

Dungeon Essentials

Due to the nature of the Celestial Dungeons, a large portion of adventures will likely take place outside of traditional dungeons. However, traditional dungeons can be very entertaining when done correctly.

This section is for GM reference, intended to provide a list of content for creating traditional dungeons, particularly in simulated adventures within the Celestial Dungeons. This list includes types of dungeons, dungeon themes, reason the dungeons exist, who uses them, things that exist in the dungeon, common quests and adventures, and so forth.

Dungeon Archetype: Why Was It Created?

Archetype	Description
Burial Chamber	The dungeon was built as a tomb for a legendary, magical, or powerful being; or many of them, such as a lineage or a coven. The location is often considered sacred, may have many worshipers, and is meant to be undisturbed. It is likely to contain treasures of those that reside there, and traps to dissuade looters.
Church	The dungeon was built as a holy place of worship for a deity, a pantheon of gods, a demonic force, etc. Devoted followers could worship under the authority of a zealous cult, an ancient order, a small sect of disciples, true awakened avatars of a deity, a vampire clan, necromancers, a powerful warlock, etc.
Fortress	The dungeon serves as a defensive fortress. It will contain heavily defensive positions that advantageous to the existing occupants as well as traps, contingency routes, alert systems, etc. It is built for war.
Incomprehensible	Incomprehensible dungeons, such as maze labyrinths, serve no identifiable purpose that human society would understand. Such dungeons, if they exist, are typically created by chaos gods, races from other dimensions, or fey races. They tend to possess powerful magic and be confusing to navigate.
Lair	Lairs are locations where someone resides: a powerful monster, a race of exiles, a force of rebellion, a brilliant caster, a secret society, a necromancer, an immortal, etc. Lairs may be specifically built for their purpose or repurposed from an existing location such as caverns, an abandoned mine, old ruins, etc.
Labyrinth, Library	Contains vast quantities of books and information: history, records, arcane and magical lore, stories, memoirs, etc. These are extremely rare, usually very magical in nature, and the labyrinths itself tends to contain . and likely only created by extremely powerful beings (gods, deities, races of fey, etc). May also include sections that are more like museums than a library, as well as many secrets within its walls.
Labyrinth, Menagerie	Contains a labyrinth of magical creatures, beasts, monsters, etc. They tend to be extremely rare, peculiar, and potentially dangerous. Only gods, deities, immortals, or powerful fey races tend to have the interest and capacity in creating such a labyrinth.
Labyrinth, Museum	Contains interesting and historical objects, sometimes magical in nature. Such labyrinths are extremely rare and peculiar, and likely only created at the behest of gods, deities, races of fey, or extremely powerful beings.
Magic Sanctuary	Contains powerful magical energies from leylines or natural energy formations. The dungeon taps into these raw channels of energy, and tend to possess magical enchantments of great significance or power. May be used as a ritual site or for magical preservation, but often has another archetype (vault, workshop, etc).
Mine, Magical	Mines serve a critical role in society, yet aren't typically categorized as dungeons. Magical variants, which extract useful ores or components, tend to attract magical threats: monsters, entities, powerful rivals, etc. These can be a catalyst for major conflicts, resulting in makeshift dungeons.
Operations	Built as a meeting spot for a collective: covens, cults, rebellions, criminals, black markets, mage's guild, dark order, etc. Often intended to be secretive (or at least private), secluded, or fortified.
Prison	Dungeon was designed to imprison magical or immortal beings, political enemies, monsters that could not be killed, truly egregious criminals, or some other special function. It may have unique or magical requirements, such as being self-sustained without intervention, being sealed away, or protecting the guards.
School, Combat	The dungeon is a school that teaches some form of combat: martial arts, weapon training, tactical warfare, guerrilla warfare, a rebellion school, divine combat, etc.
School, Magic	The dungeon is a school that teaches magical arts to its disciples. It may teach arcane lore, sorcery, dark arts, lost casting forms, necromancy, element casting, divine arts, etc. It was sheltered away to retain its secrecy or

	because there were dangers of making it more publicly accessible.
Sewers	The dungeon's originally served as a sewer system for a recent or ancient civilization, but has likely been repurposed or taken over since its initial construction. These tend to be infested with monsters.
Tunnel System	Tunnel systems are simply designed to provide underground transportation between areas. It may be a defensive route during times of war, a route for criminals, a passage for rebels, etc.
Undercity	The dungeon was an underground village or city, but built for defense, secrecy, space, or other functions. It has likely been repurposed, infested, or otherwise abandoned and taken over by a new host.
Workshop, Factory	The dungeon serves as a production system for valuable goods or materials: poisons, illegal goods, drugs, mechanical supplies, currency minting, steampunk vehicles, etc.
Workshop, Lab	The dungeon serves as a unique research lab: fringe science, secret or dark lore, magical technologies, necromancy and resurrection, war tools, research on foreign adversaries, alien research, etc.
Workshop, Magic	The dungeon produces magical goods: artifacts and trinkets, potions, component production, magical weapons and armor, enchanted jewelry, casting scrolls, runes, totems, spellbooks, wands, cursed or evil items, etc.
Vault, Lore	The dungeon contains valuable or dangerous knowledge: arcane secrets, dark and forbidden lore, the doctrine of a religious cult, knowledge bestowed by gods or deities, the secrets of a powerful lineage, etc.
Vault, Power	The dungeon guards a source of power: a magical portal, a powerful spirit, a minor deity, the last magical race of its kind, a holy relic that cannot be reforged, a path between realms, a powerful energy node, etc.
Vault, Trap	Serves as an unexpected trap, meant to kill or contain anyone that entered. Depending on how it was used, many adventurers may have since lost their lives inside. May contain the treasures of dead adventurers, but is likely littered with traps or dangerous rooms, or fake teasers that rewards are ahead.
Vault, Treasury	The dungeon protects a treasury of wealth, supplies, magical goods, or other valuables. It likely contains many gates, locked or sealed passages, defensive positions, or traps that are designed to resist intrusion.

Dungeon Creator: Who Built It And Why?

Creator	Description
Criminals	Powerful criminal organizations needed an underground lair to serve as a black market, retain a treasury of stolen or illegal supplies, perform their darkest transactions, hide from the law, or to manage and coordinate their forces. These dungeons are often well-concealed, but near major populations.
Dark Gods	Gods of darkness or chaos want to lure in foolish mortals. Treasure means nothing to them, but mortal greed can't get enough. A few heroes will inevitably survive the dungeons, spreading the word of their wealth to other fools that will seek out glory. This merely continues the cycle of death that favors the dark gods.
Enslaved Race	A race of lesser creatures, golems, captives, or those incapable of fighting back have been enslaved (legally or otherwise) to serve a more powerful force: a warlock, a corrupt organization, a race of brutes, an immortal (such as a vampire or lich), etc. They are generally quite capable in their work.
Escaped Golems	Golems that were magically enslaved managed to escape into foreign territory. However, their instincts to build is still very strong. They construct elaborate, decorative, and sometimes magical dungeons in secretive locations that they expect nobody to discover.
Fey	Magical creatures with bizarre quirks and reasoning created a dungeon, possibly as a living quarters that may have been abandoned since its primary use. The nature of the dungeon may be peculiar, but it is likely well-designed and contains many magical enchantments.
Gift of Deity	A gift from divine powers; godly beings that granted it as a reward or for their own hidden agendas. It may have been purchased with magical currency, offered as a reward for an important service, or resulted from a minor deity's ritual. These dungeons tend to be important, spectacular, and magical.
Lesser Race	A lesser evolved race, or a race that is often ostracized or unwelcome in stronger populations (orcs, ogres, etc), has retreated into the safety of dungeons they've constructed. These dungeons are often poorly built, as they're not likely to be the natural or desired habitat of the race that built them.
Mad Scientist	A mad scientist, engineer, or wizard has created a base of operations worthy of their talents. Though it has taken them many years, and it may have required considerable magic or treasure to complete, their results are impressive.
Magic Society	A society of mages, druids, sorcerers, wizards, warlocks, or other magical classes discovered sources of magic

	in the area (leylines, energy nodes, etc). They knew an opportunity existed: imbuing powerful enchantments, using it as a shamanic ritual site, contacting the spirit world, portals, forging powerful artifacts, etc.
Miners	The initial layout was the result of a mining operation, either for natural ores or magical materials. The final dungeon may have retained many of the original mining characteristics, or it may have been adapted to specific needs or interests by its new host.
Monsters	Large monsters (or monsters that can perform large tasks in swarms) tunneled out a lair or added to an existing cavern system. These lairs tend to accommodate one primary type of monster, but may be lead by a larger monster that oversees it.
Necromancer's Army	An army of undead workers dominated by a lich king or powerful necromancer has been tasked with the construction of a lair. Their endless commitment and time availability can result in truly spectacular work, depending on the skill of the necromancer.
Phantoms	Phantoms, summoned entities whose sole purpose is to craft on behalf of their summoner, have been instructed to build a given location. Their work may widely vary in quality, from rather inefficient to masterful, depending on the means and mastery of summoning.
Rebels	A rebellious force, fighting against at a perceived injustice, created the dungeon in hopes of providing a safe haven for their allies. The base may have been designed with the interest of secrecy, defense, residence, or as a meeting place to coordinate their rebellion.
Sacred Guardian	A sacred guardian (such as a magical being, a secret coven, druids, a deity, a watchful spirit, etc) built the dungeon to protect an important relic or purpose. It possesses great importance, or at least the guardian believes it to. It may be preserved for an important destiny, or it might just be religious zealotry.
Tinkering Race	A creative tinkering race (such as goblins) finds safety or comfort in the underground, sheltered, or secretive lairs they've created. Their craftsmen, engineers, enchanters, and alchemists are inventive in their own way; but sometimes a bit too peculiar or extreme in their constructions.
Outer World	Was created by beings from another dimension, whose natures are unknown and familiar. These dungeons have a variety of forms. Some are beautiful and elegant, others are extremely peculiar and filled with bizarre contraptions or puzzles, and others serve an essential function. Most are magical in nature.
Underground Race	A race that has taken to underground life (or been long adapted to it already) has decided to produce a major construction at this location below ground. The area may have since been abandoned, leaving only what remains from its previous form.
Worshippers	A group of believers created the dungeon to serve as a sacred ground for their source of worship: a benevolent god, a powerful demon, a minor deity, a living saint, a magical sorcerer that specializes in charm magic, etc. These dungeons may not be built by professionals, but they are usually created with great care.

Dungeon's History: Has Something Happened To It?

Occurrence	Description
Abandoned	The dungeon was unwanted, no longer useful, or the occupants that benefited from it have passed.
Battle, Losses	A great battle occurred, with significant losses by the occupants, and potentially significant damage to many aspects of the dungeon itself.
Battle, Survived	A great battle occurred, but the occupants were able to survive or recover. The dungeon may have new fortifications or advancements to address any similar issues in the future.
Battleground, Inactive	A war was waged over this dungeon as a strategic resource or waypoint. Significant damage and modifications have occurred. Remnants of the battleground may still remain, but the war is over.
Battleground, Occupied	A war is being waged over this dungeon as a strategic resource or waypoint. Control may have switched hands recently, or may do so in the near future. The occupants are in the midst of chaos.
Destroyed	The dungeon was destroyed, at least in part. It may have been intentional (explosives), accidental (such as a magic spell gone wrong), or the result of decay over time (ancient ruins).
Exchanged	The dungeon was sold, given away, or otherwise exchanged to a new owner.
Infestation	The dungeon has become infested with monsters.
Looted	The dungeon was looted by adventurers, explorers, or others with an interest in it.

Rebuilt	The dungeon was rebuilt, expanded, enhanced, or otherwise modified.
Repurposed	The dungeon was repurposed from its original intent, and is now being used to serve a new role. This likely changed many of the features of the dungeon, and some sections may have aesthetic clashes.
Takeover	The dungeon has been taken over and modified by a powerful being: a powerful sorcerer, a secret order, a deity, a god, an immortal (vampire, lich, etc), a small force, a religious cult, a dangerous villain, etc.
Threat, Hazard	The dungeon has been exposed to a major hazard: dangerous poisons or toxins, radiation, diseased occupants, unexpected fires, etc. The hazard may still exist, causing complications for those within.
Threat, Monster	A giant or dangerous monster (or large group of monsters) emerged, causing havoc within the dungeon. The threat has likely not been dealt with yet; if it has, the remnants of the dungeon are likely in disorder.
Wild Chasm	Wild, chaotic, failed, or unexpected magic broke out within the dungeon. It unleashed chaos, or significant complications. Nearby energy nodes may be reacting with chaotic effects, permanent enchantments may be instilled, and a wide variety of unusual behaviors may occur here.

Dungeon's Occupants: Who Resides There Now?

Occupants	Description
Abandoned	There are no current occupants. The dungeon has been abandoned.
Beast	A powerful magical creature resides here. It may not be hostile, but it is likely powerful and dangerous.
Black Market	A black market now operates from the dungeon. It may serve as a meeting grounds, an operations center, a trade hub, a safe haven, a collection center, extra storage, a strategic waypoint, a magical safe house, etc.
Commoners	The dungeon is occupied by commoners, likely using it as a makeshift city or safe haven.
Coven	A magical coven resides here: witches, wizards, sorcerers, dark casters, etc.
Criminals	Criminals now reside here: a thief's guild, assassin's guild, fences, crime handlers, etc. There may be illegal contraband, drugs, stolen supplies, illegal weapons, etc.
Cult	A cult resides here, dedicated to worship of something: a god, a dark god or demonic force, a local deity, a particular archetype of nature, a powerful sorcerer or individual, a local immortal, etc.
Fey	A bizarre magical races reside here. Some of their kind may be powerful, others may just be strange.
Guild	A guild resides here: merchants, traders, mercenaries, craftsmen, alchemists, etc.
Golems, Conjured	Conjured golems (earth golems, ice golems, etc) reside here. They may be lead by a caster.
Golems, Mechanical	Mechanical golems reside here; likely crafted by their own race or a magical engineer.
Immortal	An immortal being (vampire, lich, minor deity, etc) has taken residence.
Monsters	A group of monsters has infected the dungeon and taken over.
Monsters, Boss	A powerful, dangerous, or legendary boss monster usurped the dungeon. Likely joined by many minions.
Necromancer	A necromancer or lich, likely working with his collective of undead, has assumed control.
Prisoners, Common	Prisoners, left here to live out their sentence (or entire lives), currently occupy the dungeon.
Prisoners, Powerful	Powerful and dangerous prisoners reside here, likely restrained by magical means unique to them.
Rebels	A force of rebellion has taken residence within the dungeon. May have a leader: a paladin-like warrior, a charismatic leader, a furious noble with money to spare, etc.
Secret Order	A secret order resides here. They may be protecting something (information, sacred relic, etc), plotting a coup, organizing their conspiracies and marching orders, etc.
Spirits	The dungeon has attracted a host of spirits; ones that may be capable of apparition or interaction within the dungeon. They may be pacifists, dangerous (like wraiths), helpful, vindictive, etc.
Tinker Race	A race of tinkerers (such as gnomes) have taken residence and started their own modifications and projects.
Undead	A swarm of undead monsters have become attracted to the location and taken over.
Underground Race	A race that prefers (or accepts) underground lifestyles is present.
Unique Race	A special race resides here: last of their kind, an unknown or forgotten race, a rare magical race, etc.

Wealthy Owner	The dungeon was sold or taken over by someone of wealth: nobility, politicians, a warlord, merchant, etc.
Workers	The dungeon is still under construction, and has workers in active development.

Dungeon Context: What Complications Arise?

Dungeon context includes the circumstances around or within the dungeon itself: the territory nearby, the rumors relating to the dungeon, information known about it, etc.

Context	Description
Alerts	The occupants have alert systems in place to notify them of potential intrusions or intervention.
Backdoor	There is a back door or secret entrance to the dungeon; may be safer than the primary one.
City-Bound	The dungeon is within an urban center, likely concealed or only accessible by specific passages.
Concealed	The dungeon has been concealed. It may be intentional, resulted from overgrown vegetation, etc.
Contingencies	Occupants may already have contingency plans in place to deal with an intrusion.
Discovered	The dungeon, or at least it's entrance, was recently discovered. Not much else is known about it.
Disrupted Terrain	The terrain is heavily disrupted; possibly from battles, wild magic, monsters attracted to the dungeon, etc.
Enchanted, Interior	The dungeon may be enchanted with oppressive magic that threatens those unfamiliar or unprepared.
Enchanted, Terrain	The surrounding territory has enchantments placed on it to dissuade or complicate intrusion.
Enemy Passage	Occupants likely have all the keys or passwords necessary to traverse the area without issue.
Fortifications	Occupants may have distinct fortified advantages; barriers, high ground, ranged attack points, etc.
Hazards	There are hazards in the territory surrounding the dungeon. These may have been: placed intentionally, the result of magical remnants from the dungeon, due to the environment itself, etc.
Mapped, Accurate	There is a full or partial map of the dungeon.
Mapped, Skewed	There is a mapping of the dungeon, but it's based on hearsay. Parts may be skewed or inaccurate.
Monsters	There are monsters that roam in the territory surrounding the dungeon.
Rumors, Accurate	There are known and useful details about the dungeon.
Rumors, Skewed	There are rumors about the dungeon, but it's often skewed or inaccurate due to braggarts or the uninformed.
Scouts, Effective	There is an effective scouting routine near the dungeon: attentive guards, well placed tripwires, etc.
Scouts, Ineffective	There is a minimal or ineffective scouting routine near the dungeon, but is likely squandered due to years of inactivity or reliance on ineffective techniques.
Turf Advantage	Occupants know the layout, terrain, traps, passages, secrets, tactical points, etc.
Warning Sign	The dungeon has an explicit warning sign, informing people to stay away.
Warning Corpses	There are corpses near the dungeon; either on display or laying on the ground nearby.

Dungeon Quests: Why Are You Here?

Quest	Description
Ally	A suspected ally (powerful wizard, secret cult, etc) is believed to be within the dungeon.
Assessment	It is unknown what exists in the dungeon, and someone needs to assess the situation.
Base	Clearing out the dungeon could provide a useful base of operations.
Components	There are special ingredients, such as for alchemy potions, that are believed to be within the lair.
Criminal Activity	There is reason to believe there is illegal activity occurring; thieves, assassins, murderers, etc.

Dark Presence	There is suspected dark, illegal, or evil presence in the lair that needs to be addressed.
Disappearance	Someone has disappeared, and the dungeon is a suspected location to find them.
Enemy	An enemy of the party is believed to be within the dungeon.
Energy Node	There are important leylines or energy nodes in the dungeon, useful to alchemists and engineers.
Exploration	The dungeon was recently discovered, and unknown possibilities or opportunities await.
Fame & Glory	Conquering the dungeon may elevate the adventurers to fame, glory, and respect among their societies.
Free Prisoner	Find and recover a specific prisoner: an ally, an important figure, someone with secret knowledge, etc.
Intimidation	Conquering the dungeon may inspire fear or intimidation of those who dared to conquer it.
Lore	The dungeon is believed to possess important clues or knowledge the party would benefit from.
Mapping	There is a request or desire for someone to map out the location.
Monsters	A monster (or multiple) has been causing troubles to the nearby population and must be defeated.
Mystery	There is a wide-scale mystery relating to the dungeon, and it's time someone solved it.
Prison Break	Break prisoners out of a prison: an enslaved group, a team of allies, potential recruits, a rebellion, etc.
Recovery	Something was taken into the dungeon that needs to be recovered.
Rescue	An ally or party member needs to be rescued.
Tracking	Someone being tracked down is believed to have entered the dungeon.
Trap	The adventurers aren't actually expected to return. Someone just wants them dead.
Treasure	It is believed (or known) that a powerful or meaningful treasure exists within the lair.
Worthiness	There are legends or claims that conquering it is a sacred rite of passage to some elevated purpose.

Dungeon Rivals: Who Else Is Here?

Most dungeon quests don't involve rivals, but they may appear from time to time. Rivals refer to other adventurers that are also competing for dungeon's rewards or opportunities, and the party is likely to cross paths with them at some point.

Rivals don't have to be hostile to the party; they're just competing for similar objectives. It is possible to talk with them, work together, trade useful secrets or discoveries, make deals, or end up on the opposite side of battle.

Rivals	Description
Antagonists	Your rivals aren't here to fight, but they don't like you being here and will try to complicate your efforts.
Cautious	The rivals are cautious. They over-analyze every encounter and approach slowly.
Clever	Your rivals are extremely cunning, and can respond to challenges with a strong wit.
Deceitful	Your rivals are extremely deceitful, and ready to exploit your party if they can.
Early	Your rivals already explored, encountered certain challenges, gathered intelligence, extracted resources, etc.
Equipment, Poor	Your rivals have poor quality, less than ideal equipment.
Equipment, Excellent	Your rivals have excellent equipment.
Failures	Your rivals are failing at their objectives. They may be willing to compromise at this point.
Friendly	Your rivals are not here to oppose you. They seek to work together for mutual benefit, if possible.
Funded	Your rivals are funded through a wealthy benefactor. They will paid handsomely to fulfill their objectives.
Grateful	Your rivals are extremely grateful if you ever offer any assistance.
Hostile	Your rivals see you as a direct threat to their victory. They will address you with aggressive force.
Informed	Your rivals know a lot more about this dungeon than you do.

Multiple Teams	There are multiple teams of rivals, some of which may already be competing against each other.
Paranoid	Your rivals are paranoid of you and any other party. They consider you a potential threat.
Ruthless	Your rivals will have no qualms stealing from you or killing you if they feel they can get away with it.
Selfless	Your rivals will put your needs over their own. At least to a certain extent; they have limits.
Sneaky	Your rivals are good at remaining unnoticed.
Strong	Your rivals are very well suited for combat. Whatever they're up against, expect them to be good.
Under-Prepared	Your rivals are pretty likely to die if they continue. Whatever is ahead, they're not ready for it.