

# Ultimate Mongol Empire Guide

A stylized illustration of Mongol warriors on horseback. The warriors are wearing traditional armor, including helmets with fur trim and scale-like breastplates. They are mounted on horses and holding bows and arrows, ready for battle. The background features a large, bright yellow sun or moon in a hazy, orange-yellow sky, with several arrows flying through the air. The overall style is graphic and colorful, typical of a book cover for a role-playing game.

**THUNDER ON THE STEPPE**



# Ultimate Mongol Empire Guide

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# Contents

Introduction.....	3	Battles.....	27
Equipment.....	5	Legacy.....	29
Weapons.....	5	East Asia.....	29
Weapons Table.....	7	Central and West Asia.....	29
Armor.....	7	Europe.....	29
Armor Chart.....	8	Character Options.....	31
Items.....	8	Archetypes.....	31
Item Chart.....	9	New Hindrances.....	32
Rank and Structure.....	11	New Edges.....	33
Tactics.....	12	Pre-generated Characters.....	35
Tactical Formations.....	14	Ogla-Khan.....	35
Siege Warfare.....	15	Ilindara, the Maiden of Deri.....	36
Life and Culture.....	16	Hiuja Foi.....	37
Important People.....	18	Savage Tales.....	39
Genghis Khan.....	18	Khan of Khans.....	39
Subutai.....	19	The Preview.....	39
Jochi Khan.....	19	The Players.....	39
Batu Khan.....	19	The Plot.....	40
Chagatai Khan.....	19	The Prize.....	42
Ögedei Khan.....	20	Hell is for Children.....	42
Tolui Khan.....	20	The Preview.....	42
Möngke Khan.....	21	The Players.....	42
Kublai Khan.....	21	The Plot.....	43
Toghan Temür Khan.....	21	The Prize.....	44
Major Events.....	23	Epilogue.....	45
Consolidation of Tribes.....	23	Sources.....	47
Conquests of China.....	24		
Invasion of the Song.....	25		
Kara-Khitai Khanate.....	25		
Mongol Invasion of Khwarezm and the Islamic States.....	25		
Mongol Invasion of Rus.....	26		
Invasion of Georgia.....	26		

# Introduction

*"A man's greatest work is to break his enemies, to drive them before him, to take from them all the things that have been theirs, to hear the weeping of those who cherished them."*

-Genghis Khan

*People had told Temür from an early age that he was destined for great things. His father had known it, his mother had known it, and even the clan elder had known it. Now, sitting atop his steed Qara, the horse he'd ridden since a child, overlooking the gathering force arrayed against him, he knew it. Behind him his family, friends, and paid mercenaries gathered atop their mounts. It was mid-November and the winter was closing fast, another reason to finish this feud. Abagha, the current clan elder, rode up behind him in silence. "Are they there?" he asked in a hushed whisper.*

*"They are." Temür replied in kind.*

*"They will not expect us." He told the night air.*

*Temür nodded and smiled. It was true. He had pushed his force hard into the night to reach the plateau that overlooked the enemy. They'd sleep tonight in peace, believing the battle would come tomorrow. They were wrong. The battle would come in only a few hours. "Tell the men to rest, we'll strike when the moon is high." Abagha nodded and turned his horse back to the gathered host. "Sleep well tonight fiend, for it will be the last night you see."*

*"Do you have a minute to talk?" Temür turned and saw Chagha'an, the mercenary leader, approach. He hid his grimace and nodded. Temür wasn't sure what it was, but something about the mercenary irked him. "The horses are tired, but the men are fresh, we could sneak into camp without them and slay the host before they knew we were upon them."*

*Temür looked blankly at the man. "Leave the horses?" he almost laughed.*

*"Yes, leave them. On foot we can be upon them in mere seconds."*

*Temür shook his head. "You are not Mongol, Chagha'an. You do not understand Mongol ways."*

*"No, I understand the ways of war." Chagha'an told him. And that understanding crosses all nations.*

*Temür placed a hand at his chin and stroked it slightly. "No, I am in the better here. We will do it my way."*

*"So be it." Chagha'an shrugged. "My men and I will be ready."*

*Temür watched the man return to his men and considered his words. No, the man might be schooled in the art of warfare, but he didn't understand Mongols; he never would. He shook the man from his thoughts and turned back to his enemy. Below him fifty or so men sat around makeshift campfires. They numbered only about half of what Temür had assumed his enemy would bring, but so much the better to slay the villain in their ranks. The rising sun would bring him a new life as he took the head of this new upstart, added men and horses to his own, and returned to his family only a few hours to the north to celebrate his victory. Temür grinned and readied his nerve, wishing for the hours to pass quickly.*

Throughout history there have been few armies that can truly say they have conquered. Most nations embark on petty squabbling with neighbors, attempting to expand and consolidate their lands in tiny morsels. Only a few Empires, the great nations of history, the Roman Empire, the British Empire, the Russian Empire, expanded in great swaths. All of them however, pale at the size, speed, and utter brutality in which the Mongol Empire came to fame. From a weak group of warring clans in the Mongolian steppe, Genghis Khan forged the largest land empire the world had ever seen. Reaching from the shores of the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic Sea, encompassing nearly all of Eurasia, the Mongols burnt, massacred, and conquered their way into history. So entrenched was the Mongol Empire that its successor states would last into the 20th century.

In nearly every battle the Mongols and her Khans were victorious. Europe, Africa, and the world were saved only from the timely death of its leader, the Great Khan, on more than one occasion. But, with destruction often comes rebirth. The Mongol peace that existed with a unified Empire allowed trade to prosper from the East to the West, championing science, technology, agriculture, and the arts. Genghis, sensing his hard work could crumble on his death, divided his Empire up between his sons and Gran-sons. This staved off internal strife, but eventually even the mighty Mongols would fall to a combination of internal politics and foreign usurpers. This is their story.



# Equipment

A Mongol warrior was one of the best equipped and self-sufficient fighters of his time. Not only did he bring an array of weaponry, effective at any range, into combat, he also was equipped for hunting, cooking, basic repairs, and a host of other survival activities. This self-reliance and individualistic mentality made each warrior a true threat. When these men came together into a massive fighting force, few could stand before them. What follows is a catalog of the weapons, armor, clothing, and equipment of the Mongol armies.

## Weapons

### **ARROW**

As necessary as the bow was to Mongol life, the arrow was just as crucial. Mongol warriors utilized several different types of arrows for any given situation and were required to always have at least two full quivers on them. The typical arrowhead was v-shaped and used against most opponents. A heavier, iron tipped arrow was utilized at closer range against heavily armored opponents. Finally, a third arrow was built with holes in it. When fired it would create a screeching sound. This sound was used both for signaling purposes and to rattle opposing forces.

### **Bow**

The Mongol bow, renowned in history, was a recurved weapon that came in two forms: one used while riding and one used while dismounted. Both bows were created with a laminate construction; that is, they were created with multiple materials forming several layers. In this way wood or bamboo was augmented with sinew, boiled horn, or hide to form a tough, strong weapon that surpassed contemporary models.

The riding bow was smaller and could be fired in rapid succession while mounted. The bow used while dismounted was heavier and had a much farther range than its smaller kin. The smaller bow had an effective range of around 200 meters with a maximum range of around 500 meters while its larger counterpart exhibited an effective range of about 300 meters and a maximum range of over 700 meters. Both weapons had an average rate of fire of around 12 rounds per minute.

### **DAGGER**

The dagger was an essential part of the Mongol arsenal. It was usually carried concealed on the left forearm and was necessary not only as a weapon of last resort, but as an eating instrument, knife, and all around utility tool. It was typically around 13 inches long and curved slightly.

### **HALBERD**

Halberds were a rarity in Mongolian combat. They were more expensive and harder to make than the typical javelin or lance and therefore outside the realm of the average soldier. However, in combat the halberd was deadly when swung from horseback. With its long, two-sided blade atop a stout pole, the weapon could reach multiple opponents at once when swung.

### **HUOCHONG**

The huochong was first developed in China and quickly adopted by the conquering Mongols. It was a simple, bamboo or bronze tube that used black powder to launch arrows or larger bolts at a foe. They varied in size from small hand versions to frame supported siege weapons. They could also be used to confuse or terrify a resilient opponent.

### **JAVELINS**

Mongol light cavalry were usually outfitted with a few javelins. These weapons were excellent for their versatility as they could be thrown small distances or used in hand to hand combat, especially against infantry forces. These javelins were typically 2-2.5 meters in length with an effective range of around 20 meters.

### **LANCES**

The Mongol lance was a smaller type of pole weapon used as the primary melee weapon by the heavy Mongol cavalry. Unlike European heavy cavalry, the Mongol lance was primarily used as a slashing weapon to attack from horseback and not as a piercing charge. The total length of the lance was about 12 feet and a hook was built in to the blade's underside which could be used to pull riders from their saddles. It was not particularly effective when dismounted.

### **LASSO**

The lasso developed into a weapon as it was a common tool for the Steppe people in daily lives. Effective in moving both livestock and people, the Mongols were quite skilled by upbringing with the lasso and used that skill in battle. A favorite tactic was to sink the lasso around a victim and then drag them behind a galloping horse.

### **SCIMITAR**

Each warrior was equipped with a scimitar for hand to hand combat. These weapons were single-edged curved blades roughly three to four feet in length. The weapon was light, balanced, and quite effective both mounted and on foot.

### **SIEGE ENGINES**

Catapults, trebuchets, and mangonels were all used to create breaches in fortified walls, throw rocks and debris over walls, and start fires with burning pitch. Siege engines were usually built on the site of the siege, utilizing natural resources and a specialized Engineer Corps made up of skilled captives from past conquests. Plague victims were favored ammunition against stubborn, high population centers, as the disease could quickly spread and decimate defenses.

*\*Siege engines are not very effective against individual units as they are difficult to aim with any precision and difficult to utilize in hand to hand combat. Instead, the damage listed is applied to structures as they are considered heavy weapons for the purposes of damaging vehicles, buildings, and fortifications. Most siege engines require a crew of four to reload in the listed time. Add one round of reloading time for each missing crewman below four.*

## Weapons Table

Name	Dmg	Range	Wt	Price	Notes
Bow, Heavy	Str+2d6	14/28/56	5	300	RoF 1
Bow, riding	2d6	10/20/40	3	250	RoF 1
Catapult	2d6	25/50/100	5000	4000	AP 2, Heavy Weapon*
Dagger	Str+d4	2/4/8	1	25	RoF 1
Halberd	Str+d10		15	800	2 hands, Reach 1,
Huochong	2d8	10/20/40	12	300	2 actions to reload
Javelin	Str+d6	3/6/12	5	100	Min Str d8, RoF 1
Lance	Str+d8		10	300	AP 2 / charging, Reach 2
Lasso	Str+d4		2	200	Ignore Shield Parry, Reach 2, +2 to damage to resist disarm
Mangonel	2d6	15/30/60	1200	3500	AP 2, Heavy Weapon*
Scimitar	Str+d6		4	200	
Trebuchet	3d6	35/70/140	8000	6000	AP 2, Heavy Weapon*

## Armor

### BARDING

Barding was incredibly common in the rank and file. Lamellar armor, generally of hardened leather, was the most prevalent, but bronze and steel were also utilized by heavy cavalry. The armor was typically divided into five parts covering vulnerable parts of the animal.

### FUR

The temperature in the steppe often plunged low and a sturdy fur coat could be the difference between life and death. Fur coats were a part of life and usually made personally or handed down from family to family from hunting expeditions. A fur coat could also be seen as a sign of status with wealthier families using exotic or strong animal hides.

### HELMS

The most common helmet used by the ranks was a steel or bronze top to protect the head with a leather curtain for protection of the neck and ears.

### LAMINAR STEEL ARMOR

Laminar armor was made of horizontal overlapping metal plates. This banded construction offered an even greater level of protection, but was quite heavy and weighed down the mount and rider. As the Mongol army relied to a great extent on mobility, this armor was not very common. The Mongol people rarely created this type of armor themselves, instead using it when taken as a spoil of combat.

### LEATHER LAMELLAR ARMOR

The typical Mongol breastplate was made of rectangular plates sewn together into horizontal rows. Light and tough the armor could be made fairly cheaply and allowed for a good deal of protection and maximum flexibility.



**MONGOL SHIELD**

The horseman warrior used a small, round shield made of wicker and reinforced with leather. It was excellent at blocking missile fire and light enough that the offhand could be armed with sword or lance. The shield was stored on the saddle during bow use.

**SCALE STEEL ARMOR**

Scale armor differed from lamellar as the scales were often of various shapes and slightly overlapped one another from top to bottom. This added an additional level of protection over lamellar, but took away some much needed flexibility. Because of this, the armor was not in general use, but instead used for heavier cavalry.

**SILK PADDING**

Silk padding was very common under Mongol armor or clothing. Silk was preferred as it was of great use in protecting against arrows. An arrow wound would fail to rip the silk, which would allow the bolt to be removed easier. Since the silk absorbed a great deal of the blow, poison often failed against it as well.

**STEEL LAMELLAR ARMOR**

Steel or bronze armor was less common and typically only found when taken off a fallen foe or for a higher ranking warrior. The lamellar construction allowed for the same flexibility as leather, but with a greater level of protection as it consisted of dozens of metal plates.

Armor Chart

Name	Armor	Wt	Price	Notes
Fur	+1	20	10	Covers Torso, Arms, + vs cold
Helm	+1	3	10	Covers Head
Lamellar Leather Barding	+2	20	400	Covers Torso, Legs
Lamellar Steel Barding	+3	30	600	Covers Torso, Legs
Laminar Steel Armor	+3	25	900	Covers Torso, Legs, Arms
Leather Lamellar Armor	+1	15	50	Covers Torso
Mongol Shield	-	5	12	+1 Parry, +2 Armor vs ranged
Scale Steel Armor	+4	25	1200	Covers Torso, Legs, Arms
Silk Padding	-	3	55	+2 to Vigor to resist Poison
Steel Lamellar Armor	+2	20	200	Covers Torso

Items

**CAMELS**

Camels were in heavy use by the Mongol army, primarily as beasts of burden, and could be relied on to carry heavy loads for a long duration.

**CAMEL****Attr:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8**Skills:** Fighting d4, Notice d6, Survival d8**Special Abilities:**

- **Desert Adaption:** Camels never need to roll for Survival Checks in desert environments.
- **Kick:** Str
- **Size +2:** Camels weigh between 800 and 1,200 pounds

**FIELD KIT**

Each warrior was expected to carry a field kit that allowed him to survive and thrive as an individual unit. This kit consisted of a knife, needle and thread, awl, kettle, lasso, and additional warm weather clothing. Dried meat and water skins served as basic rations.

**HORSE**

The most effective weapon the Mongol army employed were the very horses that defined their nomadic lifestyle. The exact numbers are vague, but each warrior was expected to bring 2-7 horses with him on campaign. The horses, in reality ponies, were slower on the gallop compared to rival mounts, but were agile, stable, and exhibited greater tenacity and endurance. Additionally, they needed little sustenance and could thrive on grazing.

**MONGOL HORSE****Attr:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10**Pace:** 12; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9**Skills:** Fighting d4, Notice d6, Survival d8**Special Abilities:**

- **Fleet Footed:** Horses roll a d8 when running instead of a d6
- **Kick:** Str
- **Size +2:** Mongol horses weigh between 700 and 900 pounds

**STIRRUPS**

The invention of stirrups most likely spread from riders in the Asian central plain. These simple, leather loops, which later evolved into metal, allowed a rider to remain mounted during sharp turns and quick changes in momentum. It also allowed for easier bow use from the saddle.

## Item Chart

Name	Cost	Notes
Camels	300	
Field Kit	5	+1 to Survival
Horse	400	
Stirrups	15	+1 to Ride



# Rank and Structure

The Mongol army rivaled the best in the world in organization and structure. Genghis Khan took several steps he saw as necessary to make sure the army functioned at peak efficiency. The command structure was built on the individual warrior and created a semblance of esprit de corps for not only the army or regiment, but individual cohorts as well. Genghis used the Decimal System, which divided the army along divisions of ten. The army structure is outlined below from the individual to campaign army. Transfers between units were forbidden and members of the same clan were often separated into differing corps.

- The individual unit, the warrior. Outfitted for survival and combat in the Steppe.
- 10 men made one Arban. These ten warriors were to be brothers to one another and defend each other with their lives. The eldest member was the de facto leader, but the Arban could elect their own when desired. Members of an Arban were trained to never leave another member behind in combat. These units created and kept their own camps and could be detached to perform tasks such as sentry duty. It was rare for members of the same tribe to be included in the same Arban.
- 100 men, or 10 Arbans, comprised a Yaghun. One member was elected its leader and he would disseminate orders from the chain of command. Not as much pride was instilled in the Yaghun as there was the Arban.
- 1,000 men, or 100 Arbans or 10 Yaghuns, formed into a single Minghan. Minghan were useful as they could easily be divided during combat to encircle, feign retreat, or execute other advanced tactical maneuvers. A Minghan was commanded by a single leader and his personal bodyguard.
- 10,000 men, or 1,000 Arbans, 100 Yaghuns, or 10 Minghan, created a single Tumen. The Tumen was considered the appropriate size to be effective in massed combat. It was strong enough to break armies and small enough to travel relatively quickly. These field armies would each be commanded by a single Khan (General).
- Finally, when on a grand campaign or before a large battle was joined, 2-5 Tumen could be gathered quickly into a single grand army, or Hordu, from which the English word Horde originates. These armies excelled at speed and flexibility, largely because of the subunits they comprised.

The individual in charge of each segment was given a wide birth when it came to the care of their men and the execution of their orders. There were very few ranks within the military command. Each Arban and Yaghun's leader was simply referred to as a Chief. Larger units would be led by a man who was given the title of Noyan. Allowing each unit complete tactical autonomy allowed for great flexibility for the mounted forces. Banners, signal whistles, and sound inducing arrows were all used to give orders during the chaos of the fight. Listed below are some basic commands for troop movement.

- **Morindoo:** mount
- **Uragshaa:** go forward

- **Aragshaa:** go backward
- **Zuun tiishee:** go left
- **Baruun tiishee:** go right
- **Zogs:** stop
- **Odoo:** now
- **Ereg:** turn around

One of the great strengths of the Mongol army was its mobility. The entire fighting force consisted of cavalry. This was unseen in Western Europe or China as horses were expensive and difficult to train. The Mongols had the inherent advantage of breeding and riding horses as a way of life, shifting the burden of expense and training onto the individual. As nomadic people, riding and horse rearing were simply part of every individual's upbringing.

The Mongol people practiced a form of Total War. Every male of age was expected to take part in the campaigns; the women, elderly, and young were expected to assist with the war effort in-so-far that it was expected they mend cloth, fletch arrows, cook, assist with the mounts, etc. That being said, the strongest or most skilled women rode into battle alongside the male warriors. The nomad lifestyle was well fit for a military campaign.

Two radical concepts separated the Mongol force from any other contemporary military body. The first was a fairly strict promotion by merit and not birth. There was no divine right to rule on the steppe; instead, leadership was taken by the strong and the cunning. Always worried about old tribal dividing lines, Genghis took great pains to ensure companies were made up of many different tribes; devotion to the unit was more important than the clan. A second advantage, and most noticeable conception, was the creation of an all-cavalry force. In Western Europe especially, cavalry forces were cost prohibitive as the cost and maintenance of the horse was very high. This cost was irrelevant for a fighting force that raised their mounts as a matter of birth. This, coupled with their nomadic lifestyle, made the Mongols excellent horsemen.

Approximately sixty percent of the force was made up entirely of lightly armored, cavalry archers. These men were trained to move in, loose their arrows in deadly volleys, and move away before they could be engaged directly. The other forty percent of the army was made up of heavier armed lancers. These units could also strike and retreat, but excelled at screening maneuvers to either mop up weakened enemies or cover the lighter cavalry archers if enemy forces drew close enough to engage in hand to hand melee. Commanders were expected to fight with their men and lead from the center. Officers and Generals were expected to fight from the battle-center.

## Tactics

Mongol tactics were derived directly from the philosophy born from their nomadic lifestyle. The Mongol people were, before Genghis, historically disorganized into rival clans that fought one another more than any outside force. It was these warring rivalries that the Great Khan took and put into motion on a much larger scale. Some of the basic tenants of this philosophy follow.

**MOBILITY**

By being more mobile than your enemy, you can better control the battlefield. (This ties directly into the second philosophy.) This was utilized on both a tactical and strategic level. On the strategic level it wasn't unheard of for an arm to cover 160 kilometers in a day.

**STRENGTH OPPORTUNITY**

By pitting your strengths against an opponent's weaknesses, you will have greater success. Utilizing a greater mobility, one can achieve this easier.

**DECEPTION**

Deception usually took on the guise of false retreats. An army is vulnerable when retreating and when pursuing a retreating enemy. If you can eliminate your weakness during retreat, but your enemy retains their weakness during pursuit, you create opportunity.

**MORALE**

Mongols preyed upon fear and low morale that existed in most fighting forces at the time. They would purposely spread the tale of bloodthirsty hordes and battlefield atrocities to instill fear in future opponents. Loss of morale was the single greatest catalyst to loss in medieval warfare.

**OBJECTIVE ORIENTATED**

A battle usually had a specific objective involved that wasn't "destroy the enemy force". It was often to gain a flanking advantage or separate forces. These objectives, when met, would stack and create an overall victory in the field.

**CONTINUANCE**

Survivability was the single most important philosophy when it came to the Mongol warrior. Unlike the Norse or Japanese, there was no such thing as glory in death. If one was dead, they could not continue to fight. As such, if retreat or flight was the necessity, it was done. There was no shame in surviving to fight and win the next day. This ideal of bending against strength is a very Eastern philosophy and runs contrary to the ideals of chivalry and "manliness" in the West.

Using these mindsets, specific tactics were created and perfected until the entirety of the Hordu knew their place and could act in concert with one another. These specific tactics are what the Mongols would eventually become known for and what made them such a fearsome foe on the battlefield. The most important tactical theories are as follows.

**DIVIDE ENEMY CONTINGENTS**

Separating less disciplined units from the main force is essential for victory. This can be done by feigning retreat, harassing flanks until they chase, or inciting dread in enemy troops.

**PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT**

Choose the time and place of the desired engagement. Utilize mobility and intelligence to determine where to strike. If combat seems too costly or defeat likely, change the engagement to another time or place.

### **ADVANCED UNIT FILTERING**

Filter units between one another. In this way lighter units can filter back through heavier armed units, screening and falling back whenever necessary. This tactic was used to great success by the Roman Empire. The ability to do so by a force completely on horseback was an incredible achievement of training.

## Tactical Formations

Several formations were developed to bring strength against enemy weakness.

### **LAKE FORMATION**

Also known as the Caracole tactic, waves of light horsemen surge forward, loosed their arrows at about 40-50 meters, and filtered back. On the way back they would fire additional nearly blind shots over their shoulder into the enemy mass. This would bring a continuous stream of arrows against an enemy front while keeping the main force outside of melee range.

### **FALLING STARS**

Detachments of the main force attack the enemy force from multiple angles at the same time. This causes confusion in the enemy ranks and doesn't allow any of the defending force to respond to each individual attack. The main force can then choose to concentrate the bulk of their attack on any one of the sides.

### **MOVING BUSH**

Create skirmishes at irregular intervals along the opponent's formation. This would cause the enemy to respond to each skirmish and their defensive formation would loosen, allowing for a deeper initial charge.

### **FIGHTING DOG**

Organize a retreat that appears to be a rout during the peak of a battle. The enemy army would chase and be vulnerable to additional ambush, harassment, or a full wheeled attack. This feign could last for miles or, in some cases, even a few days.

### **THREE PRONGS**

Penetrate the middle and both flanks at the same time. Often the strongest prong would be on one of the flanks while the weaker flanks would use a "soft" engage, harassing and using mobility to stay out of reach.

### **CHISEL FORMATION**

Also known as spear or diamond formation in the West, placing your heaviest and best armed troops in the center front and driving a wedge into the enemy's front. This not only divided the enemy into two sections, but was often enough to break morale once the ranks were smashed.

Psychological and supernatural warfare was also heavily used. This was typically done with a series of feigns or false information. For instance, it was not uncommon for riders to drag straw mats behind them at a distance. The resulting dust cloud would make the army appear much larger than it actually was. Additional camp fires would be made in the evenings and they would slaughter entire populations of smaller towns or villages that resisted, making future sieges of larger towns unnecessary, counting on rumor and

legend to facilitate a quick surrender. There are even reports of several armies fighting in complete silence; a move that gave the horde an almost spiritual, ghostly quality.

Mongol spy networks were also extensive. There was rarely an attack that happened without advance scouting. Relevant information such as road networks and possible retreat avenues were well mapped for the invading force. Before the invasion of Europe, Mongol commanders were said to have spied in the area for over ten years. On the supernatural end Jadaci, a shaman, used weather magic to call rains or snow and certain feathers used as fletching were said to hold mystical qualities.

## Siege Warfare

As natural nomadic people, siege warfare was initially one of the Mongols' weaknesses. However, they had some natural abilities that made sieges a bit easier. After the fall of China, the Hordu hired many of their new subjects who were adapt at creating siege engines and brought them along on conquest. In contrast, the Chinese were excellent at siege warfare and greatly contributed to the Mongol conquests. The native Mongol way of sieging a city was simply to surround the target and cut it off from any supplies. This effectively slowly starved the city's occupants while the Mongols were free to forage the surrounding area, a skill they excelled at. If a town was close to a body of water, it was often effective to dam and reroute waterways to flood the area. A flooded town was much harder to defend and often the town would surrender straight away.

A distinctly Mongol siege tactic was known as the Kharash. The Kharash was the practice of gathering local residents or prisoners from previous fights and placing them at the head of an advancing unit. This would force the defenders to fire on their own kin to stop the attack. It also provided a living shield wall for the attackers. Even after siege weapons became common place in the Mongol armies, Kharash was used by placing these people at the forefront of a breach assault.

### LOGISTICS

The Mongol logistical system was the most efficient system of its day. The reason for this is twofold. First, as nomadic people, the entirety of the system was used to moving regularly. Entire family structures often moved with the Hordu, bringing up wagons and heavier supplies. Second, the army needed very little supplies during its march. As natural foragers they lived off the land and generally only needed open prairie to feed their numerous mounts. A warrior could, in a pinch, survive a full month off the milk of his horses, which were usually all mares. However, the need for open grazing space eventually became an obstacle for the Mongols. Many scholars believe it was the denseness of forests, hills, and mountains in the West that made the style of Mongol warfare nearly impossible in Western Europe.

To pass information along, fortified stables were dotted along the Mongol territories. A messenger could ride hard to one station, change horses there, and continue along on a fresh mount. As an ancient form of the pony express, this allowed messages to cover great distances in a short amount of time.



## Life and Culture

If you happened to live in a part of the newly conquered Mongolia, you would have found life fairly comfortable. For all their bloodthirsty reputation, once conquered and integrated, the Mongol lifestyle was fairly enlightened for the day. During the 13th and 14th centuries, the Mongol Empire held successful administration over an enormous amount of land. Trade between all parts of the Empire and the West was encouraged and security established. Leadership positions were usually given based on bravery on the battlefield or extreme examples of loyalty. Inheritance based on clan or family status was abolished.

Rather than the state, emphasis was placed on loyalty to the Great Khan. Genghis, the first of the great Khan's, established a form of rule of law that was kept by high government officials. Known as Yassa, this written code of laws was the principal form of law throughout the Empire. Breaking the Yassa was generally punishable with death. The principal purpose was to keep peace despite a wide variety of cultures, religions, and lifestyles. Some articles of the Yassa are spelled out below, although no complete copy of the code survives today.

1. Worship of a God or Gods was permissible in whichever way desired.
2. Respect for all religions with no preference placed over any.
3. Public leaders, learned scholars, religious personal, and specialists are free of any required taxes.
4. Pillaging an enemy before permission from a unit leader is forbidden.
5. Establishment of a yearly great hunt.
6. Peace cannot be maintained with any state that has not submitted to the Empire.
7. Theft must be repaid nine times over. Failure to pay the fine is forfeiture of one's children or life.
8. Foreign rulers cannot hold title.
9. Trading in women is forbidden. Depending on the location, a bride price or dowry is custom to deter from using women as a commodity.
10. Concubine born children are legitimate offspring and entitled to inheritance.
11. Young children can be married via contract if two families wish to be united. Even if the children perish, the contract can still be honored.
12. Sodomy is punishable by death.
13. Urinating in water is illegal.
14. Abduction or sexual assault is punishable by death.
15. Children smaller than a wagon wheel shall not be killed during wartime.
16. One may ransom themselves with payment if they commit murder.

Numerous other laws exist, from never touching water in a water basin with your hands to presenting eligible children to the Khan so that he may choose marriage partners for himself or his family. While some of the laws are unique or may be considered strange, it shows that law and order was respected in the Empire.

As outlined above, freedom of religion and a desire to treat all faiths on an equal basis was important to the Mongols. That being said, the Mongol people historically practiced Tengriism. However, Buddhism, Shamanism, Islam, and a host of other religions were

prevalent and encouraged. As one might expect, Tengriism played a dominant role as it emphasized living in harmony with the world around you.

The Mongol economy was also a complex and breathing entity. As nomadic people, they mass produced very little. As such, they valued finished products from outside sources. Trade was encouraged and the relative safety the Mongols brought made expeditions from and to the West possible; Marco Polo being one of the most famous to prosper from the stability of the Empire. This stable economy brought with it prosperity and wealth and the Mongols quickly transformed their society from completely nomadic to nearly sedentary as they settled in to rule cities and counties within their Empire.

After the death of the first Great Khan, the Empire was divided between his family members. Although there were standard divisions with unique names, it was still considered to be one unified Mongol Empire, with the capital being in Dadu (Beijing), within the Yuan Empire of China. The other branches, the Golden Horde in Russia and Eastern Europe, the Ilkhanid of the Middle East, and the Chaghatay Khanate which dominated Central Asia, were all connected via roadway and messenger rider. So interconnected were the regions that a messenger could deliver a letter or package from one end of the Empire to the other, over 9,000 kilometers away, in just over a month.

The relative stability of the region allowed people to resettle or transfer from one region to the next. The relative tolerance of the Pam Mongolia, or Mongol Peace, encouraged it. It brought together unique and wide spreading cultures like Islamic, Chinese, Asian, Iranian, and Nomadic under one banner and created governance that would last for generations to come.

Into this varied environment came traditional Mongol values which greatly influenced the people they governed. These values generally included love for ancestors, nature, and home. Horses always played a pivotal role in their culture and took on a revered status. Finally, hospitality had always been an important trait and over-the-top hospitality was seen as a virtue. The Yurt, or portable dwelling, was the norm on the steppe, so offering one's home to a traveler or one without home was common.

A few rituals that might seem out of place in the West revolved around life and death. The first major celebration of a new life took place around the age of four and centered on the first haircut. This was typically a village wide celebration and often done for several young members at once. It was also not uncommon to hold ceremony for the dead in the open field. After a short ceremony the body would be left in the open to become sustenance for animals and birds, to return to nature.

# Important People

The list of important military commanders that had a hand in the creation and retention of the Mongol Empire is quite extensive. Listed below are some of the more famous or influential leaders.

## Genghis Khan

The first Great Khan was born by the name Temujin in either 1155 or 1162. Although the exact date of his birth isn't known, what is known is that he was born into a powerful family, the third son of a chief of the Kiyad clan. This noble birth would eventually make it easier for him to achieve Mongol unification. He was betrothed to a noble of the Onggirat tribe in his teenage years and left to live with them as per Mongol custom. In his early twenties he was captured and held for ransom, but summarily escaped from his captors, the story of which greatly increased his legend.

This early life showed Temujin how volatile relationships and temporary alliances within the Mongol clans were. The Chinese especially benefited from the tribal conflicts and were often behind increased inter-tribe hostilities. One of his greatest achievements was eventually uniting all the clans and breaking the generations old tribal alliances. After uniting the clans he invaded the Jin and Xia Dynasties in China, the Kara-Khitan Khanate and Khwarezmian Empire in Eurasia, and west into today's Russia, Georgia, and Bulgaria. Alone these conquests stand as the largest contiguous land Empire to have ever existed. These conquests were only possible because of the major reforms Temujin instituted upon his assertion to the rank of Great Khan.

The major discussion of the day was how to deal with Genghis Khan's succession. Genghis had four sons, and although he preached and practiced leadership by merit in his armies, he held his succession to be quite feudalistic in nature, that is, by birthright. Numerous theories and speculation exist regarding Genghis Khan's succession, but what is known for sure is that he divided his territory into subterritories, which all would be subject to the next great Khan, Ögedei Khan, who finished most of the major invasions after his father's death.



## Subutai

Perhaps the most successful military general in history, Subutai conquered over thirty nations during his service to first Genghis and later Ögedei Khan. The picture of advancement by merit, Subutai was born about twenty years after Genghis into the common class. He quickly distinguished himself and planned and executed the invasions of China and the West. He was adept at surveying the battlefield and finding weak points to exploit. He was said to have plans laid and spies in place for an invasion into Austria and other elements of the Holy Roman Empire at the time of Genghis' death. Subutai, ever faithful, counseled returning to Mongolia to elect the next Great Khan. He was instrumental in the creation of the Mongol Empire and respected by friend and foe alike. He died in his early seventies after retiring to his homeland.



## Jochi Khan

Genghis Khan's first and eldest son, Jochi was a child of controversy. His mother, Börte, was abducted prior to his birth so his legitimacy as one of Genghis' sons was always in question. As such, he was never seriously considered for the heir to the Empire. He was dispatched to expand the conquests North into Siberia and did so successfully. Jochi died before his father, but his sons were given the Westernmost part of the Empire, which would eventually consolidate into the Golden Horde.

## Batu Khan

The son of Jochi and grandson of Genghis, Batu was one of the most successful Khans of the Mongol Empire. Under the guidance of Subutai he conquered most of present day Russia, Poland, and pushed the Empire into the heart of Europe. Plans on the table to invade Austria, Germany, and Poland were halted only because of the death of the Great Khan. He formed the Golden Horde out of his conquests and the Sub-Khanate was one of the longest lasting portions of the Mongol Empire. He was greatly respected during his day and seen as a superior general and leader.

## Chagatai Khan

The second son of Genghis and first to be born without controversy, Chagatai was well respected by his peers, despite his temperamental attitude. Because of Jochi's potential illegitimacy, he was incredibly vocal of Jochi ever succeeding his father and swore to never accept such an assignment. This was the main reason why Genghis appointed his third son as his heir, to avoid a civil war upon his death.

Chagatai created and headed the Chagatai Khanate in Central Asia after his father's death. Of all Genghis Khan's sons, Chagatai most embodied the traditional Mongol life. While his brothers were setting up residence in newly conquered territories, he saw the nomadic lifestyle as more appropriate and governed as such.



### Ögedei Khan

Genghis' successor, the second leader of the Mongol Empire was born the third son to Genghis. During his father's reign he participated in attacks in China and Central Asia and distinguished himself with well executed invasions. He was named Genghis' successor as his two older brothers, Jochi and Chagatai, were feuding. Not wishing to see his Empire ripped apart, Genghis named Ögedei the next great Khan as he was seen as more even keel than his two older brothers.

Said to be charismatic and generous, Ögedei is best remembered for his ability to keep the Empire together despite the loss of its original leader. During his reign, he completed the invasion of the Jin in China, Georgia, Armenia,

Eastern Europe, added Persia to the Empire, and invaded India and Korea as well. Although never his father's equal on the battlefield, he surrounded himself with men of merit and expanded the borders of the Empire even farther. Although intelligent and influential, he was addicted to alcohol and died in an alcoholic stupor at the age of 55. Despite naming his grandson, Shiremun, as his heir, he was succeeded by his eldest son, Güyük.

### Tolui Khan

The youngest son of Genghis, Tolui was in his youth during most of the initial conquests by his father. He did see combat in China and the Middle East though and was an adept soldier and commander. Upon his father's death he inherited most of Mongolia, the homeland of his ancestors, as was common in Mongolian tradition.

Tolui's death came in a unique manner. He willfully ingested a poisonous drink to drive out evil spirits who were afflicting his brother Ögedei. Tolui was killed by the poison, but the sacrifice was not in vein as his brother recovered almost immediately. Tolui's children Kublai and Möngke would go on to rule China and the Il-Khans and his lineage would rule most of Mongolia for the next four-hundred years.

## Möngke Khan

The grandson of Genghis Khan and oldest son of Tolui Khan, Möngke became the fourth Great Khan and ruled the Empire for eight years. During that time he expanded the Empire's borders into the Middle East conquering Iraq and Syria while at the same time enacting pivotal reforms that allowed the Empire to prosper. Tolui saw combat in China against the Jin, but was much more of a statesman than a warrior. He enacted monetary reforms and formalized weights and measurements throughout the Empire and pushed the Imperial borders in the West all the way to Egypt. He died of disease at the age of 50 and was succeeded by his son, Kublai.

## Kublai Khan

Genghis Khan's grandson, sired by Tolui, Kublai Khan completed the submission of Eastern Asia and established the Yuan Dynasty in China, the seat of his power. He was also the first of the Great Khan's who had to bring to heel rival elements within his own family in order to ascend to the throne. The resulting civil war, although brief, was the first instance of instability within the newly formed Mongolian Empire.

During his reign Kublai focused almost entirely on the administration in China and left the Western possessions great autonomy. He launched several invasions and brought much of Southeast Asia into tributary status. However, his two invasions of Japan both failed; sidelined before the armies even reached the Japanese shores. In his later years, having outlived his wife and chosen heir, he turned to food and drink and died at the age of 78.



## Toghan Temür Khan

The last Great Khan, Toghon Temür was in power when the Ming pushed the Yuan Dynasty out of China. Revolts around the Empire were triggered when the government failed to respond to famine, drought, and other natural disasters. As the rebellions grew and organized, Toghon Temür and his court were forced north into Mongolia, effectively losing control of China to the Ming. He died in the country of his ancestors at the age of 50.

### THE GREAT KHANS OF THE MONGOL EMPIRE

- Genghis Khan (1206–1227)
- Tolui Khan (as Regent) (1227–1229)
- Ögedei Khan (1229–1241)
- Töregene Khatun (as Regent) (1243–1246)
- Güyük Khan (1246–1248)
- Oghul Qaimish (as Regent) (1248–1251)
- Möngke Khan (1251–1259)
- Ariq Böke (1259–1264)
- Kublai Khan (1260–1294)
- Temür Khan (1294–1307)
- Khayisan (1308–1311)
- Ayurbarwada (1311–1320)
- Shidebala (1321–1323)
- Yesün-Temür (1323–1328)
- Ragibagh (1328)
- Tugh Temür (1328–1329)
- Kuśala (1329)
- Rinchinbal (1332)
- Toghon Temür (1333–1370)



# Major Events

Subjugated the Mergid Confederations	1189 CE
Consolidation of Tribes	1200-1206
Conquest of Western Xia	1205-1206
Subjugation of Mongol tribes complete	1206
Conquest of Siberia	1207
Conquest of Jin Dynasty	1213-1235
Conquest of the Kara-Khitai	1216-1218
Conquest of Khwarazm	1219-1220
Invasion of the Cumans	1220-1224
Mongol Invasions of India	1222-1327
Invasion of Volga Bulgaria	1223-1236
Invasion of Korea	1231-1259
Conquest of Song dynasty	1235-1279
Invasion of Rus	1236-1242
Invasion of Cumania and Alania	1238-1240
Invasion of Tibet	1240-1241
Battle of Legnica	1241
Invasion of Hungary	1241
Invasion of Anatolia	1241-1244
Invasion of Poland and Bohemia	1241
Battle of Mohi	1241
Invasion of Croatia	1241-1242
Invasion of Serbia and Bulgaria	1242
Invasion of Austria and Northeast Italy	1241
Invasion of Persia, Syria and Mesopotamia	1251-1259
Invasion of Yunnan	1253-1256
Invasion of Baghdad	1258
Siege of Baghdad	1258
Invasion of Galych-Volhynia, Lithuania and Poland	1258-1260
Battle of Ain Jalut	1260
Battle of Abulustayn	1277
Invasions of Japan	1274, 1281
Invasions of Vietnam	1257, 1284, 1287
Invasion of Myanmar	1277

## Consolidation of Tribes

Before the world trembled before the might of the Great Khan and his hordes, he was just another chieftain in the fractured Mongol clans. Rivalries and slights were common and even Temüjin wasn't immune to the normal infighting. One of his earliest conflicts was with a rival warlord who did not want to marry his daughter to Temüjin's eldest son, Jochi.



This sparked conflict that would eventually come to an end only after he had united most of the smaller tribes into a unified confederation.

It's important to know that most of the conflict during this time was conflict of reason. That is, Temüjin and his men would usually fight one or two major battles with the leader of the opposition before the defeated man's men came over to his side. In this way, his troops and legend grew after each successful victory, instead of having to deal with great losses. This unification process began around 1190 and by 1206 nearly all the smaller tribes were united.

In order to secure allegiance, Temüjin broke up the fighting forces and reassigned them as inter-tribal and based on the decimal system. In this way, no rival could become overly powerful as men were beholden to their individual cohort and not their tribe. It was after this unification and restructuring that the unified army flexed their muscle outward, toward ancient enemies.

### Conquests of China

The Mongol conquest of China was not a quick invasion. It was slow, prepared, systematic, and complete spanning nearly a quarter of a century in scope. For decades the Jin Dynasty in China had encouraged and engineered competition and dispute between the Mongol chiefs to keep them fragmented and weak. Seasonal expeditions were sent to collect tribute or weaken the nomadic population and China treated most of the nomadic territory as a vassal state. However, with the tribes unified, The Great Khan looked south himself.

The Mongol army rolled south in 1211 and first clashed with the Jin troops in Northeast China in what is today Hebei province. The first campaign culminated at the Battle of the Badger Mouth. With a full force of nearly 100,000 Mongol troops riding off the plain, the Jin pulled their defenses back to a defensible pass and gathered nearly 500,000 men for defense of the nation. Approximately 70% of these troops were infantry commanded by the Jin's top generals. Supremely confided of their defensible positions and superior numbers, the Jin waited for the Mongols to attack.

Genghis Khan surprised the Jin forces by sending a third of his forces over the mountain peaks and around the main flank. From here, the front force, led by Genghis, utilized their wave formation to send rank after rank forward, firing deadly arrow volleys, before falling back. The Jin infantry suffered heavy losses. During the peak of the attack, the troops who had circumvented the mountains struck at the army's rear and supplies. The attack took the Jin completely unprepared and there was a general route. What was left of the army retreated to the capital while the outer provinces fell one by one to the Mongols.

The resulting siege of Zhongdu, today's Beijing, lasted four years, but eventually the city fell to starvation. The Jin lost a large portion of their territory and an even larger portion of their military. Successful, Genghis Khan took tribute home and set up his new territory's administration. The invasion complete in the mind of the Mongols, they moved on to new territory to the west. Numerous defections from routed armies, additional mercenaries, and newfound allies all joined the Mongol army after the stunning success against the Jin.

The invasion would eventually continue in 1230 when hostilities erupted over Jin refusal to submit to Mongol demands or pay tribute. The Mongols, a bit more adapt at siege warfare after the assimilation of local siege experts, could now take cities faster.

The next four years saw mostly siege battles as the Mongols chased down fleeing Jin troops and the emperors continued to move their capital farther and farther south. Although Genghis Khan died in 1227, his son continued the fight and saw the fall of the Jin as Mongolian troops stormed the last Jin stronghold in 1234.

## Invasion of the Song

In southern China the Song Dynasty had at first allied themselves to Genghis Khan and his men to help complete the destruction of the Jin. However, after the fall of the Jin, the Song desired their old cities back which were now firmly in Mongol control. There was little peace with their brief allies and tension quickly turned to all out hostilities. The Mongols would use the same tactics against the Song as they did the Jin, but were also forced to contend with naval warfare.

Much of the Song territory was dotted with vast rivers and lakes and amphibious warfare was a necessity, something the Mongols knew very little about. However, over the years, they did adapt and used local experts to eventually conquer the Song cities one at a time. The last resistance fell in 1279 after a massive naval campaign where over 1,000 Song ships were defeated by half their number Mongol warships. With the fall of the last Song city, the Yuan Dynasty was established in China.

## Kara-Khitan Khanate

The Kara-Khitan Khanate was an Empire in Central Asia that stretched across present day Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. It was founded in 1124 by the fleeing Liao Dynasty from northern China after they were removed from power. In 1217 the Kara-Khitan Khanate ruler, Kuchlug, advanced against a city the Mongols held in tribute. A small force of 20,000 men was sent south to deal with the threat; Kuchlug fielded an army of 30,000 men. However, all that was necessary was the arrival of the Mongol force for the population and most of Kuchlug's men to revolt and join the Mongols. The Khanate became a tributary state in 1218.

## Mongol Invasion of Khwarezmid and the Islamic States

The Khwarezmid Empire was a land empire that existed in modern day Iran, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan from 1077. The invasion of Khwarezmid came after Mongol emissaries were executed in 1219. Estimates of the army size and composition are varied, but it's generally agreed on that the Mongol Empire fielded an army of some 100,000 cavalry, led by the Great Khan himself as well as his sons and able commanders. Meanwhile, the Khwarezmid Empire, while fielding an army of over 400,000, were divided amongst the cities of the Empire for defense. Additionally, when an Empire was worried about possible coups or usurpers, amassing the army was often a death sentence.

The Mongol attack was swift and came in the form of several divided armies, striking at elements of the Khwarezmid in the South and East. The Mongol Empire also utilized, to great effect for one of the first times, siege techniques conscripted from the Chinese. One by one the cities of the Khwarezmid Empire fell.

The hallmark of this campaign was its death toll and it's from this campaign that the Mongols acquired their reputation for brutality. After a city fell there was a general

looting structure. Craftsmen and artisans would be sent back to Mongolia, children would be given to soldiers as slaves, most able bodied men were offered service in the army, and the rest of the town was massacred. Entire cities were destroyed in the looting or disappeared overnight with its population. By the end of the war, splinter Mongol armies had only a core 10% or so of Mongol troops, but were supplemented by foreign troops or levies. As each city fell, garrisons were left. The last city fell in 1221 after the gathered forces of the Khwarezmid Empire were defeated on the shore of the Indus River, where again Genghis utilized maneuverability to circumvent a mountain to attack with a portion of his forces on a flank.

### Mongol Invasion of Rus

The Russian states did not escape the wrath of the Mongols. In fact, the origin of the Mongol attack in Eastern Europe is an almost supernatural tale. In 1223, prominent princes of Rus joined together and sent a force east to fight the strange nomads who had pushed their neighbors west with tales of destruction in their wake. At the Battle of Kalka River, the Russian princes were defeated, but the Mongols did not press their attack and disappeared back East. For the next dozen years there was no sign of the Mongol armies and the princes of Russia continued their quarrelling with one another. They reappeared in 1237 enmass and changed Russian history forever.

After the fall of Volga Bulgaria in 1236, the Mongols continued pushing west into Russian lands. As the princes of Rus did not accept submission, the Hordus under Batu Khan and the famed general Subutai continued west and besieged and took Ryazan after six days. The city was looted and completely burnt to the ground. The Grand Prince attempted to consolidate his forces and gave the Mongols one final battle at the Battle of the Sit River, but the army was annihilated. In all, the Mongol armies besieged and sacked over a dozen major Russian towns including Moscow, Rostov, Tver, and the capital at Vladimir-Suzdal, where most of the Russian nobility died. After this the remaining Russian cities submitted to Mongol rule and existed as tributary portions of the Golden Horde until 1480 when Akhmat Khan was held at bay by the forces of the Grand Prince Ivan III.

### Invasion of Georgia

Historical Georgia, which at this time stretched from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea, dominated the Caucasus Mountain region. After the fall of the Khwarezmid Empire the Mongol forces were brought into conflict with Georgia in 1220. Jebe Khan and Subutai continued westward after the fall of Khwarezmid and came into contact with 60,000 troops commanded by King George IV of Georgia. The battle was largely inconclusive as the Mongols did not fully commit to the fight, unwilling to conquer the Caucasus region at the current time. In fact, Genghis' orders had been for Jebe and Subutai to move west on reconnaissance and not conquest. After the attack the Mongol recon unit continued north into Russian lands where they would have their initial skirmish with the princes of Rus.

The Mongol army returned later and in 1236 the final invasion began. The great battle never transpired, however. The Georgian army was devastated from conflict with the fleeing Khwarezmid Shah and had little resistance left. Nearly every city submitted to

Mongol overlordship while the Queen fled to the North. Georgia was absorbed as a vassal state and paid annual tribute to the Great Khan. Georgian troops would henceforth fight under the Mongol banner until the fifteenth century when the Kingdom was shattered into small princedoms as the Mongols retreated from the area.

## Battles

Mongol battles were generally conducted in the same manner. They utilized their superior mobility, range, and firepower to obliterate and isolate the enemy before crushing them with heavy cavalry. They rarely engaged in straight melee combat unless they could envelope or outflank an enemy. Listed below are a few examples of battles fought in this manner.

**BATTLE OF THE KALKA RIVER**

Mongol Recon Army

20,000 Cavalry

Jebe Khan, Subutai

**MAY, 1223 CE**

Russian Princes field armies (Kiev, Galicia-Volhynia, Chernigov, Smolensk; Cuman Confederation)

30,000 – 80,000; mostly infantry

Prince Mstislav the Bold, Prince Mstislav III of Kiev, Prince Daniel of Galicia, Prince Mstislav II, Khan Koten

Several Rus princes meet with an army of Cuman nomads to fight off an expeditionary force of Mongols under Jebe and Subutai. The Mongols led the Russians on a nine day feigned retreat, causing the army to be strung out and disorganized. On the banks of the Kalka River, the Mongols turned and decimated the Rus and Cumans. Several Russian princes were slaughtered and the entire army was broken.

**BATTLE OF MOHI**

Mongolian Invasion Army

20,000 Cavalry

Batu Khan, Subutai

**APRIL 11, 1241 CE**

Kingdom of Hungary, HRE, Teutonic Knights, Knights Templar

~40,000 troops; including heavy cavalry contingents and multiple crossbow regiments

King Bela IV, Prince Coloman, Duke Frederick II, Knights Templar contingents

(The main battle during the Mongolian invasion of Hungary.) The Hungarians believed the Mongols were only raiding and realized too late that it was a full-scale invasion. After some posturing, the Hungarian army was destroyed by the Mongol army, who had split into three separate armies. The Hungarian army lost over 30,000 men and from henceforth could not mount any type of resistance.

**BATTLE OF AIN JALUT**

Mongolian Empire  
20,000 Cavalry

Kitbuqa (general)

**SEPTEMBER 3, 1260 CE**

Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt  
20,000 troops; including heavy cavalry and hand  
cannoneer infantry  
Third and fourth Mamluk Sultans, Saif ad-Din  
Qutuz and Baibars

The Battle of Ain Jalut was a pivotal battle in history for two reasons. First, it represented the first loss to the Mongol Empire where they were unable to return later and push their loss into a victory. Second, it was the first major battle recorded to include hand cannon-eers. With the bulk of the Mongol forces returned to Mongolia for the election of the next Great Khan, the Sultan of the Mamluks decided to attack the reduced forces of the Mongols stationed in Syria.

The Mongol general made a grave mistake and failed to use the traditional Mongol hit and run tactics. This allowed the heavy cavalry of the Mamluks to surround and crush the Mongol forces. Primary sources also indicate the use of firearms was effective at frightening Mongol horses during the battle. The Mongols lost nearly their entire force during the battle. A punitive force was called off due to skirmishes with rival Mongol forces in the Caucasus region. In essence, it was the Mongols themselves that were necessary to stop the Mongols from continued expansion.

**BATTLE OF LEGNICA**

Mongol Empire  
Orda Khan, Baidar, Kadan  
20,000 cavalry

**APRIL 9, 1241 CE**

Army of Poland and Christian Alliance troops  
Henry II of HRE, Mieszko II  
30,000-35,000 troops; most infantry, but also  
including heavy knights, conscripts, and merce-  
naries

As the Mongol invasion of Hungary was in full swing, the Northern Mongol army was sent from the east, north through Poland, and expected to meet the main Mongol army south in Hungary. However, Henry II of Silesian met the Mongols in the open field with an alliance of Christian troops. Utilizing traditional Mongol tactics, hit and run techniques, and superior mobility, the horsemen were able to outflank, outmaneuver, and draw the Christian army apart, annihilating it entirely with very little loss.

# Legacy

The legacy of the Mongol Hordes and how they changed the face of Europe, Asia, and Africa cannot be overstated. What follows is a brief overview of the changes the Mongol advance provoked.

## East Asia

East Asia was radically changed by the invading Mongols. The scattered tribes of Mongolia were consolidated into one massive confederation for the first time. This in itself would have been a profound achievement. When that confederation marched, little was left unconquered. The Mongol Yuan Dynasty would rule absolute in the lands of China until 1368 after they conquered the Jin in the North and the Song in Southern China.

Farther to the west the Kingdom of Dali, in present day Tibet, was conquered and absorbed. Korea, Burma, Java, and Vietnam were all crushed and taken as tribute states. These conquests would eventually bring gunpowder and powder-based Chinese weapons west into the Middle-East and Russia, exposing them to Europe for the first time.

## Central and West Asia

Central Asia was the easiest target and Empires like the Kara-Khitan and Khwarezmid were taken, pushing through the Middle-East all the way to the doorsteps of Egypt, the Caucasus, and the Byzantines. Iran, Iraq, Syria, Gaza, and Palestine were absorbed and united. Entire Muslim cities were destroyed and depopulated, the effects which can still be seen today. The Chagatai Khanate would exist in Central Asia for another four hundred years, only coming to an end in 1687. In the Middle East the Ilkhanate did a bit worse due to internal conflicts, but still stabilized turmoil until its retreat in 1335.

This stable corridor of trade created the Silk Road which exposed the far east to Europe and vice-versa. The travels of Marco Polo were exclusively done through Mongol territory. Eventually, this increased exposure would bring with it a new threat, the Bubonic Plague, which would decimate Europe and extend the devastating effect of the already present Dark Ages.

## Europe

Eastern Europe was also greatly impacted by the arrival of the Mongol armies. The Russian principalities were either completely destroyed and absorbed into the Empire or paid tribute for centuries to come. The Golden Horde was established as the sub-Khanate and would exist into the sixteenth century, falling in 1502. Its borders reached through present day Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania, threatening even Poland and Austria. A byproduct of the invasions was the unification of Russia and dominance of the Principality of Muscovy who took on the role of collecting tribute from the other princes and delivering it to the Mongols. This position earned Muscovy great wealth which they were able

to use to purchase and consolidate other Russian lands and led directly to its dominance. Along the Black Sea the Crimean Khanate and Kazakh Khanate would last into the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, when the last Khan descendent of Genghis fell in battle with the Russians in 1847, thus completing a war that spanned seven-hundred years.

The lasting legacy the Mongol conquests had around the world is almost too immense to imagine. From the shores of Japan to the steps of Russia, from the borders of Siberia and down to the mountains of Nepal and the coast of the Persian Gulf, all lands ran with the sound of Mongol hooves. The lands that were conquered are impressive, but many more simply submitted to rule rather than face destruction. Bulgaria, Serbia, Burma, Thailand, Champa, Vietnam, and Novgorod all paid homage along with Trebizond and several Crusader States in the Middle East. Even the mighty remnants of the Roman Empire, the Byzantines, paid tribute after the sack of Thrace when Michael VIII of Byzantium gave his daughter to Nogai Khan along with valuable tribute. Into these conflicts entire people were decimated. A resisting city was obliterated, its people slain, raped, or sold into slavery. Some scholars believe Persia may have lost 90% of its inhabitants, dropping from a population of around 2,500,000 to 250,000. Chinese records indicate over 20 million dead or displaced, Hungary over a million, and Russia similarly as many.

However, there were at least some bright points to come out of so much destruction. With the establishment of relative peace, Pax Mongolica, different people were exposed to new cultures, religions, and viewpoints. Trade was increased and wealth flowed across the regions. The Mongol propensity for religious freedom allowed Buddhist, Muslim, and Christians to travel freely and set-up religious buildings in foreign lands. History, medicine, agriculture, printing, and science received a bump in intensity and learning as ideas were spread from one side of Eurasia to the other.

# Character Options

## Archetypes

While Savage Worlds is a system with lots of flexibility, it lacks standard archetypes. However, some players may wish to skip part of character creation and jump right into a game. To facilitate this, here is a list of archetypes of characters common in the Mongol Empire for quick play or creative reference.

### ARTISAN

**Attr:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d8

**Charisma:** +0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 6

**Skills:** Gambling d8, Knowledge (Craft) d8, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Repair d8

**Hindrances:** Bad Eyes (Major), Death Wish (Minor), Poverty (Minor)

**Edges:** +3 Edges

### CAVALRY OFFICER

**Attr:** Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Charisma:** +0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 7, **Toughness:** 5

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Notice d4, Riding d10, Shooting d6, Survival d4, Tracking d4, +2 Skill Points

**Hindrances:** Curious (Major), Farmer's Daughter (Minor), Loyal (Minor)

**Edges:** Born in the Saddle, Danger Sense

### DIPLOMAT

**Attr:** Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Charisma:** +2, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 5

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Gambling d6, Investigation d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6, Taunt d8

**Hindrances:** All Thumbs (Minor), Greedy (Major), Quirk (Minor)

**Edges:** Attractive, Far and Wide, +1 Edge

### EUROPEAN MERCENARY

**Attr:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Charisma:** -2, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 5

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Gambling d4, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4, +3 Skill Points

**Hindrances:** Outsider (Minor), Stubborn (Minor), +1 Major

**Edges:** Luck, Quick Draw, Trademark Weapon (Choose)

### FOREIGN MERCHANT

**Attr:** Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d4

**Charisma:** +4, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 4

**Skills:** Gambling d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Streetwise d8, +3 Skill Points

**Hindrances:** Greedy (Major), Outsider (Minor), Weak Skin (Minor)

**Edges:** Attractive, Far and Wide, Very Attractive

### HEAVY CAVALRY WARRIOR

**Attr:** Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength dx6 Vigor d6

**Charisma:** -2, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 7, **Toughness:** 5

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Notice d4, Riding d10, Shooting d8, Survival d4

**Hindrances:** Arrogant (Major), Illiterate (Minor), Mean (Minor)

**Edges:** Born in the Saddle, Trademark Weapon (Lance), True Nomad



### LIGHT CAVALRY WARRIOR

**Attr:** Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Charisma:** -4, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 5

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Riding d10, Shooting d10, Survival d4, Tracking d4

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty (Major), Child of Dirt (Minor), Illiterate (Minor)

**Edges:** Born in the Saddle, +2 Edges

### SIEGE ENGINEER CONSCRIPT

**Attr:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Charisma:** -1, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 4

**Skills:** Boating d4, Driving d6, Knowledge d8 (Siege Engines), Knowledge (Tactics) d8, Piloting d6, Repair d10, Streetwise d4

**Hindrances:** Outsider (Minor), Small (Minor), Weak Skin (Major)

**Edges:** +3 Edges

### SLAVER

**Attr:** Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Charisma:** -4, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 5

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Gambling d6, Healing d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Taunt d6, +3 Skill Points

**Hindrances:** Greedy (Major), Mean (Minor), Skunk Scent (Minor)

**Edges:** Connections, Danger Sense, +1 Edge

### TENGRI SHAMAN

**Attr:** Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d8

**Charisma:** -2, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 6

**Skills:** Intimidation d6, Persuasion d10, Knowledge (Religion) d6, Streetwise d4, Survival d4, +4 Skill Points

**Hindrances:** Cautious (Minor), Skunk Scent (Minor)

**Edges:** Healer, Luck

## New Hindrances

### ANIMAL BLIGHT (MINOR)

For some reason, the character brings out the worse in animals. Domesticated animals bite and buck and wild animals either avoid or attack her depending on the situation. She may never have a pet and cannot domesticate animals. Additionally, she must succeed at a Persuasion check whenever the GM calls for it to ride or utilize an animal.

### CHILD OF THE DIRT (MINOR)

Forever bound to land, the character despises large bodies of water and actively attempts to avoid them. Oceans and seas are out of the question and even lakes and rivers are seen with trepidation. She may never learn Swimming or Boating skills and is considered Fatigued when in water.

### FARMER'S DAUGHTER (MINOR)

The male character has gotten a little too close to someone's daughter. The tryst has produced a child and has earned the ire of the daughter's clan. Members of the family will hunt down and generally make life difficult for him. Depending on the setting, there may be legal or moral ramifications for the union as well.

### SCARLET DAUGHTER (MINOR)

The female character has engaged in unwedded intercourse with a stranger, which has produced either pregnancy or a child. In either case, once the transgression is known there can be severe ramifications from family and society.

**SKUNK SCENT (MINOR)**

The character constantly has repulsive body odor. He rarely bathes, but when he does it does little to alleviate the issue. A constant dose of strong perfumes may mask the odor temporarily, but even then the base stench seeps through. He suffers a -2 to Charisma and may alert foes to his presence simply from the smell.

**WEAK SKIN (MINOR/MAJOR)**

The character cannot endure outdoor living. Bugs, rain, heat, cold, everything nature brings seems to annoy her. She must make Vigor rolls after each full day in the wilderness, with a penalty equal to the number of days minus one she has been in the wilderness. On a failed check, she gains a level of Fatigue. This is a Major Hindrance if the campaign features outdoor settings exclusively.

## New Edges

**BORN IN THE SADDLE**

**Type:** Background

**Requirements:** Novice, Agility d8+, Riding d8+

The character has spent most of their life riding. She is as comfortable in the saddle as most people are in their shoes. She receives a +2 bonus to Riding and can fight from the saddle with no penalties. Additionally, she increases the Pace of any mount she rides by 2.

**FAR AND WIDE**

**Type:** Background

**Requirements:** Novice, Persuasion d8+, Charisma 0+

The character has traveled the breadth of the continent and back again. He is well versed in the customs and languages of other lands and generally knows somebody everywhere. When in a city, he may make a Persuasion check to find free basic food and lodging. Additionally, he can speak

enough of the language to get by, although details will escape him. This Edge grants no benefit in a city he could not have feebly visited previously.

**HUNTER**

**Type:** Background

**Requirements:** Novice, Tracking d8+, Shooting d8+

The character is a natural hunter who has done so since an early age. He receives a +2 bonus to all Tracking rolls and extends the distance of his ranged attacks by ten percent, rounded up.

**SURVIVOR**

**Type:** Background

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d6+, Vigor d6+, Survival d8+

The character needs next to nothing to survive. She never makes a Survival roll for basic sustenance and receives a +1 bonus to Vigor to resist Fatigue.

**TRUE NOMAD**

**Type:** Background

**Requirements:** Novice, Spirit d8+

Everything the character owns can be either carried or packed on his horse and moved easily. Any items or treasures he finds can be immediately sold at the nearest town or city for full value. However, he may never acquire immobile property or settle in one place for too long. As long as he moves everything he owns at least ten miles every week, he receives a +1 bonus to all Spirit rolls.

**VACANT SOUL**

**Type:** Background

**Requirements:** Novice, Spirit d8+

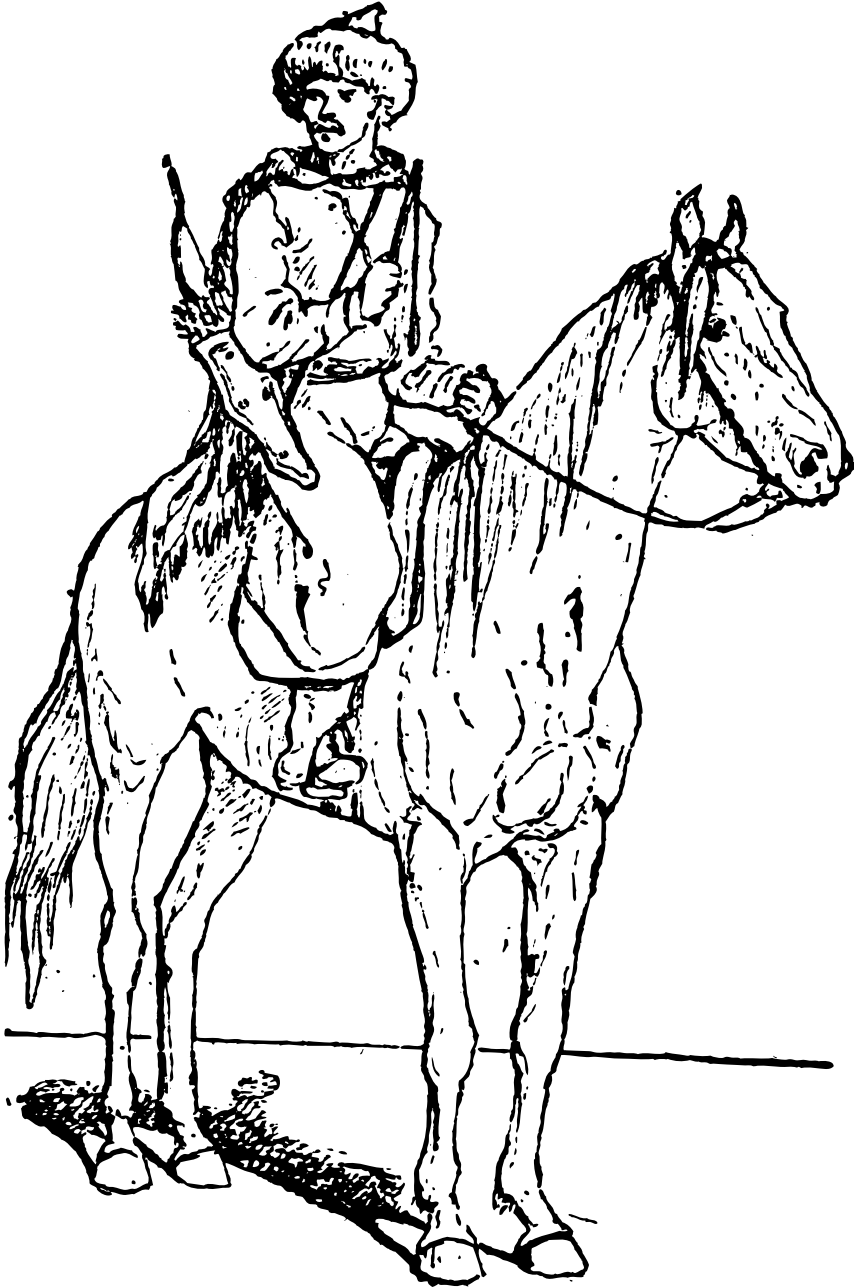
The character lacks all empathy and is devoid of strong emotion. People find it difficult to share strong emotions with him and he may often feel like a social outcast. He receives a +2 bonus to Spirit to resist Fear, but also is unable to benefit from any inspirational advantages.

### VOICE OF THE KHAN

**Type:** Leadership

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d8+, Command, Knowledge (Yassa) d8+

The character is schooled in the details of the Yassa, the laws and punishment established by the Great Khan. With this knowledge comes a bit of prestige and the ability to pass sentence upon those who break it. However, anyone misusing or misrepresenting the code is subject to death and may be hunted down by a proper authority.



# Pre-generated Characters

## Ogla-Khan

Ogla-Khan is a massive, beast of a man that stands over seven feet tall and boasts a thick, red beard. Despite his name, he is not Mongol, but instead came to the East after his clan suffered a disastrous defeat. He adopted the name Ogla-Khan in reference to the great men around him. It's sufficient to say his new hosts don't take kindly to the name.

**Personality:** Loud and full of mirth, Ogla-Khan is warm and friendly to those who treat him kindly. He is quick with a joke, a laugh, as well as a beer. People who meet him are often astonished by the large man's good nature and happy-go-lucky attitude. However, this has gotten him in trouble on several occasions as he is quick to forgive a slight or enemy, who often return later.

**Mannerisms:** Ogla-Khan is rarely in public without a smile on his face. In some places he has earned the nickname, "The Happy Giant". He rarely shakes hands, instead preferring to clasp arms with newcomers and share a massive bear hug with friends.

**Distinguishing Features:** Seven feet tall with a head and beard of red, Ogla-Khan is impossible to miss. His hair and beard are often miskept giving him a wild looking appearance. When provoked to combat he yields a massive two-handed axe, a specially made gift from a local blacksmith friend. Another oddity is that Ogla-Khan takes the middle finger from every evil person he is forced to fight. His current collection is quickly outgrowing the bag he has.

**Environment:** Ogla-Khan prefers cities to towns and towns to the wilderness. He loves people and never misses a chance to introduce himself to a new friend. When in town he usually stays at the best inns and brothels. His coin purse doesn't seem to have a bottom despite his overly generous nature.

**Adventure Seeds:** People who fancy themselves tough men come from far and wide to test themselves against Ogla-Khan. After he dispatches them in combat he is usually quick to turn the potential rivals into friends by pointing out how skilled and brave they are. Occasionally though, a rival wants to stay and returns with friends. The PCs might encounter Ogla-Khan defending himself (well) against a half-dozen angry attackers. Or they may be assigned by a local governor to hunt down and kill the renegade who calls himself Khan. Once they face him though, they might not be so quick to engage him given his stature and friendly nature. Or Ogla might seek the party out in a quest to fight to get his home back.

### OGLA-KHAN (HEROIC)

*Standing over seven feet tall and built like an ox, Ogla-Khan is a massive, friendly, giant of a man. Slow to anger, quick to befriend, Ogla has given the shirt off his back to this new land he now calls home.*

**Attr:** Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 11 (4); **Charisma:** -2

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d12(+2), Gambling d4, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

**Amor:** Scale Steel Armor (Torso, Legs, Arms +4)

**Weapons:** Great Axe (Str+d10; AP 1, Parry -1, 2 hands)

**Items:** Back pack, field kit, bag of fingers

**Edges:** Trademark Weapon (Great Axe), Improved Trademark Weapon (Great Axe), Mighty Blow, Sweep, Improved Sweep, Block, Improved Block

**Hindrances:** Outsider (Minor), Wanted (Minor), Enemy (Major)

### Ilindara, the Maiden of Deri

If you find yourself traveling the vast, open steppe on a cool summer night, with not a soul around, you just might run into Ilindara, the Maiden of Deri. A mysterious woman who always travels alone, Ilindara's past is known only to herself. Travelers who encountered her tell of a persuasive, beautiful woman who is mild mannered and able to convince them to do almost anything.

**Personality:** Ilindara is quiet and rarely talks first. Oddly enough though, she does not avoid confrontation and actively seeks out those passing her by, silently approaching them until they meet. Once engaged she speaks softly and wisely; many a man has said they found their life's calling from a simple conversation with Ilindara. An excellent listener, Ilindara has a way of knowing what the traveler needs and how to best achieve their goal. She usually asks for a token for her advice, taking what she pleases, with the givers consent.

**Mannerisms:** Ilindara is reserved at first, but once conversation has been joined, she uses physical contact to a great extent. A simple touch on the shoulder or arm sends shivers to the recipient. Travelers report a desire to give to her after such a touch.

**Distinguishing Features:** Ilindara is covered head to toe in a plain brown robe. Some have said they have caught sight of a beautiful, silk, blue gown under her robes, but she never fully reveals it. Her hair is a dark, raven colored and she journeys with it tied up into an intricate knot. No sojourner has ever claimed to see her hair down.

**Environment:** Ilindara can be found traveling the open prairie, steppe, and wastelands of the world. She has never been seen in a town or village and dislikes the company of large groups, although she has appeared to smaller groups of five or six.

**Adventure Seeds:** The enigmatic woman of the wastes can be happened upon at any time. She seeks out travelers for her own mysterious purposes. Adventurers are likely to be the target of her rather than the quarry. However, a curious client may hire the PCs to seek out the woman for their own purposes. In either case, it is unlikely Ilindara will make an appearance unless she desires it.

**ILINDARA (LEGENDARY)**

*Clad in a simple brown robe, the raven-haired beauty glides effortlessly through the sand. Her voice is slow and simple, but rings with the truth of ages.*

**Attr:** Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d4, Vigor d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6; **Charisma:** +6

**Skills:** Healing d8, Knowledge (Arcane) d10, Knowledge (History) d8, Knowledge (Psychology) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d12, Psionics d8, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d8, Tracking d6, Survival d8

**Amor:** None

**Weapons:** None

**Items:** Silk dress, brown robe, backpack, amazing wealth

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Magic), Arcane Background (Psionic), Attractive, Very Attractive, Power Points (Magic), Power Points (Psionic), Charismatic, Extra Power

**Hindrances:** Curious (Major), Vow (Minor), Habit (Minor)

**Arcane Power Points:** 15; **Psionic Power Points:** 15

**Arcane Powers:** *blast, invisibility, shape change, stun*

**Psionic Powers:** *environmental protection, puppet, telekinesis*

## Hiuja Foi

Hiuja is a young nomad warrior in his late teenage years. When the Mongols came in force, his clan did not put up a fight, but instead joined the Great Empire. A sliver of a man, Hiuja was always small and had a hard time keeping up with the larger men. So, when the Mongols began conscripting all the men into their armies, Hiuja was ordered to flee by his mother. Displaced to the West, Hiuja is a constant advocate for others to stand united against the hordes.

**Personality:** Hiuja is soft-spoken and uneasy in his new home. He keeps his head down and tries to avoid confrontation. However, if given the chance to talk about the Mongols he speaks with a passionate plea. He has seen firsthand what the Mongols are capable of and wishes to see others avoid the same fate as his people. He is shy and reserved, not easily making friends in this new land.

**Mannerisms:** Hiuja usually walks about with his head lowered. He rarely looks into people's eyes when speaking. This stems from a sense of embarrassment over the loss of his home and family.

**Distinguishing Features:** Hiuja is never without his sword. He wears it constantly, parting only briefly with it during his sleep, but even then it's near. He is small, standing only five and a half feet tall and slim as a stick. His demeanor gives him a very non-threatening look and he's often picked on by others because of his small stature. He keeps a journal of his notes and is constantly writing in it.

**Environment:** Hiuja is most often found in the great cities of the West attempting to recruit support for his stand against the Mongols. He has a vast knowledge of their ways as he has dedicated most of his time to studying their tactics and habits. He refuses to enter the Mongol lands and talks of the border with great fear.

**Adventure Seeds:** Hiuja needs help and lots of it. He'll talk to anyone who will listen to him about the Mongol threat and impart as much of his knowledge as possible on others. He could be sought out as an expert in the field or may turn to the PCs for a mission; entering the Mongol lands themselves as scouts or attempting to locate his family. He is

not wealthy, but will work hard to earn anything of value to pay for their services. He does not take payment for his information, asking only that others pass on his knowledge and the threat he knows is coming.

### **HIUJA FOI (NOVICE)**

*Small and quick, Hiuja seems very nervous around other people. His voice is tepid and he is more likely to run than fight, though he grips the hilt of his sword so tight his knuckles turn white.*

**Attr:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4; **Charisma:** 0

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Mongols) d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Shooting d6

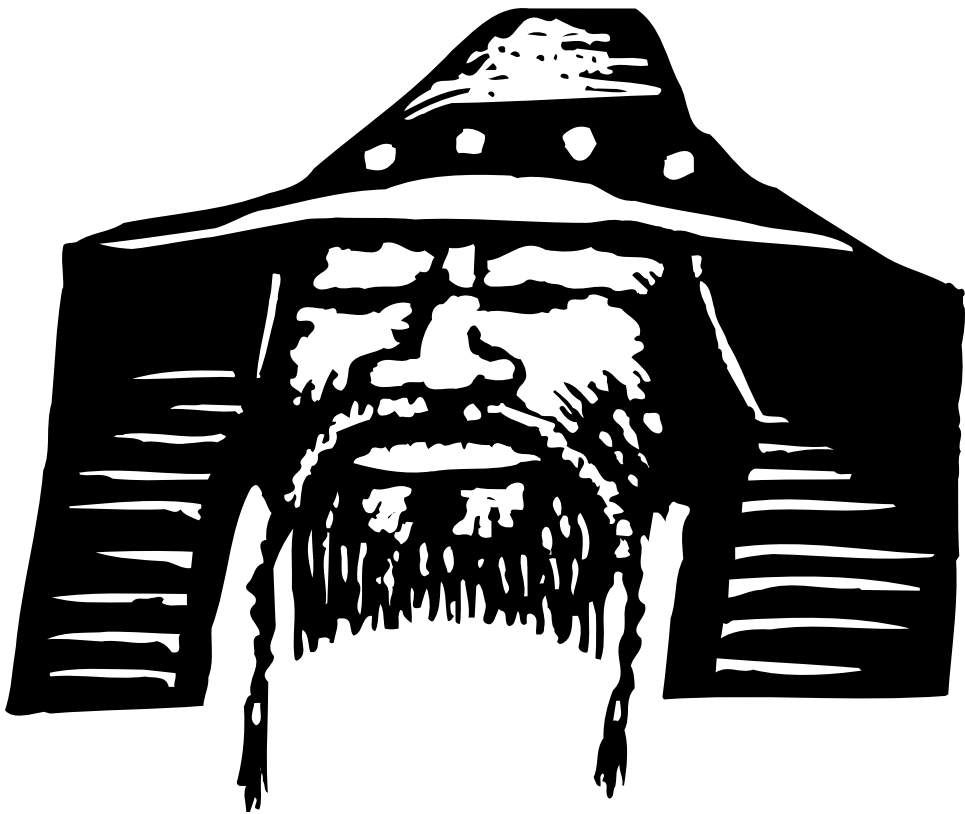
**Amor:** None

**Weapons:** Short sword (Str+d4), bow (12/24/48; 2d6)

**Items:** Travel clothing, pack, journal

**Edges:** Luck, Quick, Survivor

**Hindrances:** Outsider (Minor), Phobia [Mongols] (Minor), Small (Major)



# Savage Tales

Provided here are two micro-adventures intended to give the GM ideas for games set in the Mongol Empire. Details are not provided to allow the GM to tailor adventures for any level of play or insert them into an existing campaign. They are intended to be run over the course of one evening of play.

## Khan of Khans

### The Preview

As members of a small Mongol clan in the East, the PCs hear tell of a great warrior attempting to unite the Mongol tribes into one vast coalition. The PCs are approached by a Chinese dignitary who has heard rumors of the man. He would like them to investigate and return with information on this Chingis. The dignitary can pay well and wants nothing in return other than information on what kind of man he is, utilizing three questions. If the PCs accept and return, the dignitary is alarmed by the answers and has one other mission for the PCs: he would like them to poison Chingis as he believes the man will bring destruction and ruin. If they agree, he will pay a Prince's ransom.

The PCs now have a moral and ethical question to answer. Do they attempt to poison the man or do they reveal the plot to the man? Depending on their decision, the group will face different challenges. If they are successful at poisoning the man, they could change the very course of history. If they reveal the plot, Chingis will begin to trust them and send them out to capture the spy, rewarding them if successful.

### The Players

#### **LU WEN**

Lu Wen is a Chinese envoy that arrives in the PCs' lands from time to time. Because the PCs' clan is traditionally located near the Chinese border, envoys are fairly common. Lu Wen has the reputation for being fair and true to his word, though he rarely talks about his true mission. He stands around 5 feet 9 inches tall and his middle-aged face sports a neatly groomed goatee. If threatened, he usually leans on his dignitary status, backed up by the Jin Dynasty. If threatened more, he usually enlists the aid of others to fight for him.

#### **CHINGIS**

Chingis is a tall, burley Mongol with an air of authority about him. He has a quick temper and would rather fight his battles in the open field than deal with subterfuge. However, he knows that if he is to be successful, he needs to learn both equally. He makes no reservations about his desire to conquer the world under the Mongol boot. He rewards competence and loyalty well and punishes failure and disloyalty with death.



### **WUPIN**

Chingis' bodyguard and loyal friend, Wupin tastes any food given to Chingis before serving it to him. He has a strong fortitude to resist poisons and illness, but is sickened when poison is digested, thus knowing of its existence. He has thwarted two poison attempts on Chingis' life already and relished bringing the culprits to justice. The man is grossly overweight, but still strong and fast. He sees every situation as a threat and is wary of strangers.

### **RAIDERS**

The raiders are a force of nomadic horsemen who have been exiled from their clan or taken to banditry. They charge into the PCs, wielding one-handed swords and bows. They will not accept surrender and flee if they take too many losses.

### **JIN FORCES**

The Jin attackers ride horses, but fight better dismounted. They are the official response to the Mongol threat and fight in coordinated pairs. They are equipped with light armor, shields, and hand weapons. They obey the orders of their leader and if he can be made to surrender or falls, the rest will follow suit.

### **MONGOL PURSUERS**

These are traditional Mongol horsemen who have been sent on a punitive mission against the PCs. They will fight to the death, for if they fail they would most likely receive the same fate at home. They use riding bows before closing with swords.

## The Plot

The PCs are gathered together for dinner, or are hunting near their local semi-camp, and are approached by Lu Wen. He introduces himself as a Jin dignitary sent to forge relations with the Mongol clans. He is polite and giving, offering small, shiny gemstones from his homeland. The gems are valueless, but pretty. If the PCs request it, they can make a Notice roll with a (-1) penalty to determine that he's holding something back. Eventually, he turns the conversation to the confederation consolidating to the west.

The PCs have heard of Chingis and the clans that have already joined him. In fact, the clan elders have been in discussions about what to do. Most favor joining him, but some are skeptical. Lu Wen eventually offers the PCs a good amount of money to seek out Chingis and learn about him. He wants to know his general disposition and the respect others give him. He would also like the PCs to ask Chingis three questions. If they can gather the answers to his questions and the additional information he's asking for, he will give them the promised pay. (His people have heard of Chingis and want to know more about him.) The questions Lu Wen wants answered are:

- If a man is lost, where should he look?
- How can one best help others?
- What is the cost of ambition?

If the PCs agree, he happily engages further, talking at length about his homeland and people. If they refuse, he tells them that he'll be camped in the area for the next two days if they change their minds.

The PCs are free to discuss the mission with their family, friends, or the village elders. The elders console caution as the Jin have never been friends to the Mongols, occasionally sending punitive forces into their lands to burn and pillage. However, they too are interested in learning more about Chingis and encourage the PCs to seek out the man and learn what they can for the good of the clan. Chingis is a member of the Borijin clan, which have always had cordial relations with the PCs' clan.

If the PCs head off to investigate, they embark on a four-day journey by horse to the west. Although true nomads, Chingis has been keeping a semi-permanent camp nearby for recruits and forces to gather. Enroute, the PCs run into a group of raiders returning from a successful raid. They see the PCs as an opportunity for additional wealth and attack after closing to speaking distance. They are confident in their abilities and do not need to resort to deception, blatantly attacking the PCs for their belongings. If dispatched, the PCs are free to loot the bodies or bring the raiders to a camp for justice.

Once the PCs arrive at Chingis' camp, they find it teeming with business. Thousands of Mongols have gathered along with their families. Dozens of merchants have set up shop and there is a festive-like attitude in the evenings. People are excited about the prospect of a united Mongol nation. They speak about invading the Tartars and Jin to stabilize their borders and are expected to hold a Kuriltai, or tribal council, with those present to elect a leader, a Great Khan. Chingis is considered the top contender and if he wins, only a coalition of rival clans further west will stand against him and a united Mongolia.

The PCs can shop, explore, eat, gable, and do a host of other activities usually constrained to large cities. Eventually they try to meet with Chingis and are pointed to the largest tent. Chingis doesn't stand on ceremony and meets with them for five minutes. If they indicate they are presenting a clan that hasn't yet joined, he is gracious and polite, but firm. If asked the questions, he answers them in the following manner after first asking the PCs what they think the answers are:

- If a man is lost, where should he look?
- "I would start by looking at myself."
- How can one best help others?
- "Listen without judgment."
- What is the cost of ambition?
- "The world."

The PCs are free to come and go as they please and should eventually return to their camp.

Back at camp the PCs can report their findings to either the elders, Lu Wen, or both. If they don't seek out Lu Wen, he seeks them out and attempts to gleam the information he needs. After more conversation and diplomacy, Lu Wen speaks about a vision he had recently of the Mongols being destroyed in battle with Chingis at its head. The Mongol people and their lives will be completely destroyed. He is certain it will come to pass unless Chingis is removed from power. He suggests adding a small bit of poison, provided by him, to Chingis' drink. Once complete, Lu Wen and his people will be so thankful, they will make the PCs rich and powerful in the Jin Empire.

The PCs can discuss the merits of doing the deed or not and Lu Wen uses his silver tongue to attempt to get them to agree. If pressed, he accompanies them to Chingis' camp, but will not take part in the deed. The elders, if the reported to, are mostly leaning toward joining Chingis after the report.

The PCs might wish to set a trap for Lu Wen or turn him over to the elders. The elders indicate they are powerless to do anything as they are fearful of the Jin wrath if they kill the man. However, if he was brought to Chingis' camp, the man has a reputation for destroying spies publically. If the PCs end their relationship with Lu Wen here, he leaves, returning to his people to report his findings. If they continue on, they again find themselves riding to the west.

Back at Chingis' camp the PCs are free to act as they please. If they wish to attempt to poison Chingis, they can gather information to find out about Wupin and his role. If they wish to inform the Mongol leader about Lu Wen, they may need to pass a few Persuasion rolls to gain the man's trust. Wupin is more easily swayed and seeks out any threat to his friend. Depending on their actions, Lu Wen may be hung in the streets, Chingis may be poisoned, or both! The PCs are either heroes to the Mongols and villains to the Jin, or vice-versa. If they poison Chingis and flee, a small group catches up to them and gives combat. If they get Lu Wen murdered, a small force of Jin soldiers seeks them out to give combat. If the PCs survive, they are free to collect their prize.

### The Prize

Depending on which side or effect the PCs decide on, they can earn some suitable rewards. If they assist Wu Len in gathering the information, he rewards them with a small amount of wealth. If they further are able to assassinate the Khan, he journeys with them to the capital where he can make them "Rich as Princes." Of course, once in his land, the PCs will be discarded and rebuked.

If the PCs reveal Wu Len's plot to the Khan, he befriends them and they can call on the great man for a service in the future. In addition, he presents each of them with a strong Mongol steed, fully outfitted. Upon inspection, they also find golden horse idols in their saddle bags, which can be sold for a bit of wealth or kept as status tokens.

## Hell is for Children

### The Preview

The PCs are part of a small expeditionary force sent west to scout a small Principedom for resistance. However, the local authorities caught wind of their arrival and set a deadly trap. The force was wiped out completely except for a few scant survivors. The PCs and a low level officer are all that remain of the force. The officer attempts to convince the PCs to finish their mission before returning home. If they agree, they must infiltrate the city and discover the needed information before making their escape back to the east. Although a loss, the completion of the mission will at least not make it a complete failure.

### The Players

#### ESSEN

An older Mongol officer with a diehard dedication to duty, he believes his life and the life of his men are nothing when compared to success of the Empire. He is humorless and short, expecting everyone to feel as he does. There is little room in his life for compromise. A capable fighter, he is often shortsighted in the long run.

**PURSUIT FORCE**

These mounted men exhibit an almost religious zeal when hunting down the PCs. Their morale is high after their recent success and do not flee or surrender, confident in their abilities. The force is mounted and armed with traditional swords and lances. They are moderately armored, though their horses are simple riding horses.

**GUARDS**

The city guards are a simple paid levy that keeps the peace in the city. They are not very brave and call for reinforcements as soon as possible. If encountered outside of the city or where no help can come, they fight defensively and attempt to flee as soon as possible. They will not surrender, however, knowing of the Mongol's reputation for bloodthirstiness. They are lightly armored and wield a wide variety of weapons.

## The Plot

The PCs were part of a reconnaissance force, Zaghun of 100 men detached from a large force two-hundred miles east. The mission was to ride in secret into the lands of Prince Yeuir IV and scout the area, memorizing terrain and attempting to ascertain resistance levels. However, Prince Yeuir learned of the PCs' force and set an intricate ambush. Most of the Mongols were killed and the few that weren't were routed. Cut off from escape, the PCs and a young officer named Essen fled further east and are now holed up near the banks of an expansive river. From here the PCs need to figure out what to do.

Essen weighs in that he believes they should complete their mission. The loss of the force is a tragedy, but it doesn't have to be for not if they can complete the mission. Allow the PCs to discuss the situation and hear all sides. They're in a lightly forested setting about a week away from the main force by horseback and full of people who speak a different language than they do. If they simply wish to flee back to their forces, Essen again tries to convince them to help finish the mission. If he cannot convince them, he does it on his own. If the PCs still want to flee, the GM should use several instances of the Pursuit Force along with Survival and possible Stealth rolls to make it back in one piece. Fatigue may be a factor after so long in the wilderness.

If the PCs agree to help Essen, he responds as if it's only natural they would want to perform their duty. However, he isn't sure what to do to or how to do it. They were told to scout the area for roads, bridges, and other passageways and determine the level of resistance in both the Prince and his subjects. The PCs may come up with the idea of disguising themselves to look like locals. If they do, they can pass if they don't do anything hostile and attempt to blend in. One of the PCs may have to succeed at a few Persuasion rolls if pressed.

Scouting the land is relatively simple; the PCs need to cooperate over the course of three days and get 15 successful rolls out of thirty tries. They can use whatever skills would be helpful, though the GM is free to determine if a skill isn't relative. For instance, the PCs might utilize Streetwise or Investigation to gather information, Stealth to sneak into a fortified area, or Gambling to discover information during a game. If successful, they have gathered enough relevant information to consider the mission a success. If unsuccessful, they have been discovered and the local authorities send a Pursuit Force to track them down.

If the PCs deal with the Pursuit Force, they may make another scouting attempt over the next several days. A second failure and the Prince sends two Pursuit Forces, and so on and so on until the PCs flee, are captured, or are successful. Once they're on their way back, they are spotted by a Pursuit Force who chases them and gives combat. The Pursuit Force knows the lands better than the PCs and is able to maneuver around rivers, woods, and creeks to catch up.

If the PCs elude or defeat the Pursuit Force, they are free to return home. However, enroute, a heat wave covers the area and makes travel extremely difficult across the steppe. Each day the PCs must make Survival rolls or move along the Fatigue track. Springs and rivers are dry or low and muddy, providing almost no relief. They must remember to help their mounts get enough water as well, or they too will succumb to dehydration. Water will be in such a short supply that Survival rolls only allow the PCs to find enough water for three people for that day. (Horses for this purpose count as one person.)

### The Prize

If the PCs manage to return back to the army and are successful, they are treated as heroes. They are rewarded with new horses, clothing, weapons, armor, and gold, as well as prestige. If they're members of the army, each one will be given the chance to lead their own Zaghun. In either case, they are considered local celebrities and receive a +2 bonus to Charisma within that army.

# Epilogue

*Temür sat on his mount in front of his gathered, silent host. The early morning wind bit at his face and he knew it would only be a few days before winter began in earnest. The Northern plains had probably already felt the icy sting of snow. The group had maneuvered around the base of the plateau and now waited only four-hundred yards from their enemy. Temür turned and looked at his men. They smiled back at him with nervous looks. All except for Chagha'na and his men, who seemed remarkably relaxed. "Confidence of many prior battles", he thought to himself. He took a deep breath and pushed Qara forward.*

*The first cry came when he was only ten paces from the tents. He rode through that man, stabbing down with his sword and crying out for vengeance. They trampled the tents and pushed fires over, burning everything before them. In the chaos, it took over two minutes to realize there were only a few people in camp, most of them fleeing east to the hills. Temür pointed to them and yelled, "Pursue! Pursue!" as loud as his voice could over the din of battle. His men saw him and gave chase toward the frightened foes.*

*The half dozen men had just disappeared behind the first hill when his men caught up to him. The riders reached the top and stopped dead in their tracks. On the far side were over a hundred mounted warriors, bows drawn and waiting for them. The men they'd been chasing raced over to free horses and mounted quickly, proud of their part in the ruse. "What is this?" Temür demanded.*

*"You're last stand," came a familiar voice. The lead horsemen parted and a younger, heavily bearded beast of a man rode forward holding a heavy scimitar. "Or you're first?"*

*Temür recognized the voice instantly and his temper flared. "Temujin!" he cried. "How?"*

*"Did you think to outsmart me?" Temujin asked. "While your men were galloping as fast as they could, mine were luring you here.*

*Temür drew the blood off his sword on his pants and looked at his enemy. "I want a clean blade to taste you, Temujin."*

*"You can't win, Temür." Temujin told him sadly.*

*"Two to one odds, I've overcome greater before."*

*Temujin nodded his agreement. "Two to one, yes. You are a great fighter, Temür, worthy of your name. But you are no leader. That is why I took pains to ensure you're destruction." Temujin gave a nod and Chagha'na and his men walked their horses over to Temujin's side.*

*"Traitors!" Temür bellowed.*

*Chagha'na turned around when he reached Temujin's lines and looked to Temür oddly. "Traitor? We're mercenaries! He paid better."*

*"Very well, three to one odds then!" Temür declared.*

*Temujin laughed loudly. "You still do not understand. This is not a battle, Temür. You are defeated. This is a chance for you and your men to pledge to a winning cause. You see, my other force, the one you did so well to avoid, was split up for a reason. While you rested, it raided your caravan." Temür's eyes went wide when understanding of the situation hit him. "Your men, your wives, your children, your mothers, are all being held by my men. Surrender yourself to my charge, ride under my banner, and they will be returned."*

*"Lies! The bastard lies!" Temür decreed. He tried to rally his men, but could see plainly the looks on their faces.*

*"It is no lie, Temür," Temujin told him again. "I want only two things in this life. You and a few like you stand in my way for my first ambition."*

*"Goal?" Temür asked. "And what would that be?"*

*"To unite the rival clans and factions into one army, the scourge of God."*

*"I will never give you my family." Temür whispered into the wind.*

*"Then you will never see them again." Temujin told him. "The same goes for the rest of you. Join me, unite Mongol to Mongol and we can cleanse this world."*

*Temür sighed. He was beaten. He knew he was. Even if he held out, there was no way his men would. "For curiosities sake, what is your second ambition?"*

*Temujin's face surrendered to a serene calmness. "The complete conquest of the world under Mongol rule." For a long time the only sound was the rush of the wind over the hills. Slowly, without word, Temür's men began going over to Temujin's side. It happened without word or emotion, just the slow canter of horse hooves. At the last, Temür stood on one side, arrayed against many. "There is room for you in this new order." Temujin told him.*

*Temür nodded slowly. "No, not after your slight against my family."*

*"Your sister, yes. I had to refuse her. I hold no ill will toward you or toward her." As he spoke Temujin stood up in his saddle, standing high above the gathered host. "But, as I said, I have a greater ambition." Temür knew he had always been meant for great things. He just never knew those great things would be done in another's name. Without option or recourse, he dismounted and bent a knee.*

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