# Exotic Encounters:

## Minotaurs



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#### Introduction

The Pathfinder Bestiary, and the long line of monstrous encyclopedia that came before it, do a great job of attacking the problem of providing game statistics and mechanical information for a very wide variety of creatures. There are a lot of strange creatures from fantasy novels and movies, from ancient mythology, and, as time went on, from the twisted minds of game designers and even GMs, for that matter. Anyone today who tried to go about creating an extensive bestiary of all the different cool and interesting fantasy monsters could fill three or four volumes with three hundred monsters each, and still have a long way left to go, with fans crying out for various "forgotten" monsters to get some attention. That kind of breadth doesn't leave a whole lot of room for depth, and that's where *Exotic Encounters* comes in.

There are all kinds of reasons why you might not want to use a monster stat-block straight from the core rules. For one thing, if your players have a habit of browsing through such books, or are long-time veterans who know the basic ins and outs of most fantasy staples, you may need an unusual stat-block just to throw them a curve ball and teach them that they can't count on their out of character knowledge to take all the mystery out of the game. Alternatively, many GMs can recall a time when they wanted to make use of a certain monster in their game, only to find that it was a few CRs too high or low for what they had in mind. *Exotic Encounters* takes a single, iconic monster, and creates three new variants on that theme. These variants aren't simple tweaks, and are more than simply advancing or removing Hit Dice, though that occurs as well. Each of these three variations on the monster's theme has a specific, flavorful goal in mind, and a role to play, and their statistics entries are gently massaged in order to make them fit those roles. Further, each of these variants comes with brand new specially-crafted special abilities, which are unique to *Exotic Encounters* and not found anywhere else.

This particular installment of *Exotic Encounters* focuses on the minotaur. A classic of greek myth, these halfmen half-bulls have captured imaginations for centuries. Though depicted in legend as a terrifyingly powerful guardian and deadly foe, the standard Pathfinder minotaur is only CR 4. The minotaurs in this tome are designed to take minotaurs from being an uninspiring low-level bruiser to a memorable encounter unto themselves. First, the twoheaded minotaur (CR 7) is a feral and wild beast with a fractured mind, whose savage offensive power is only somewhat mitigated by its mental fragility. The bronze minotaur (CR 10) sounds like a construct (and looks like one too) but isn't. This terrible guardian of tombs and other such places is an expert at crafting traps, and the sound of its approaching footsteps is so terrible that it drives fear into the heart of seasoned adventurers. Finally, the maze master **minotaur** (CR 15) is a minotaur of a more magical bent, who can drag foes into a mystical maze of its own creation, where they face deadly threats and, if slain, grant the maze master minotaur the ability to create a simulacrum of the victim to serve him.

#### **Two-Headed Minotaur**

This creature is humanoid, but covered in coarse, thick red fur. Its hands end in sharp claws, and its two heads both resemble that of an angry bull, their eyes rolling in their heads and their four horns stained red with blood.

#### MINOTAUR, TWO-HEADED

CR<sub>7</sub>

XP 3,200

#### CE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (+10 natural, -1 size) hp 85 (10010+20) Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +7

#### **Defensive Abilities** natural cunning

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +13 (1d8+4) and 2 gores +8 (2d6+4) Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** bestial rage 12 rounds/day, powerful charge (2 gores +15, 4d6+8), rend (2 gores, 2d6+6 plus 1d6 bleed damage)

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 6 Base Atk +10; CMB +15; CMD 25 Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Attack (gore), Power Attack, Toughness Skills Intimidate +8, Perception +12, Stealth +4, Survival +12; Racial Modifiers +10 Intimidate, +4 Perception, +4 Survival Languages Giant SQ fractured mind ECOLOGY Environment any temperate Organization solitary Treasure standard SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Bestial Rage (Ex):** As a free action, a two-headed minotaur can fly into a deadly rage. This functions as the barbarian's rage class feature, with a few exceptions. First, while raging, the bestial minotaur gains a +8 bonus to Strength and a -4 penalty to Dexterity, instead of the normal amounts. He does not gain a bonus to his Constitution score as a result of raging in this way. Additionally, at the end of the rage, instead of being fatigued, the two-headed minotaur suffers a -4 penalty to Strength and Dexterity. The duration of this penalty is the same as the normal duration of the fatigue effect at the end of a barbarian's rage. Finally, the number of daily rounds of bestial rage that a two-headed minotaur can use is equal to its racial Hit Dice + its Constitution modifier.

Fractured Mind (Ex): A two-headed minotaur's

mind is divided between its two heads, which both makes it more resilient to mental assault, and more fragile. Whenever the two-headed minotaur is forced to make a Will save, it can roll twice and take the better result. However, whenever the two-headed minotaur fails a Will save for any reason, in addition to the normal effects of failing the Will save, the two-headed minotaur becomes confused for 1d4 rounds.

**Natural Cunning (Ex):** Although minotaurs are not especially intelligent, they possess innate cunning and logical ability. This gives them immunity to *maze* spells and prevents them from ever becoming lost. Further, they are never caught flat-footed.

**Powerful Charge (Ex):** In addition to the normal effects of a powerful charge, whenever a two-headed minotaur uses the charge action, he can make two gore attacks instead of making a single attack.

Two-Headed Combatant (Ex): A two-headed minotaur cannot be flanked (it is still subject to critical hits and precision-based damage). Additionally, the twoheaded minotaur has two gore natural attacks. While twoheaded minotaurs do not typically wield manufactured weapons, if one did, it would not suffer a penalty on attack or damage rolls for attacking with two weapons, because each of its two heads controls an arm.

#### Ecology

These strange, mutated minotaurs are very uncommon, and generally only occur in one out of a thousand or so minotaur births. Of these staggeringly low numbers, only a small fraction survive the first few days after being born. Most minotaur traditions hold that two-headed minotaurs are a sign of divine displeasure, as well as metaphysically tainted and unclean, and are a curse upon any tribe that harbors them. As a result, most minotaurs that give birth to a two-headed minotaur will slay it outright rather than have to face the shame that their child would cause them. Even when the parents are not willing to destroy their "abomination" offspring, the rest of the tribe will often band together to stone the child to death, and sometime the parents, as well. A few of the more tolerant tribes simply leave infant two-headed minotaurs exposed to the elements, where most still die, but a few manage to survive and grow to adulthood. Because they are almost universally shunned by their kin (and rarely welcomed by other intelligent races, for that matter), two-headed minotaurs are more feral and less intellectually developed than other minotaurs, though some believe that this is due instead to the fact that their brains are split between their two heads: whereas creatures like ettins have two distinct heads with different personalities, a two-headed minotaur has a single, if slightly fractured, mind. As a result, they have extreme difficulty focusing for extensive periods, though the dual nature of their minds can sometimes allow them to reach complex conclusions much more quickly than other species, making them a dangerously cunning foe.

#### Bronze Minotaur

This creature appears to be a minotaur, but its skin is smooth, and appears to have been made of burnished bronze. The creature moves far too fluidly to be a proper golem, however, and you can see steam escaping from its nostrils as it snorts at you angrily and hefts its flaming, golden axe above its head.

#### MINOTAUR, BRONZE

#### CR 10

XP 9,600

LN Large monstrous humanoid Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 24 (+15 natural, -1 size) hp 142 (15d10+60) Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +11 DR 10/magic; Immune magic; Resist fire 10; Defensive Abilities natural cunning Weaknesses fire weakness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 flaming greataxe +19/+14/+9 (3d6+7 plus 1d6 fire/19-20 x3) and gore +13 (1d8+2) Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. Special Attacks intimidating steps, powerful charge (gore +20, 2d6+6)

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8 Base Atk +15; CMB +20; CMD 30 Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greataxe), Improved Natural Attack (gore), Iron Will, Power Attack, Step Up, Toughness Skills Craft (traps) +16, Intimidate +9, Perception +15, Stealth +7; Racial Modifiers +8 Craft (traps), +4 Perception Languages Giant

ECOLOGY

**Environment** any ruins or underground **Organization** solitary, pair, or patrol (4-6) **Treasure** standard (+*1 flaming greataxe*, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Elite Trapsmith** (Ex): Bronze minotaurs are masters of creating and working around traps. A bronze minotaur can create and reset traps in half the time that it normally costs to create or reset them. In addition, a bronze minotaur never accidentally triggers his own traps, and is immune to any damage inflicted by traps that he created.

**Fire Weakness (Ex):** Whenever a bronze minotaur suffers at least 1 point of fire damage (after applying its fire resistance), it is staggered until the end of its next turn.

**Immunity to Magic (Ex):** A bronze minotaur is immune to all spells of 4<sup>th</sup> level or lower. Additionally, any spell that requires a ranged touch attack that targets the bronze minotaur is reflected off its metallic skin and back towards the caster. The bronze minotaur makes a new attack roll for the spell, using its own base attack bonus and Dexterity modifier. It suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls made in this way. If the second attack roll hits, the source of the spell is affected by it as though he had been the initial target. This ability also applies to spell-like abilities, but not supernatural abilities, even if they mimic spells.

Intimidating Steps (Ex): The sound of a bronze minotaur's footsteps slowly stalking through its territory is enough to unnerve even hardened adventurers. As a fullround action, the bronze minotaur can move up to its speed while walking in an intimidating fashion. If he does so, then he may make a special Intimidate check with a +5 bonus, which applies to all characters that can hear him but cannot see him. This otherwise functions as the demoralize function of the Intimidate skill. Creatures that cannot hear the bronze minotaur, or can both see and hear him, are not affected.

**Natural Cunning (Ex):** Although bronze minotaurs are not especially intelligent, they possess innate cunning and logical ability. This gives them immunity to *maze* spells and prevents them from ever becoming lost. Further, they are never caught flat-footed.

#### Ecology

Bronze minotaurs are not a true subspecies of minotaur, but rather the result of strange arcane forces. Bronze minotaurs are incapable of breeding, either with each other or with other minotaurs, and so cannot have offspring of any kind. Instead, each bronze minotaur was once a standard minotaur, who was affected by a powerful and mysterious curse, which transforms his flesh to have the appearance of bronze, among other changes. The transformation occurs over the course of one week, during which a small patch of bronze-colored skin slowly spreads across the minotaur's entire body. The process also warps the bronze minotaur's mind, making it much more rigid and orderly (although not any more intelligent), and compelling it to seek out treasures and relics to guard.

While a bronze minotaur's skin has the appearance of bronze, and is quite hard, it is not actually metallic. A bronze minotaur is warm to the touch, and its movements are not hindered in any way by the transformation. One sage, who conducted very thorough experiments on the matter, noted that the bronze minotaur's internal organs appear to undergo the same transformation, and it is bronze-colored throughout. This may explain why the bronze minotaur does not need to eat, though it still needs to breathe and sleep. The same sage also noted that, after death, a bronze minotaur's body does decompose, and that while it is resistant to fire, if its body is heated sufficiently, it burns, rather than melting.

The exact nature of the curse is unknown, though it does not spread by contact from one minotaur to another. Some scholars postulate that it is in fact a powerful and secret spell, which archwizards use to draft guardians for their treasures, while others, pointing out the lack of any known spell that does such a thing, postulate that it is the work of the gods, perhaps punishing minotaurs who are extremely wicked, or even rewarding those that serve them well.

#### Maze Master Minotaur

The creature before you appears entirely human from the neck downwards, dressed only in a kilt made of gold cloth. His body is muscular and tan, and appears to gleam, as though oiled. From the neck up, instead of a human head, it has the head of a bull, its eyes glowing an angry shade of red, its curved horns sharpened to points.

#### MINOTAUR, MAZE MASTER

#### CR 15

XP 51,200

CE Large monstrous humanoid Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +40

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 9, flat-footed 27 (+18 natural, -1 size) hp 210 (20d10+100) Fort +12, Ref +14, Will +19 Defensive Abilities exceptional cunning

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 flaming greataxe +25/+20/+15/+10 (3d6+6 plus 1d6 fire/19-20 x3) and gore +17 (1d6+1) Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. Special Attacks deadly maze (3/day, DC 27), powerful charge (gore +24, 2d6+4) Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15<sup>th</sup>) Constant—nondetection 3/day—alarm, arcane lock, obscure object

1/day—hungry pit<sup>APG</sup> (DC 22), solid fog

#### STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 11, Wis 24, Cha 8 Base Atk +20; CMB +24; CMD 34 Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (greataxe), Improved Bull Rush, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Skill Focus (Perception), Step Up, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greataxe) Skills Intimidate +28, Perception +40, Stealth +19, Survival +34; Racial Modifiers +4 Perception, +4 Survival

Languages Aklo, Common

SQ maze minion

ECOLOGY

Environment any ruins or underground Organization solitary Treasure standard (+2 *flaming greataxe*, other treasure) SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Deadly Maze (Sp):** Three times per day, as a fullround action, a maze master minotaur can consign a single creature within 60 feet to an extradimensional maze full of deadly horrors. This functions as the *maze* spell, with a few exceptions. First, in order to escape the maze, instead of succeeding on a DC 20 Intelligence check, the trapped creature must succeed on an opposed Wisdom check against the maze master minotaur. If desired, the trapped creature may substitute an Intelligence check instead of a Wisdom check. Additionally, whenever the trapped creature fails an opposed check in this way, he suffers 3d6 points of damage, plus an additional 1d6 points of damage for every 2 points by which the maze master minotaur's resulted exceeded his own (to a maximum of 8d6). Finally, the effect lasts indefinitely, and the trapped creature is not automatically released after 10 minutes.

The maze master minotaur can only affect one creature with this ability at a time. If the maze master minotaur uses this ability while a creature is already trapped within the maze, the first creature is released. If the maze master minotaur is ever the target of a *maze* spell, in addition to being immune to it, he also regains a daily use of this ability. The saving throw DC to resist this ability is 27, and is Constitution-based.

**Exceptional Cunning** (Ex): Maze master minotaurs have a much greater natural cunning and logical ability than the average minotaur. In addition to being immune to *maze* spells and becoming lost, and never being flat-footed, a maze master minotaur cannot be flanked except by a character with 4 or more rogue levels than the maze master minotuar's CR. Additionally, the maze master minotaur automatically disbelieves any spells of the illusion school that are subject to disbelief.

**Maze Minion (Su):** Whenever a creature dies while affected by the maze master minotaur's deadly maze ability, the maze master minotaur gains the ability to create a simulacrum of that creature. This functions as the *simulacrum* spell, except that the maze master minotaur can create the simulacrum as a full-round action, and can only have one simulacrum created in this way at any one time. If the maze master minotaur creates a new simulacrum while a previous simulacrum exists, the previous simulacrum of a creature in this way, he loses the ability to create further simulacrums of that creature, so if the simulacrum is destroyed, he cannot create another. Unlike the *simulacrum* spell, this ability does grant the maze master minotaur direct telepathic control over the simulacrum created in this way.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** A maze master minotaur uses his Wisdom, rather than his Charisma, to determine the saving throw DCs of his spell-like abilities.

#### Ecology

While minotaurs of all sorts are often associated with mazes, due primarily to their keen navigational sense and occasional penchant for making their lairs in such locales, maze master minotaurs truly deserve their name, and are masters of navigating tricky and winding paths both physically and mentally. These strange creatures do not seem to have much in common with their lesser kin other than a few superficial features. While most standard minotaurs have bull-like features throughout their body, including fur and often hooves or a tail, the maze master minotaur has a much stranger appearance, with only its head marking it as different from a normal man. The maze master minotaur does not speak Giant, as most minotaurs do, but rather speaks Common and Aklo. Further, maze master minotaurs do not associate with other types of minotaurs, and vice versa.

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## Exotic Encounters: Minotaurs

There are all kinds of reasons why you might not want to use a monster stat-block straight from the core rules. For one thing, if your players have a habit of browsing through such books, or are long-time veterans who know the basic ins and outs of most fantasy staples, you may need an unusual stat-block just to throw them a curve ball and teach them that they can't count on their out of character knowledge to take all the mystery out of the game. Alternatively, many GMs can recall a time when they wanted to make use of a certain monster in their game, only to find that it was a few CRs too high or low for what they had in mind.

Geotic Gnoounters takes a single, iconic monster, and creates three new variants on that theme. These variants aren't simple tweaks, and are more than simply advancing or removing hit Dice, though that occurs as well. Each of these three variations on the monster's theme has a specific, flavorful goal in mind, and a role to play, and their statistics entries are gently massaged in order to make them fit those roles. Further, each of these variants comes with brand new specially-crafted special abilities, which are unique to Exotic Encounters and not found anywhere else.

This particular installment of Gootic Gnoounters focuses on the minotaur. A dassic of greek myth, these half-men half-bulls have captured imaginations for centuries. Though depicted in legend as a terrifyingly powerful guardian and deadly foe, the standard *Pathfinder* minotaur is only CR 4. The minotaurs in this tome are designed to take minotaurs from being an uninspiring low-level bruiser to a memorable encounter unto themselves. First, the two-headed minotaur (CR 7) is a feral and wild beast with a fractured mind, whose savage offensive power is only somewhat mitigated by its mental fragility. The bronze minotaur (CR 10) sounds like a construct (and looks like one too) but isn't. This terrible guardian of tombs and other such places is an expert at crafting traps, and the sound of its approaching footsteps is so terrible that it drives fear into the heart of seasoned adventurers. Finally, the maze master minotaur (CR 15) is a minotaur of a more magical bent, who can drag foes into a mystical maze of its own creation, where they face deadly threats and, if slain, grant the maze master minotaur the ability to create a simulacrum of the victim to serve him.

