Feat: Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

Bonus Feat (Human): Combat Reflexes.

Gear: Backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel. bullseye lantern and 1 pint oil, 20 arrows.

Gold: 2d4 gp.

SWASHBUCKLER

The swashbuckler embodies the concepts of daring and panache. Favoring agility and wit over brute force, the swashbuckler excels both in combat situations and social interactions, making her a versatile character indeed.

Adventures: Swashbucklers adventure for a variety of motivations, based on their alignment and background. Some seek to right injustices, while others seek only fame and fortune. All swashbucklers, however, share a tendency to leap into action when the call comes, regardless of their personal views.

Characteristics: The swashbuckler combines skill and finesse with sheer combat prowess. Though swashbucklers can't dish out quite as much damage as a typical fighter or barbarian, they tend to be more agile and mobile than most melee combatants. When she can pick her battles carefully, a swashbuckler becomes a very deadly opponent (not to mention hard to pin down). Swashbucklers also hold their own in social situations, unlike most fighters.

Alignment: Like rogues, swashbucklers tend to be diverse in their outlooks, and thus in their alignments. Those who chafe under societal restrictions tend to be chaotic, while those who uphold honorable traditions may well be lawful.

Religion: Most swashbucklers pay at least some small amount of homage to Olidammara (deity of thieves), since that deity is renowned as being lucky. Lawful or chivalrous swashbucklers may revere Heironeous (deity of valor) or even St. Cuthbert (deity of retribution). Swashbucklers who choose the open road over a fixed residence often worship Fharlanghn (deity of roads).

Background: Many swashbucklers come from affluent backgrounds, but anyone valuing finesse over force can become a swashbuckler, regardless of background. A common shared element among swashbucklers' backgrounds is life in an urban environment, whether the back alleys of a slum or the cultured halls of royalty.

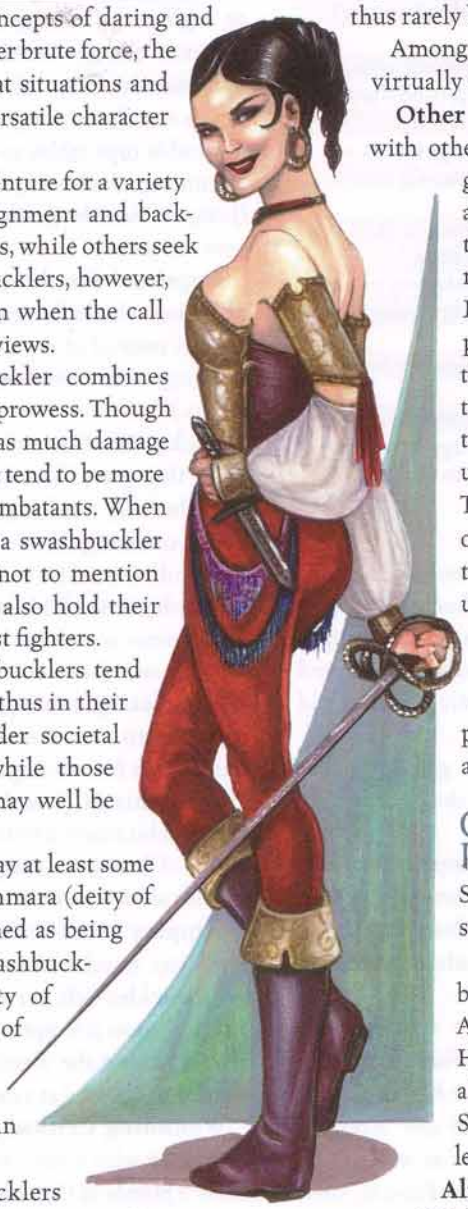
Swashbucklers tend to see other swashbucklers as rivals rather than allies, even when sharing similar goals. The swashbuckler's need for attention often outweighs her better judgment, leading either to friendly competition or even outright distrust and antipathy.

Races: Swashbucklers are most often humans, elves, or half-elves. Humans and half-elves tend to have the daring nature required of a swashbuckler, and the natural grace of elves makes them well suited for the class. Halflings and gnomes often have the temperament to become a swashbuckler, though their slower speed works against them. Dwarves tend to prefer fighting in heavy armor with big weapons, and thus rarely become swashbucklers.

Among the savage humanoids, swashbucklers are virtually unknown.

Other Classes: Swashbucklers prefer to work with other quick, lightly armored characters. They get along best with rogues and bards, and appreciate the agility and combat talents of the monk (though chaotic swashbucklers may chafe at the monk's ascetic nature). Lawful good swashbucklers often share the paladin's honorable nature, but otherwise the classes tend to clash in their approach to life. Swashbucklers have no particular distaste for spellcasters, and they appreciate the utility of a cleverly chosen, well-timed spell. They don't interact with barbarians, druids, or rangers very often, since these characters tend to prefer natural settings to the typical urban environment of the swashbuckler.

Role: The swashbuckler is an able melee combatant, particularly when paired with a fighter or rogue. She can also make a fine party leader or spokesperson, thanks to her access to Charisma-based skills.



A swashbuckler

Illus. by G. Kubic

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Swashbucklers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: The lightly armored swashbuckler depends on a high Dexterity for her Armor Class, as well as for many class skills. High Intelligence and Charisma scores are also hallmarks of a successful swashbuckler. Strength is not as important for a swashbuckler as it is for other melee combatants.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d10.

Class Skills

The swashbuckler's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Jump (Str), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex). See Chapter 4 in the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) × 4.
Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Table 1–4: The Swashbuckler

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Weapon Finesse
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Grace +1
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Insightful strike
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	—
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Dodge bonus +1
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	—
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Acrobatic charge
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Improved flanking
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	—
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Dodge bonus +2
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	Grace +2, lucky
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	—
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	Acrobatic skill mastery
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	Weakening critical
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	Dodge bonus +3
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	—
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	Slippery mind
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	—
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	Wounding critical
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Dodge bonus +4, grace +3

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the swashbuckler.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Swashbucklers are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with light armor. Some of the swashbuckler's class features, as noted below, rely on her being no more than lightly armored and unencumbered.

Weapon Finesse (Ex): A swashbuckler gains Weapon Finesse as a bonus feat at 1st level even if she does not qualify for the feat.

Grace (Ex): A swashbuckler gains a +1 competence bonus on Reflex saves at 2nd level. This bonus increases to +2 at 11th level and to +3 at 20th level. A swashbuckler loses this bonus when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

Insightful Strike (Ex): At 3rd level, a swashbuckler becomes able to place her finesse attacks where they deal greater damage. She applies her Intelligence bonus (if any) as a bonus on damage rolls (in addition to any Strength bonus she may have) with any light weapon, as well as any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse, such as a rapier, whip, or spiked chain. Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to the swashbuckler's insightful strike. A swashbuckler cannot use this ability when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

Dodge Bonus (Ex): A swashbuckler is trained at focusing her defenses on a single opponent in melee. During her action, she may designate an opponent and receive a +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class against melee attacks from that opponent. She can select a new opponent on any action. This bonus increases by +1 at every five levels after 5th (+2 at 10th level, +3 at 15th, and +4 at 20th). A swashbuckler loses this bonus when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

If the swashbuckler also has the Dodge feat, she need not designate the same target for this ability as for the Dodge feat. (If she designates the same target, the bonuses stack.)

Acrobatic Charge (Ex): A swashbuckler of 7th level or higher can charge in situations where others cannot. She may charge over difficult terrain that normally slows movement or allies blocking her path. This ability enables her to run down steep stairs, leap down from a balcony, or to tumble over tables to get to her target. Depending on the circumstance, she may still need to make appropriate checks (Jump or Tumble checks, in particular) to successfully move over the terrain.

Improved Flanking (Ex): A swashbuckler of 8th level or higher who is flanking an opponent gains a +4 bonus on attacks instead of a +2 bonus on attacks. (Other characters flanking with the swashbuckler don't gain this increased bonus.)

Lucky (Ex): Many swashbucklers live by the credo "Better lucky than good." Once per day, a swashbuckler of 11th level or higher may reroll any failed attack roll, skill check, ability check, or saving throw. The character must take the result of the reroll, even if it's worse than the original roll.

Acrobatic Skill Mastery (Ex): At 13th level, a swashbuckler becomes so certain in the use of her acrobatic skills that she can use them reliably even under adverse conditions. When making a Jump or Tumble check, a swashbuckler may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent her from doing so.

Weakening Critical (Ex): A swashbuckler of 14th level or higher who scores a critical hit against a creature also deals 2 points of Strength damage to the creature. Creatures immune to critical hits are immune to this effect.

Slippery Mind (Ex): When a swashbuckler reaches 17th level, her mind becomes more difficult to control. If the swashbuckler fails her save against an enchantment spell or effect, she can attempt the save again 1 round later at the same DC (assuming she is still alive). She gets only this one extra chance to succeed at a certain saving throw.

Wounding Critical (Ex): A swashbuckler of 19th level or higher who scores a critical hit against a creature also deals 2 points of Constitution damage to the creature. (This damage is in addition to the Strength damage dealt by the swashbuckler's weakening critical class feature.) Creatures immune to critical hits are immune to this effect.

Half-Elf Swashbuckler Starting Package

Armor: Studded leather (+3 AC, armor check penalty –1, speed 30 ft., 20 lb.).

Weapons: Rapier (1d6, crit 18–20/×2, 2 lb., one-handed, piercing).