

# Ixalan

## Campaign Bible

*The jungle was here before any city. It will be here after the last city falls.*



## INTRODUCTION

Ixalan is a vibrant and exotic plane in the multiverse characterized by its lush, uncharted jungles and treacherous seas. This world is a treasure trove of mystery, filled with ancient ruins, hidden magic, and lost cities. The landscape is dominated by dense rainforests, towering waterfalls, and volcanic mountains, providing a backdrop for the adventures of four competing tribes: [the Sun Empire](#), the once dominant civilization of Ixalan; the [Legion of Dusk](#), an invading vampire conquistador faction seeking to claim the riches and powers of Ixalan for themselves; the [Brazen Coalition](#), a group of daring pirates whose only allegiance is to their own freedom; and the [River Heralds](#), mystical merfolk who are the guardians of the natural order of Ixalan. These factions clash over the hidden treasures of Ixalan, promising both immense power and immortality.

## Themes

Much of the story of Ixalan involves the main factions in a race to uncover long lost secrets and ancient ruins of Ixalan by exploring the jungle and surrounding lands. We will follow suit. One of the major themes will be exploring and searching for these long lost treasures. Think Pirates of the Caribbean. There are secrets of a long forgotten age out there waiting to be found, and we're going to find them.

As part of this, we will also inevitably brush up against one or more of the warring factions of Ixalan and potentially be sucked into their dispute. This can be handled any way you like, whether by sword-point diplomacy, or just regular old diplomacy.

## Content

You can feel free to use content from pretty much any official source, just ask me first if it's something we haven't seen before. Additional restrictions may apply. E.g. you can use Strixhaven content, but only if you can reasonably convince me that your character has spent time on Strixhaven (remember, interplanar travel is very rare in the MtG multiverse!).

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## Mechanics

I have a few non-vanilla mechanics I would like to try out, but I will leave them up to group discretion whether we like them or not.

- Rolling with emphasis/expression. In a moment where a check is likely to either succeed spectacularly or fail miserably, with middling results less likely, we might roll with emphasis (roll 2d20 and take the result furthest from 10).
- Inspiration. When your character does something that is particularly in line with their values or may incite a strong sense of inspiration, you'll become inspired. An inspired character may use their inspiration to gain advantage on any attack, ability check, or saving throw. Inspiration lasts until you use it, but inspiration doesn't stack. If you're already inspired you can't become double inspired, so make sure you use it so you don't miss out on the next one.
- Death saves are private between the DM and the player. This adds some amount of suspense to a death save because you can't tell whether your party member just made their first save or rolled a 1 and might die on the next turn.
- One DnD exhaustion system. On this campaign I might dabble with exhaustion, but the current exhaustion system is miserable. The One DnD exhaustion system is much fairer and easier to remember. If you have N levels of exhaustion, you subtract N from all attack, ability check, and saving throws. (Possible addition that players with one or more levels of exhaustion can't take the dash action?)
- Thinking about returning to the old initiative system where everyone rolls individually rather than by teams. Personally I think I prefer it the old way but curious to hear what the group thinks.
- One DnD Guidance. In One DnD, guidance is now a reaction to a failed roll. *However* a creature can only benefit from guidance once per long rest.



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# SECTION 1

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THE WORLD

## 1.1 Factions

### 1.1.1 River Heralds

*Our foes are many and mighty. But not as many as the trees or as mighty as the sea.*

The River Heralds stand as enigmatic guardians of nature's deepest secrets. These merfolk, masters of water and greenery, weave their magic through the riverways and lush jungle expanses, maintaining the balance of their precious ecosystem. Clad in vibrant scales that mirror the colors of their environment, the River Heralds are deeply spiritual and fiercely protective of the plane's integrity. They see themselves as the true stewards of Ixalan, opposing the encroaching greed and destruction brought by outsiders. Guided by ancient traditions and the wisdom of their shamans, the River Heralds navigate the complex currents of their world, ready to defend the sanctity of Ixalan's secrets and ensure that its sacred power does not fall into the wrong hands. Their deep connection to the land and its life force makes them formidable opponents and wise allies in the ongoing struggle for control over Ixalan's destiny.

By merfolk reckoning, nine tributaries to the Great River dominate the interior of Ixalan. Accordingly, their society consists of nine tribes, each associated with one of the tributaries of the Great River. The tribes are formed by bands, each headed by a shaman (or *shaper*). The shapers whose bands control the mouths of the tributaries are the most respected. The tributaries are named after the first nine shapers who controlled them, as are the shapers who inherit their responsibilities. The most powerful of these is Tishana, the primary branch of the Great River residing on the western side of Ixalan. The nine great shapers are:

- Tishana, the Voice of Thunder
- Falani
- Kopala
- Kumena

- Mitica
- Notana
- Pashona
- Tuvasa
- Vuhana

The wisdom of the elders is passed down orally from shaper to shaper and is central to the River Heralds' society. They pass on the records of the lost secrets of Ixalan, instructions of life in the jungle, the names of the nature spirits they conjure and command, the cruel histories of the Sun Empire, and current events including calls for tribal congress. The River Heralds have a complicated and strained relationship with the Sun Empire due to their history of war, but the two are aligned in their goal to defend Ixalan against the Dusk Legion and Brazen Coalition invaders.

**Races:** Almost exclusively merfolk (mechanically, Triton)

### 1.1.2 The Sun Empire

*Kinjalli sculpted humans from clay, but the dinosaurs were carved from unyielding stone.*

The Sun Empire of Ixalan shines brightly as a beacon of power and majesty in a world teeming with mystery and peril. As its name suggests, this civilization worships the sun in three aspects, namely creation, life, and destruction (associated with white, green, and red mana respectively). The Empire's warriors, adorned in vibrant armor that reflects their sacred sun worship, command awe-inspiring dinosaurs as both mounts and battle companions, and are protected by the magic of their sun priests. These titanic creatures are integral to the Empire's might, making them a formidable force in the land. The Sun Empire once dominate the lush landscapes of Ixalan with their grand cities and temples. While they still maintain a significant hold over the land, they are not the same massive empire they once were. Led by an ambitious emperor, the Sun Empire is driven by a divine mandate to reclaim their lost history and their glory of old.

The Sun Empire is composed a few major city-states, namely Atzocan, Otepec, and their capital city Pachatupa, as well as hundreds of minor villages, fortresses, and towns between. The Sun Empire is rich in material wealth, natural beauty, arable land, biodiversity, and people. They are known for their incredible stone architecture interwoven with both technology and magic. Their cities were built to accommodate dinosaur riders, with high arches to allow their knights to pass through unobstructed.

The Sun Empire has a long and strained history with the River Heralds, but have reached a tenuous alliance with them for the purposes of repelling the invading influences of the Dusk Legion and the Brazen Coalition.

**Races:** Predominantly humans

### 1.1.3 Legion of Dusk

*The Church of Dusk teaches there is no gain without loss, no triumph without sacrifice, no drink of exquisite crimson without a dying gasp.*

The Legion of Dusk is the military arm of Alta Torrezon, a religious vampire monarchy on the continent of Torrezon across the sea from Ixalan. After conquering their home continent of Torrezon, they turned their sights toward Ixalan, in search of power, wealth, and the secrets of their own immortality. Buoyed by a massive host of human aspirants, the modern Legion of Dusk is capable of managing massive operations across oceans and directing its profit back to its coffers on Torrezon.

The Legion of Dusk is an alliance between the Church of Dusk and the iron-fisted Queen Miralda. The Church of Dusk turns aspirants (mainly humans) into vampires by way of the Rite of Redemption. Members of the Church view their vampirism as both a blessing and a curse, granting them with the strength and longevity to achieve their aims of conquering, but requiring them to feed on the blood of the living regularly. However, their constant drive for conquest ensures that they will always have blood of their enemies to drink, which they believe is their righteous punishment for the unholy acts of their opposition.

**Races:** Mostly humans and vampires (mechanically Dhampir minus their ability to walk on walls).

### 1.1.4 The Brazen Coalition

*Pockets full of gold, lungs full of brine.*

The Brazen Coalition is a society of pirates that answers to no one and lives on the Stormwreck Sea of the eastern coast of Ixalan. This is the most diverse faction on Ixalan, including humans from a wide variety of backgrounds, but also goblins, orcs, sirens, and others. With no more than a handful of small archipelagos under their control, the coalition proudly marked the ocean as their domain.

When the Legion of Dusk completed their conquest of Torrezon, the last remaining survivors of the free cities on its western coast fled to the sea to escape the tyrannical rule of Queen Miralda. They were turned away by the Sun Empire, and with no land to call home they were forced to turn to piracy. They began raiding Ixalan's coast, preferring to face down other humans rather than the vampires that controlled Torrezon.

Beckett Brass, as captain of the Scourge, earned a formidable reputation because of both her skills as a sword fighter and her mastery of enchantment magic. Jareth Wake, navigator of a ship called Squid Eyes, was obsessed with finding Brass. After the Scourge rammed Squid Eyes, the two ships became impossibly entangled and, through some quirk of fate, stayed afloat. Eventually, the two captains agreed to a parley, realizing that victory was impossible for either side. They eventually declared themselves the first citizens of High and Dry — a neutral ground where pirates could meet and trade goods, tools, treasures, and stories. Over time,

other derelict vessels limped to High and Dry — or were towed there by more seaworthy vessels — and expanded the dimensions of what soon became a thriving town. The existence of High and Dry allowed for the creation of an unusual currency among the pirate captains: favors and obligations. Insofar as a lasting connection exists among the pirates, they refer to themselves as the Brazen Coalition, in honor of Captain Brass.

Over the coalition's first century, great legends cobbled together collections of ships and planted their flags on the few islands that dot the Stormwreck Sea. These captains styled their ranks in many ways but in effect were the same as kings — they ruled over fiefdoms they called fleets, struggling against and with each other for de facto rule over the coalition. Some were plain in their desire to be sovereign above all others, though most rejected the old words of the law that lorded over them and their ancestors on the land. Law was written by the last captain standing and enforced first with the edge of a cutlass.

**Races:** Humans, goblins, orcs, sirens (probably mechanically a sea elf? still working that out), others.

### 1.1.5 Factionless

Of course, Ixalan is a vast and diverse place. Not every living being is aligned to one of the above four factions. While the politics and realities of daily life may be dominated by the power struggled between these groups, there is no need for you to align with one of these groups. For example, there is a thriving population of dryads deep in the forests of Ixalan who view the struggles between these groups as simply the squabbles of greedy men and women searching for power, and reject them in favour of the sanctity of nature. For that matter, you could play a character who originates somewhere other than the plane of Ixalan, and we can work out a way for your character to have stumbled into the group.