounter an NPC whose reaction to the party is not obvious, the Warden may roll 2d6 and consult the following table.

- 2: Hostile
- 3-5: Wary
- 6-8: Curious
- 9-11: Friendly
- 12: Helpful

What Do They Want? Most NPCs will have something they want. Roll a d10 on the following table to find out what they want.

D10. Want: Description

1. Food: You can distract them with rations, point them towards corpses, cast a food illusion.
2. Aid: They could be hurt and need medical aid of some sort.
3. Money: They want money. Extortion, toll, tax, tribute, or greed.
4. Valuables: Rare or unique items. Excellent pairings can result in their friendship or gaining as allies.
5. Territory: This is their turf. They will defend it, ask you to leave, or to prove why you should be able to pass through.
6. Info: They want to know about a nearby NPC, faction, landmark, or location.
7. Help: They need something from nearby, probably something dangerous. Kill something, clear out an area, retrieve something.
8. Trade: They have random equipment (from each category on equipment tables) and want to trade or sell. 1 in 6 chance they have something rare or valuable. Good business means possible friendship.
9. Mission: They're in service to another nearby NPC or faction and are helping to achieve a goal for them.
10. Directions: They are lost and need directions somewhere, or help being escorted there safely.

Dungeon Exploration

Dungeon Turns

A dungeon turn is approximately 10 minutes. Dungeon exploration can be turned into a subsystem of managing resources, making strategic decisions, and structuring the dungeon crawl into a sort of mini-game. There is an element of pushing your luck as you spend more time searching, checking for hidden things, and lingering in dangerous locations. Time spent always has a cost, and that cost is provoking an encounter roll. These encounters can involve running into monsters, but can also challenge or reward the party in other ways.

Sequence of Play Per Turn

1. Encounter Roll: GM makes a d6 loaded encounter roll once every few dungeon turns, or at their discretion.
2. Actions: The party decides what action to take. (e.g. moving, searching, listening, entering or exiting rooms).
3. Description: GM describes and resolves what happens. If encounters were rolled, they happen here. If (1) was rolled on the encounter die, make a reaction roll and proceed from there.
4. End of turn: GM updates time, and management of light, food, need to rest, or any sort of usage dice rolls can be made.

Dungeon Turn Movement

- Players can move carefully about 200 ft. in a 10 minute turn. Players moving carefully spot signs of all traps. Traps should be designed to be disarmed or subverted with ingenuity and

creative thinking using common sense and inventory.

- Players can quickly move 600 ft. in a 10-minute turn. Players moving quickly may get a chance to roll under WIL to notice a trap (GM discretion). Otherwise, they may trigger a trap if it is concealed (usually 1-2 on a d6, adjust as necessary for trap deadliness)

Searching

- A quick search takes 1 minute, covers roughly a 30x30' space, and reveals only the most obvious information.
- A detailed search takes 10 minutes (1 turn), covers roughly a 30x30' space, and reveals most hidden information, at the GM's discretion.
- You can replace 30x30 with small, medium, and large rooms, and require additional turns to complete a detailed search.

Loaded Encounter Roll

Roll a d6 encounter dice every 2 or 3 rounds (at your discretion, adjust as needed) or when players make noise. Only a roll of 1 will result in an encounter, and they won't always be hostile. Roll the reaction dice to see their disposition, and remember that they're already doing something. Optionally, you can roll non-loaded encounters with only an encounter occurring on a roll of 1, while nothing else happens otherwise.

1. Encounter (roll on encounter table or choose, roll reactions + wants)

2. Sign (Clue, “spoor”, track, abandoned lair, scent, victim, droppings, etc.)
3. Locality (context-dependent timer, water rising, ritual completing, The party’s surroundings shift or escalate in some way.)
4. Exhaustion (rest next round or deprived)
5. Expiration (Ongoing effects end, light usage roll, resource usage, bellies rumble.)
6. Discovery or Treasure (The party finds something interesting and possibly beneficial.)

Light

Torches, lanterns, and other radial sources of light illuminate 40’ clearly and provide dim outlines and shadows for a further 40’. In the dark, light sources are visible miles away. Standard torches will last about 6 turns, or 1 hour, before they burn out.

Wilderness Exploration

Hex Crawling

Each hex represents 6 miles. An adventuring day is divided into 6 turns of approximately 4 hours each. Two of these phases, approximately 8 hours, must be spent sleeping in order to avoid becoming deprived. In each turn, the following procedure is followed:

1. Exploration Action: The party decides on one exploration action for that turn.
2. Event Roll: The GM rolls on the event die for encounters and other random events.

3. Resolution: The action and event rolls are resolved.

Exploration Actions

The party may choose one of the following standard actions each 4-hour wilderness turn.

- Travel: Exiting a hex and moving into an adjacent one.
- Roads: The party travels through two tiles (three if mounted).
- Standard Terrain: 1 tile is traversed.
- Difficult Terrain: 1/2 tile is traversed. (requires 8 hours, or 2 turns)
- Treacherous Terrain: 1/4 tile is traversed. (requires 16 hours, or 4 turns)
- Getting Lost: There is a 1-in-6 chance, when traveling off-road, of getting lost. This is increased to 2-in-6 in tiles classified as difficult or treacherous. An experienced woodsman or explorer decreases the chance of getting lost by 1-in-6.
- Off-Course: When lost, assign a number to each adjacent tile starting from the top (north) as 1, continuing clockwise. Roll 1d6 and move the players one tile off-course that direction.
- Weather: Adverse weather can optionally increase the chances of getting lost or the difficulty of the terrain, at your discretion.
- Reorientation: If players get lost, they will need to spend the next turn reorienting themselves.
- Explore: Looking for interesting features within a hex. There is a 4-in-6 chance of discovering the main location in the hex description. Difficult terrain

reduces this to 3-in-6. An experienced woodsman increases the chance by 1-in-6.

- **Locate:** Looking for something which was previously encountered in a hex. The basic chance is 5-in-6 or 4-in-6 in difficult terrain. An experienced woodsman, tracker, or navigator increases the chance by 1-in-6.
- **Interact:** Staying in the current location (e.g. exploring a dungeon, town, etc).
- **Camp:** Resting and/or sleeping. See later for details on resting in the wilds.
- **Forage:** Hunt, fish, or forage for food. There is a basic 3-in-6 chance of success. An experienced hunter, angler, or woodsman increases the chance.

Event Roll

The GM rolls a d6 and consults the table appropriate to the party's location.

1. **Encounter:** Roll on an encounter table for that terrain type or location. Don't forget to roll for reaction and want.
2. **Sign:** Clue, spoor, or indication of nearby encounter, locality, hidden feature, or information about a nearby hex.
3. **Locality:** Shifts in weather, terrain, or other local changes.
4. **Expiration:** Resources are drained in some way. Roll a d4. 1-2: Exhaustion (rest for a turn or add 1 fatigue); 3-4: Hunger (Eat a ration or add 1 fatigue)
5. **Discovery:** Discover something useful such as food, treasure, or other resources.

6. **Hidden Feature:** The main feature of the hex is discovered, or, choose or roll randomly for a unique hex feature from a random table. Options include small dungeons, secret areas, factions, etc.

Leveling Up

Experience Points (XP)

Gain a new level every 1,000 XP. Optionally increase the XP needed each level. A good place to start is adding between 500-1,000 XP each level.

Gaining XP

Experience points are gained at a rate of 1 XP for every 1 gold (or your game's standard currency) retrieved and returned to the safety of a town or your base of operations.

Increasing HP and Ability Scores
Each time you level up: * Roll 1d6 and add to your HP total. * Re-roll each Ability Score with 3d6. If a result is higher than your current score, increase that Ability Score by 1.

Carousing

You can spend your hard-earned credit on experiences rather than on things. Carousing lets you double-dip your experience by spending it at a 1-1 ratio. The more you spend, the more impactful or eventful your experience. Carousing represents having a good time, donating your money, investing in a "business opportunity", or some other experience involving your wealth and blowing off steam. Alter these tables or add your own mishaps and

fortunes. They generally represent getting into shenanigans while inebriated but can also be sober celebratory outcomes.

Carousing Roll

Declare the amount of gold you're spending and roll 2d6 to see how your evening went.

2d6: How Things Went

- 2-5: Experience is gained. However, you've all made fools of yourself in some manner. Roll on the carousing mishaps table.
- 6-9: Experience is gained.
- 10+: Experience is gained. You've all had a stroke of good luck! Roll on the carousing fortunes table!

Mishaps and Fortunes

Roll 1d6, adding + 1 to the results for every 100 gp you carouse with (increase this amount at your preference, or as players level up.) More decadent partying comes with the potential of more volatile or legendary consequences. See the mishaps and fortunes table on the next page to see what happens. Alternatively, just roll a 1d12 and check the results.

D6+: Mishaps

1. Start a brawl. You all are involved in a brawl that gets out of control. Start the next adventure with a black eye and -1 STR per level. The local tavern keeper is no longer quite as amicable.
2. Minor misunderstanding with local authorities that you're unable to smooth over. You all spend the next 1d6 days in jail. Now seen as local troublemakers.
3. One of you insulted a local person of rank. They will hold a grudge unless you all publicly apologize and humiliate yourself before them.
4. Hangover from hell. The first 2d6 hours adventuring the next day are done with disadvantage to all STR saves.
5. Gambling binge. Your party owes a collective debt equal to roughly half the amount spent carousing to someone you'd rather not own money to.
6. You've ruined the local economy! Your excess spending means that all prices are now double until next session.
7. Major misunderstanding with local authorities. All equipment is confiscated until fines and bribes totaling 1d6 x 100 gold is paid.
8. While in a drunken stupor and a spot of trouble, you sought refuge in a church. They took care of you but now as repayment have begun hounding you to perform a charitable act.
9. Bad Investment. Invest all your spare coin in some smooth-tongued merchant's scheme. Turns out it's a sham. One of the towns merchants flees.
10. Due to a lost game of darts and a few inflammatory remarks at the tavern, you make bitter enemies with a local rival adventuring party.
11. Beaten and robbed. You are waylaid by a bunch of thugs during your drunken carousing. Collectively lose 1d100 coins.

12. The roof! The roof! The roof is on fire! Accidentally start a conflagration Roll 1d6 twice. (1-2) burn down your favorite inn (3-5) some other den of ill repute is reduced to ash (6) a big chunk of town goes up in smoke. (1-2) no one knows it was you guys (3-5) one other person knows you did it (6) everybody knows.

Fortunes

- Jackpot! One of you strikes it rich at the gambling tables! Gain level x 100 gold.
- Gain a local reputation as the life of a party! Those of ill repute are much more friendly and see you as one of their own.
- Whoa what a trip! The strange powder you sniffed revealed mystic truths about the universe. Young people in the settlement see you as cool and not one of the squares. (Optional: gain a random spell or generate a Maze Rats spell, either one-use or permanent.)
- Well fed, well rested, and ready to go! The next day of adventuring all saves are done with advantage. Citizens arrest! You catch some criminal in the act and are able to restrain them until the authorities arrive. You are seen as hero's by the settlement for a short time.
- The local blacksmith, due to your influx of cash, has been able to order in an exquisite weapon that he's willing to sell to you guys for the normal price.
- The local clergy see you guys as protectors of the settlement. They offer you a blessing before your next adventure. Impressed by your ability to drink for days and keep standing, a local hireling of high repute is willing to join you on your next adventure if you wish at no initial cost.
- Killer Investment! Invest all your spare cash in some smooth-tongued merchant's scheme. Turns out it's real! It returns 50% profits next d4 sessions.
- Local celebrity. Your ability to carouse with the common folk as lead them to see you as one of their own. The peasants of the settlement are thankful to have you around. You receive free room and board in this settlement of poor quality.
- Hot Goss. Your time spent carousing has let you in on some juicy gossip. You learn one major secret about a person in authority.
- Heroic Carousing! It was a night of truly epic debauchery. Everyone roll a d6 to see how your legend grew. (1) Re-roll HP for that level, take new result if higher, increase by 1 if lower. (2) Gain 1 STR (3) Gain 1 DEX (4) Gain 1 WIL, (5) Gain a random spell book (6) Gain Ld6 x 100 GP.

Vices

Vices serve as both character growth and a way to pressure PC's pockets and keep them continuing to adventure and acquire wealth to support their vice. If PCs start out with a group debt, a vice is a nice way to continue bleeding their wealth after they pay off their debt.

Gaining Vices

Players can roll for a vice during character creation, or acquire one through the fiction of play. Roll a d8 for a random vice. Otherwise, consult the triggers for suggestions on what might trigger a character to develop a vice. You can require them failing a WIL save after hitting a trigger if you wish. Alternatively they can willingly take on a vice they find interesting.

Satisfying Vices

Vices must be appeased once a week or the PC must pass a WIL save. Failing a WIL save adds the deprived condition until they satisfy their vice. Appeasing a vice should cost money in some way, whether directly from money or indirectly via resources.

D10. Vice: Description. (Trigger) Satisfying the vice.

1. Gambling: Playing cards, throwing dice, or other forms of risking money to games of chance. (Major win or loss at a high stakes game or wager.) Gamble with at least 10% of your personal wealth, wager a unique/useful/powerful item, put other major stakes up.
2. Alcohol: Drinking ale, wine, spirits, or other alcoholic beverages that intoxicate your senses. (Consuming large amounts of booze, drinking heavily for multiple days.) Binging heavily, buying rounds for the whole bar, brewing your own booze.
3. Drugs: Narcotic delights to smoke, snort, or consume in search of oblivion. (Indulging in addictive substances, overuse of

stims/ chemicals/boosters.) Regularly indulging in your addiction, massive binges, expensive synthetics or cures.

4. Lust: Pleasures of the flesh such as dalliances with strangers or paid sex workers. (Regular visits to brothels, unique or novel sexual experiences.) Indulging with new partners, frequent copulation, finding lusty or kinky novelties.
5. Luxury: Expensive clothing, decadent food, art, and general opulence. (Experiencing massive decadence, acquiring rare forms of wealth.) Blowing your money on ostentatious displays, buying expensive clothes/food/art, patronage of an artist or savant.
6. Weird: Consorting with devils, contacting unknown entities, and performing forgotten or forbidden rituals. (Consorting with strange entities, exposure to forces beyond comprehension.) Discovering forbidden knowledge/magic/items, growing weirder, gaining corruption, learning weird secrets.
7. Obligation: Devotion to a cause, organization, charity, or family. (Experiencing charity or aid, supporting another through difficulty, developing a strong sense of duty.) Supporting your obligation through financial assistance or help.
8. Violence: Spectating extreme violence or participating in the bloodshed yourself. (Regularly spectating or participating extreme violence, especially as entertainment.) Watch or bet on bloodsports, participate in

bloodsports, commit an act of extreme violence.

9. Faith: Dedicatation to a power, diety, ancestry, or other belief system. (Close encounter with a supernatural being, near death experience, discovering something faith-related about your past.) Paying tribute, tithe, sacrifices with expensive materials, donations to causes.
10. Ambition: Pursuing a personal goal, vendetta, or personal project. (Desiring something grand from being greatly impressed – building a keep, raising an army, attaining status.) Making significant progress toward your ambition. Spending money towards your goal.

Advanced Combat Options

Weapon Traits

Below are some optional traits a magical or good quality weapon might have. Sweep, parry, and reach are traits any weapon of that type can have. Any of the other traits should be limited to 1 per rare, special, or magic weapon.

- Sweep: (2 handed weapons only) Make a second attack against an enemy within reach if you roll for maximum damage or your attack reduces the targets HP to zero or lower.
- Parry: (swords and daggers only) Melee damage of 1-2 is harmlessly parried away.
- Reach: (polearms only) When attacked with a melee weapon without reach, the attacker must roll half or higher on their

damage roll or else you get to attack them first.

- Enchanted: (magic weapons) Damage ignores armor.
- Brutal: (magic bludgeoning weapons; 2h only) Critical Damage resulting from a Damage roll of 8 or more from this weapon is an instant kill, and forces a morale Save on the enemy.
- Deadly: (magic weapons; rare) Re-roll on max damage and add to total.
- Vorpal: (magic blades; rare) Damage immediately bypasses HP, going straight to STR and requiring a save against Critical Damage
- Blood-Thirsty: (cursed magic weapons; rare) On max damage, upgrade dice type. 6>8>10. 10 on a d10 will reset the weapon to its base dice and the weapon will need 2d6 hours to recharge. Should have some type of curse or drawback.
- Shield Splintering: Players can opt to absorb all damage and effects from an attack in exchange for their shield breaking.

Magic Damage Types

Below are some magic weapon damage types other than +1 damage. Magic damage type on a weapon should lower it's damage by 1 dice size to account for the extra effect.

- Cold: On a hit, target makes a STR save or next attack is impaired.

- Thunder: On a hit, target makes a DEX save or can't move next turn.
- Necrotic: On a hit, target makes a WIL save or loses next turn.
- Poison: On a hit, target makes a STR save or 1d4 damage for 1d4 rounds.
- Disintegration: On a hit, target makes a DEX save vs instant obliteration and the wielder takes 1 fatigue. Exceptionally powerful and rare.

Special Materials

Most weapons will be made from steel. Some special weapons, however, could potentially come

from different materials. Consider making a weapon of a special material one dice size less to compensate for its advantages.

- Cold-Iron: Heavy and prone to breaking. Enhanced vs. fey.
- Silver: Expensive. Enhanced vs. undead and certain monsters.
- Mithril: Elven alloy. Silvery-gold. Enhanced vs. goblins.
- Orichalcum: Dwarven alloy. Deep red-bronze. Enhanced vs. undead.
- Electrum: Magically forged alloy. Green-gold. Enhanced vs. demons.
- Meteor Ore: Rare star metal. Multi-hued. Enhanced vs. dragons.