

DUNGEONEER'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

by Douglas Niles



The sourcebook for AD&D® game adventures in the unknown depths of the Underdark!

TSR Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva,
WI 53147

TSR UK Ltd.
The Mill, Rathmore Road
Cambridge CB1 4AD
United Kingdom

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, BATTLESYSTEM, FIEND FOLIO, PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION, and the TSR logo are trademarks owned by TSR Inc.

Special Thanks to

The efforts of many people have gone into *Dungeons & Dragons: The Complete Survival Guide*. These people deserve to be commended for their vital contributions to this work. For any who may have been inadvertently overlooked, your efforts are greatly appreciated nonetheless.

To Harold Johnson, who oversaw the project and performed painfully meticulous reviews.

To Dave Sutherland, whose 3-D maps have truly added a new dimension to the underground.

To Frank Mentzer, whose game experience and advice helped immeasurably.

To Zeb Cook, for many an impromptu brainstorming session.

To Jon Pickens, who was always willing to offer suggestions, advice, and opinions.

To Bruce Heard, who spent time working the rules over.

And to Mary Elsbury Breault, whose editorial work enhanced the book and made its deadline possible.

Thank you!

Credits

***Dungeons & Dragons: The Complete Survival Guide* Design: Douglas Niles**

AD&D® Game System Design: Gary Gygax

Editing: Mike Breault

Cover Art: Jeff Easley

Interior Illustrations: Doug Chisum, Greg Harper, Jim Roslof, and Jeff Easley

Cartography and Diagrams: Dave Sutherland

Typography: Carolyn Vanderbilt

Keylining: Coleen Conroy, and Gloria Szopinski

Distributed to the book trade by Random House, Inc., and in Canada by Random House of Canada, Ltd.
Distributed to the toy and hobby trade by regional distributors.
Distributed in the United Kingdom by TSR UK Ltd.

© 1986 TSR Inc. All Rights Reserved.

0-88038-272-4

This work is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork presented herein is prohibited without the express written permission of TSR Inc.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Introductions

It gives me a feeling of great satisfaction to complete this addition to the AD&D® game system. After many months of design and development, the project is finally nearing the end of the long production process.

Yet, in a sense, the work is just beginning. Many pairs of eyes have looked over these pages, but they represent only a fraction of those who will eventually read and use the material within. How you, the gamers, react to this material is the true beginning of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*.

Exploring dungeons, caves, and caverns has always been my favorite part of the AD&D game. The number of subterranean monsters and cultures presented in the monster manuals serve as ample illustration of the importance of this environment to the game as a whole. Yet many questions have lingered regarding play in these regions of eternal darkness.

I welcomed the opportunity to answer some of these questions in an official volume. Rules on topics such as swimming, climbing, moving and fighting in narrow passages, and other categories of the underground game are included here. The area of nonweapon proficiencies, introduced in *Oriental Adventures*, is expanded here for use with your campaigns.

But these areas represent only a part of the scope of this guide. The nature of the vast realms below the surface of the world has

long been hinted at, but never really explained. Now the DM has at his fingertips a description of the domains of the subterranean cultures. The drow, duergar, derro, mind flayers, aboleth, and many other creatures live in uneasy harmony, often fighting among themselves, but united in their loathing of things from the sunlit world. The types of communities these beings live in are described for the DM's benefit. In addition, a sample of a specific underground world—the vast reaches of Deepearth—is presented for the DM to expand upon or use as a guide for his own campaign settings.

The ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game system continues to be the most popular role-playing game in the world. As the RPG hobby evolves, it is only natural that the AD&D game system should continue to grow with it. The roots of the game lie deep within the earth, among the dungeons and realms where most of us got our first taste of fantasy role-playing. It is these roots that are attended to in this rule book.

Now, boldly brandishing a new collection of information and guidance, characters can once again enter the regions of the underearth, face the tremendous challenges there, and return with treasures and experiences from the finest sort of adventure gaming.

Read on, and have fun.

Douglas Niles

Douglas Niles
April 22, 1986

The weeks I have spent working on the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* have been hectic but enjoyable. I'm glad to have worked on a rule book that is going to be such a valuable and long-needed addition to the AD&D® game system. In fact, the DSG contains so many new rules and DM techniques that you may wonder how you ever went dungeoneering without it. And if you've given up on dungeon-crawling and subterranean adventures altogether, this is just the ticket to send you once again into the most exciting and dangerous setting for role playing excitement—the underearth.

Both danger and opportunity await in the endless realms beneath the earth's surface. This rule book not only explains the details that make dungeons come alive, but covers the full gamut of natural and artificial underground formations.

Within these pages, the nonweapon proficiencies introduced in *Oriental Adventures* are greatly expanded to include underground adventuring skills. In the system introduced here, the

chance of success of proficiencies depends upon the character's ability scores, restoring ability scores to their originally intended preeminence.

Perhaps the most exciting feature of this book is its ability to revitalize your underground campaign. There are many ways to inject excitement and variety into subterranean adventuring; the tips and guidelines on campaign and world design presented in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* will help you do just that. Advice on storytelling techniques will help the DM pique the players' interest even further.

To sum it up, I think you'll find this volume to be an invaluable reference. The rules and game mechanics detailed here, as well as the techniques of three-dimensional mapping, storytelling, campaign creation, and DM-player interaction can add new life and enthusiasm to every game. The *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* is the source book for adventuring in the tractless realms of the Underdark. Don't leave the sunlit world without it!

Mike Breault

Mike Breault
May 12, 1986



Table of Contents Player's Section

DUNGEONEER'S SURVIVAL GUIDE: WHAT IS IT?	6	Roping Together	19
The Mystery of the Underdark	6	Bridges	19
New Rules for Underground Play	6	Permanent Bridges	19
The Denizens of the Underdark	6	Impromptu Bridges	19
The Underground Campaign	6	Falling (Expanded Rules)	19
Using this Information	6	Stopping a Fall	20
OVERVIEW OF THE UNDERDARK	7	Landing	20
Natural Underground Locales	7	Sliding Down Slopes	20
Unnatural Underground Locales	9	Spelunking	20
Hazards of the Underearth	11	The Tight Squeeze	20
MOVEMENT RULES FOR UNDERGROUND PLAY	12	Excavation	21
Ability Checks	12	Rubble	21
Proficiency Checks	12	Solid Barriers	21
Swimming	12	Fatigue and Exhaustion	21
Holding One's Breath	12	Effects of Fatigue	21
Moving in Water	13	Effects of Exhaustion	22
Effects of Moving Water	14	Movement Effects of Darkness	22
Climbing	14	Movement on Slippery Horizontal Surfaces	22
Climbing Surfaces	14	PROFICIENCIES	23
Encumbrance	15	Nonweapon Proficiencies	23
Climbing Success Rates for Non-Thieves	15	Success and Failure	23
Climbing Modifiers	16	Construction Time	23
Climbing Tools	16	Artisans, Craftsmen, and Other NPCs	24
Rappelling	16	Optional Bonuses	24
Jumping for Non-Acrobat s	17	Craftsman Proficiencies	25
Jumping Modifiers	17	Adventuring Proficiencies	26
Using Rope	17	Experience Points for Proficiencies	29
Crossing a Chasm on a Rope	17	COMBAT RULES FOR UNDERGROUND PLAY	30
Swinging Across	18	Fighting on Walls and Other Sheer Surfaces	30
Belays	18	Fighting on Bridges and Ledges	30

Table of Contents—Player's Section

Grabbing an Enemy	30
Fighting in Water	32
Fighting in Narrow Passages	32
Fighting in Darkness	32
Spellcasting in Darkness	32
Rules for Mounted Combat	32
BATTLESYSTEM™ Game Options Underground	34
Extremely Narrow Frontages	34
Combat Modifiers	34
Formation Modifiers	34
Morale Effects	34
Ventilation Effects	35
Flying Effects	35
Line-of-Sight Effects	35
Cave-ins on a Battlefield	35
THE UNDERGROUND ENVIRONMENT	36
Air Supply	36
Duration	36
Fire	36
Smoke	36
Poisonous and Noxious Gasses	37
Ventilation	37
Odor Detection	37
Cave-ins	38
Causes of Cave-ins	38
Random Occurrences of Cave-ins	39
Cave-in Chain Reactions	40
Effects of Cave-ins	40
Defensive Point Values of Underground Formations	40
Hypothermia (Optional Rule)	41
Magnetic Effects of Lodestone	42
NPC Reactions to Long Underground Adventures	42
Structural Decay	43
Underground Waterways	43
Standing Water	43
Flowing Water	44
Water Temperature	45
Access to Underground Waterways	45
Underground Water Travel	46

Mining	48
Where to Mine	48
Types of Mines	49
Excavating a Mine Tunnel	49
Shoring a Tunnel	50
Products of a Mine	50
Quality of Mine Products	51
Calculating the Value of a Placer Mine	53
Smelting Ore	53
Finishing Stones	53
Duration of a Mining Site	53
Inherent Hazards of Mining	53
The Claim	53
Hireling Loyalty	54
Natural Hazards	55
Unnatural Hazards	55
NEW EQUIPMENT	56
Costs and Weights	56
New Equipment Descriptions	56
Transportation Equipment	57
Equipment for Proficiencies	57
IMPROVING PLAY	59
Expedition Planning	59
Using Beasts of Burden	59
Using Watercraft	60
Fighting Effectively	60
Creating Diversions	60
Speeding Play	61
Creative Underground Spell Use	61
Languages of the Underdark	62
Mapping Techniques	62
DUNGEON MASTER'S SECTION	64-120
DUNGEON MASTER'S TABLE OF CONTENTS	64
COMPILED TABLES	121
INDEX	128

Tables

TABLE 1: SWIMMING EFFECTS OF ENCUMBRANCE	13
TABLE 2: RATES OF CLIMBING	14
TABLE 3: GRAPPLING SUCCESS	16
TABLE 4: BROAD JUMPING	17
TABLE 5: CROSSING WITH A GRAPPLE	17
TABLE 6: THROWN LOOP RANGES	17
TABLE 7: MINIMUM PASSAGEWAY SIZES	21
TABLE 8: ARMOR EFFECTS ON CHARACTER WIDTH	21
TABLE 9: COURSE CHANGES IN DARKNESS	22
TABLE 10: CHARACTER PROFICIENCIES	23
TABLE 11: CRAFTSMAN PROFICIENCIES	25
TABLE 12: WEAPON MAKING	26
TABLE 13: ADVENTURING PROFICIENCIES	26
TABLE 14: MOUNTED BOW FIRE	33
TABLE 15: ODOR DETECTION	38
TABLE 16: WIND EFFECTS ON ODORS	38
TABLE 17: CAVE-IN LOCATION	39
TABLE 18: CAVE-IN CHAIN REACTION	40

TABLE 19: UNDERGROUND STRUCTURE DEFENSIVE POINT VALUE	42
TABLE 20: UNSTEADY NPC REACTIONS	43
TABLE 21: BOAT MOVEMENT RATES	46
TABLE 22: MOVEMENT FROM A STANDSTILL POSITION	46
TABLE 23: BOAT DRAUGHT AND CEILINGS	46
TABLE 24: NONPROFICIENCY PENALTIES FOR BOAT USE	47
TABLE 25: COLLISION PROBABILITY	48
TABLE 26: BOAT DAMAGE	48
TABLE 27: MINING RATES	49
TABLE 28: MINERAL VEIN DIRECTION	49
TABLE 29: VEIN PATH ALTERATIONS	49
TABLE 30: MINING PRODUCTS	50
TABLE 31: MITHRIL CHECK	50
TABLE 32: GEMSTONES	50
TABLE 33: ORE QUALITY	50
TABLE 34: GEMSTONE QUALITY	51
TABLE 35: EQUIPMENT COST AND WEIGHT	56

DUNGEONEER'S SURVIVAL GUIDE: WHAT IS IT?

Most AD&D® game players began their gaming careers with a few hesitant steps into a dark dungeon somewhere in the myriad of gaming universes. Although later adventures took them through vast wildernesses and teeming cities, it is to dungeons that adventurers often long to return.

It seems that beneath the earth lurk the most fearsome (and thus, most exciting) foes, the most fabulous treasures, and the most mysterious locales.

Yet, after a time, many DMs run out of exciting ideas for dungeon adventures. The monsters all seem to lurch mechanically along in the same manner, and one 10-foot-wide corridor looks pretty much like the next one. Variety and challenge are often missing in these campaigns.

This book will change all that. Herein you will uncover vast realms and encounter underground cultures and dungeoneering mechanisms unlike any you have ever experienced.

The Mystery of the Underdark

All AD&D game players have had experience with stone dungeons carved by long-forgotten artisans. Many have ventured through subterranean caverns carved by rushing water or slow, grinding ice. Perhaps they have even sailed down an underground river or journeyed through a sulfurous labyrinth beneath an active volcano.

Within these pages, you will find descriptions of all of these underground settings, and more. Vast cities and advanced cultures await discovery; creatures live here whose eyes have never seen the light of day. How were these underground realms formed? Who controls them, and how? The answers to these questions and more await you in the realms of sunless mystery.

New Rules for Underground Play

The AD&D game system already provides rules for a great number of player actions, ranging from combat and movement to barter and negotiation. Many situations arise, however, that have not been addressed by the rules until now.

Can a character who is not a thief climb a rough stone wall? What if a PC, thief or not, has to fight a creature and cling to the wall at the same time? Or combat an opponent atop a swaying footbridge? Can your heavily laden character possibly jump that yawning chasm? All these unusual situations, and many more, are covered by rules introduced in *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*.

How much use is a mule in a dungeon? And what about that river—is it possible to swim underwater to avoid the monstrous sentries you hear down the bank? Those shiny stones over there—are they worth anything? Read on for the answers!

Player character proficiencies were first introduced in the AD&D *Oriental Adventures* book. *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* reintroduces those proficiencies and adds many more that are uniquely suited to adventuring in the dark regions of the underearth. With the addition of these proficiencies, a whole new area of adventure can be added to the AD&D game.

An assortment of new rules beckon—rules to make the underground reaches as wide open for adventuring as the forest or

meadow that surrounds your characters' home village.

The Denizens of the Underdark

The underearth—the region of caverns and realms beneath even the deepest of dungeons—is teeming with life. Many cultures have been there for as long as life has existed in the sunny reaches above. Other races have been driven there by violent conflict with kindred races of the surface.

Where do these races live? How do they interact with each other and with outsiders? What do they have to offer a group of adventurers from the surface? Creatures such as the drow, duergar, kuo-toa, and myconids are revealed in their natural environments—environments virtually unknown to even the most experienced adventurers from the surface.

The histories of these fabled races are also treated briefly, as a reference for the Dungeon Master. Many adventures can be drawn from these histories, providing a wealth of conflicts and challenges for many gaming sessions to come. There are also detailed random location and encounter generators, allowing for exciting adventuring with little or no preparation time.

The Underground Campaign

The DM receives a great deal of attention in the latter half of this volume. A section is devoted to the intricacies of the underground campaign, and is full of suggestions for designing adventures to challenge (and perhaps throw a scare into) your players.

Map making is addressed in some detail, with guidelines for creating realistic three-dimensional portrayals of many different levels of dungeons, caverns, and castles. Advice on how to stock your underworld with logical and appropriate creatures is also given.

Maintaining a strong, highly motivating story element is an important part of a DM's job, and this is covered within these pages. Suggested conflicts, always the first step in a powerful story, are presented along with comments on generating your own.

The ultimate random element of any game is the players. How do you handle players who always try to do the exact opposite of what you want? What if your campaign has gotten out of hand because of too much treasure or powerful magic in the hands of the PCs before they're ready to handle it? Must such a campaign be discontinued, or are there ways to salvage it? These topics are all covered in this tome.

Using This Information

The first section of this book includes information for player and DM alike. This mainly consists of the expanded rules for underground play, spells, character proficiencies, and new items of equipment that come in handy during adventures underground.

The latter portion of the book contains information tailored to the DM's needs. Here are listed the cultures, creatures, and treasures of the underground, together with the pertinent notes on how to play them. Players should avoid this Forbidden Territory, or face the wrath of the DM.