

HELLFROST LAND OF FIRE

• REALM GUIDE #0 •

THE BEDU

Introduction

Author & Layout: Paul Wade-Williams
Editing: Danny James Walsh
Graphic Design: Robin Elliott

The divisions of the great desert into distinct regions are the invention of modern cartographers. To the nomads that live in the wilderness, borders are meaningless, for the landscape ebbs and flows with the wind, and no one rules here. Similarly, while it is not uncommon for scholars and sages to define Bedu tribes by their homeland, they are as varied as the dunes, sharing only their love of the endless sands. Rather than detailing a geographic locale, this supplement explores the Bedu people. It expands on material found in *Hellfrost: Land of Fire*.

ORIGINS OF THE NOMADS

The origins of the tribes have never troubled the Bedu. Followers of Duamutef before Suleiman brought the Devoted creed to the desert and divided their beliefs, their ancestors lived as the god intended, moving with the seasons to find the best pastures for their small goat herds and sheep flocks. Though times have changed, the nomads still live as their ancestors did, seeing no reason to change something that works.

The theologians and historians of the great cities, though, prefer a good origin story over “it’s just the way things have always been.” After all, that doesn’t make for a good story. Most theories proclaim the Bedu were once city (or at least town) dwellers, but were driven from their homelands. The cause of this diaspora varies.

Topping the list is the belief that the desert was once far more fertile than it is today, a fact attested to in many religious stories. Some disaster turned the grassland to sand, forcing the Bedu to give up their settled life and eke a living in the wilderness. The nomads do not dispute this myth, and it appears in Faithful stories. However, they refute any claim they were ever settled—grazing land was simply more abundant in their ancestors’ days.

Another tells that the cities of the Bedu’s ancestors were conquered by some invading force. Hekata, a bogeyman state in many tales, usually gets the blame for this. While it is true Hekata’s army expanded the empire through conquest, there are few clues to the names or locations of the cities they conquered. When Hekata slid into ruin, the Bedu made good their escape. Unable to find their ancient homelands, they wander the desert eternally. It certainly appeals to modern audiences of both creeds, who draw parallels to their ancestors’ escape from jinn enslavement, but there isn’t a shred of evidence to support it. Indeed, Hekatic writings frequently make mention of “wandering tribes,” sometimes as allies and sometimes as enemies, indicating nomads were known to them.

Those who admire the Bedu lifestyle (often without understanding the hardship in-

Permission is granted to print this ebook. No site licence is given.

THIS GAME REFERENCES THE SAVAGE WORLDS GAME SYSTEM, AVAILABLE FROM PINNACLE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP AT WWW.PEGINC.COM. SAVAGE WORLDS & ALL ASSOCIATED LOGOS & TRADEMARKS ARE COPYRIGHTS OF PINNACLE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP USED WITH PERMISSION. PINNACLE MAKES NO REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY AS TO THE QUALITY, VIABILITY, OR SUITABILITY FOR PURPOSE OF THIS PRODUCT.

© 2013 Triple Ace Games Ltd. Hellfrost Realm Guides and all related marks and logos are trademarks of Triple Ace Games Ltd. Savage Worlds and all related marks and logos are trademarks of Pinnacle Entertainment Group. All rights reserved. Used with permission. © 2013. All Rights Reserved.



WWW.TRIPLEACEGAMES.COM

SETTING RULES

The following rules apply among all Bedu tribes.

* **Equipment and the Bedu:** The Bedu rarely produce metal armor, weapons, or goods, though they regularly trade for them. The price for metal items at oases, when they can be found, is increased four fold. When trying to sell the spoils of their adventures to nomadic bands, the heroes' roll to find a buyer suffers a -2 penalty unless the heroes happen across an oasis, in which case the penalty is negated.

* **Nobles:** Unless the GM allows a player character to be the head of a tribe or clan, the highest noble title with which he can begin play is bey. This makes him the child of a sheikh or mir, though he has few responsibilities and his title is honorific.

Typically, the title grants him +2 Charisma, but only half the income of the Rich Edge. He has a tent set aside at his tribe or clan's main camp, but owns no land and has no access to men-at-arms. However, he does not have to worry about settling legal matters, losing his holdings, and such like.

* **Trading with the Bedu:** Although the Bedu settled around the oases use coins, their true nomadic cousins rarely bother, preferring to trade goods.

Heroes looking to sell war booty or buy equipment from nomadic wanderers will need to accept or offer trade goods if they hope to strike any kind of deal. The GM should not demand the heroes keep a detailed list of their exact trade goods.

A hero who spends 100 dinars on trade goods need only record "trade goods: 100 dinars" on his character sheet, leaving the exact nature of the goods flexible. He may then spend the trade goods as if it were coin among the tribes. For convenience, every 5 dinars of trade goods weighs 2 pounds.

involved in desert life or the strict laws by which they live) tell a different version of the story. They speak of how the nomads gave up settled life in favor of being free to live how and where they wished. Most who support this theory claim they fled a tyrannical ruler. More than one opponent of an emir has used this tale to cast seditious comments without directly insulting the emir. Others see them through a veil of romanticism, a people filled with insatiable wanderlust or cast out because they would not bow to a cruel overlord.

Then there is the old favorite of clerics—expulsion from paradise due to sinful behavior. An insulting theory at best and jingoistic at worst, it proposes the Bedu were forced into the desert after committing some major transgression. What crime brought this constant wandering down upon them varies by cult. Despite a total lack of evidence, such stories are frequently repeated, for they serve as a warning to Faithful city dwellers to be mindful of offending the gods, lest they suffer a similar fate.

Social Hierarchy

At its most basic, every Bedu tribe is governed by a sheikh, every clan by a mir, and every family by a bey. Like most things regarding the Bedu, this simplified view does not detail how nobles are chosen.

Sheikhs are indeed tribal rulers. While some tribes practise strict primogeniture, where the oldest child adopts the title on the death of the incumbent ruler, others allow the sheikh to nominate his successor. It is rare for a sheikh to elect a non-family member as his heir, but not unknown. Both systems have strengths and weaknesses. In the former case, there is no political maneuvering for power, but it does mean unfit sheikhs may rule the tribe. In the latter case, politics plays a heavy role (and has led to murder more than once), but having free will usually means the best candidate is named successor.

Sheikhs need a mixture of hard authority and political savvy. Few are autocrats, and nomads accept that no man can be expected to know everything. As such, they frequently take advice from their counselors. Similarly, gender is not seen as an obstacle. Among tribes that use primogeniture it is meaningless, and for named successors all that matters is the heir has all the relevant skills to govern.

Because of the way Bedu names are built up, a sheikh's children rarely hold official titles—their status is shown by having fewer names. However, they are permitted to use the title bey, which is largely honorific, and is more intended to show respect to their parent than the child.

Clans within a tribe may be linked to the tribe through ancient ancestral lines or modern political alliance. Traditionally, they are governed by a mir. The title is never hereditary. Instead, the heads of each family within the clan meet to elect a new mir when the need arises. While they can elect a nobleman, they cannot remove him from office—only death or voluntary abdication can achieve that. Aside from having to be members of the clan, there are no fixed requirements. As head of the clan, the mir is expected to be astute in matters of law, wise in the clan's traditions and history, and be a competent speaker. So long as he has these qualities, any nomad may find himself elected. The mir's power is absolute save in one matter—he cannot switch the clan's allegiance to a different tribe without the unanimous approval of every family in the clan. A mir's children are also entitled to the title bey.

Each clan comprises two or more families tied together through common ancestry. By tradition, a family group comprises every person who can trace their ancestry back to the same great-grandfather on his grandfather's side. Thus, for the most recent generations it includes distant cousins. Families are headed by a bey, who is always the oldest living family member. Given Bedu do not keep accurate records, arguments over who meets that requirement are frequent, but given the age of the

candidates they are rarely violent. The children of a bey hold no formal titles.

Beneath the nobles are the wizirs, the nobles' advisors. be they clerics, mages, or mundanes, they are accorded great respect because they have the ear of the ruler. One cannot simply assume this status—it must be formally granted by the noble. The wizirs of sheikhs outrank those of mirs, and mirs those of beys.

Depending on the tribe's religious views, below the wizirs are the clerics or mages. That they can cast spells is considered very much a secondary consideration to their high status—they are prized for their wisdom and advice. Not all members of this stratum are equal, though.

Among Devoted, sand mages outrank jinn mages, at least socially, who in turn are higher than other magicians (who share a similar social rank). Clerics of Duamutef are always the highest ranking clergy, though who comes next depends on which gods the tribe favors.

Below the spellcasters are the rest of society. Respect is not given by occupation, for traditional Bedu only practice occupations essential to their survival, but on proficiency. Thus, a recognized master of his craft is always more honored than an apprentice.

GENDER

Gender is not particularly important to most modern Bedu—if someone is good at their job, what sex they are is irrelevant. However, certain roles are still considered better suited to one gender over the other.

Male roles typically involve hunting and trading, while women are the homemakers, healers, and crafters. Clerics of Ashtart and Marqod are traditionally female occupations, while those of Duamutef, Shamash, and Tammuz are male. These are not written in stone, though, and certain tribes even reverse these positions. Among one tribe, it is women who are considered the better merchants and navigators, not men. Conversely, there are tribes where the roles are rigidly enforced, and transgression into the role of the wrong gender is considered dishonorable.

Education

Even at the great oases, formal education is unheard of. This is not to say the nomads are ignorant. Education is divided into three main areas.

The tribe's elders, those who have lived long and worked hard, are responsible for passing on the history, laws, and traditions of the tribe, as well as those of other nomads living in the same region. Such lore is passed on orally, through allegorical and heroic tales. While Bedu frequently learn the written form of other languages, few save the most settled tribes place much value on written texts. Some of this is simple prudence—travelling light is essential, and paper and parchment are heavy in bulk. More pragmatically, stories evolve to represent modern

feuds and alliance, and writing them down fixes them both in time and space.

Clerics and imams are responsible for teaching religious matters. Again, storytelling is the medium of choice. While a tribe might honor many gods, only the most important will have permanent clerical representation. As such, these teachers must be converse with all faiths, in order that a complete picture is presented.

Other matters are left to elders who once practiced the topic and current practitioners. Desert navigation and area lore, hunting techniques, how to fight, how to haggle, and many other skills fall into this category.

In the great oases, children pick up information and lore from visiting merchants. While this rarely makes them wise in all matters, it does mean they are more aware of their neighbors' practices and beliefs than most city dwellers. Indeed, children often know a little something about the homelands of merchants, though such stories are not always accurate—merchants have a tendency to inflate the might and prosperity of their city.

Recreation

Though life is hard, Bedu do not neglect time to engage in recreation.

Songs, stories, and poems are very popular, and renowned storytellers are welcomed as honored guests. Unique to the Bedu is the *ghinnawa*, or "little song." Comprising just two lines, these are deeply emotional recitations. Among the Bedu, they are considered a way for men to express feelings they might not otherwise feel comfortable discussing. Usually they are melancholic lamentations or outpourings of grief, though they may be recited at weddings to express love.

Music is popular, with drums, pipes, and simple stringed instruments the common choice. Music is rarely played by itself, but rather serves as an accompaniment to stories and songs.

Pursuits relating to hunting are popular with men, and women are permitted to participate. Archery contests and camel racing are favorites, though even spending time making sure one's bow is in perfect working order is considered a recreational activity. Hunters gather around camp fires to drink coffee and swap stories of their prowess while performing this essential maintenance.

Nobles and some clerics practice falconry, both to hone their hunting birds' instincts and to watch the magnificent creatures in flight. Such birds fetch high prices among the tribes, and to gift one to a sheikh is considered a great honor both to the giver and recipient.

Chess is not unknown, but a variant of checkers is more common. Other board games include *achi* (a relation of tic-tac-toe), *dara* (a more complex variant of *achi*), and *senet* (a board game invented in Hekata millennia ago). While Bedu play various dice games, they have no inherent knowledge of card games. Gambling is common on all games and contests.

Land of Fire Realm Guide #0

DIET

While the tribes' diets vary immensely by homeland and circumstances, there are common factors.

The staple foodstuff is bread. Unleavened, it is cooked on hot stones and eaten with every meal. Wheat flour is most prized, but barley and millet are more typical. The latter two are also used to make porridge.

Dairy products are always popular, and in plentiful supply thanks to the profusion of camels, goats, and sheep. Milk (the most common drink after water), butter, yogurt, and cheese are served with most every meal.

Contrary to popular belief, meat is not regularly eaten unless it has been hunted. Goats and sheep represent wealth, and one does not squander them filling bellies. However, they are butchered when honored guests are being entertained—urban visitors may see it as a simple meal, but the sacrifice of personal wealth, and the honor it bestows on the guest, should not be underestimated. Desert hares, snakes, small lizards, and antelopes are the most common meat, and even then they may be consumed only a few times a week. They may be roasted or boiled, or air dried for later consumption.

Dates and figs are eaten fresh or dried, and form a major part of the diet, providing much needed sugar and sweetness. Honey, gathered from wild bees, is highly prized, and visitors who offer a jar as a gift will receive many thanks even from sheikhs.

Vegetables and other fruits are rarely cultivated, even at oases, and are eaten only when seasonally available. Starchy tubers keep well, and can be found in the desert by those who know where to look.

Contrary to common stories, Bedu do not consume excessive amounts of coffee—it does not grow in the desert, making it an expensive import. That said, it is drunk daily. However, they brew the coffee very strong, either drinking it in small quantities or watering it down with boiling water. Only rarely is it sweetened, and milk is never added.

Salt is another valued product. Not only is it essential to survival, but it is regarded as a symbol of purity. Gifts of salt are signs of generosity, and only honored guests are given salt with meals.

Breakfast is light, usually only bread, cheese, and a few dates, and eaten quickly. Midday meals are slightly heavier, but again are very informal. Often they are eaten on the move. The main meal is eaten in the evening, once the air has cooled. It is more formal, with the entire family gathering to share communal dishes.

and most have many more. As noted in the *Land of Fire* setting book, his clerics are advisors and hunters, and his paladins the family, clan, or tribe's champions.

It is a poor tribe that does not have a shrine to Duamutef. Often the focus of veneration is a bow (usually one that once belonged to a mighty tribal hero figure) or a small statue of a camel. Wood is as acceptable as gold, and certainly much lighter. The idol is kept in a sacred open fronted tent, and is on constant display.

Apsu is extremely important to the tribes, for without his blessing they would die of thirst. His cult is most powerful at the oases and wells, but most clans have a resident cleric among their number.

Ashtart has always been popular, both in her role of provider of edible vegetation and the goddess of the family. Among the Bedu, her clerics are predominantly women, as they are considered more level headed than men, who are prone to fits of passion. Midwifery is always a female role, as being alone with a woman not of one's family is grounds for accusations of adultery (despite her imminent childbirth).

Upuaut is popular, for travel remains essential to all nomads, be they true wanderers looking for grazing lands or tribes engaged in overland trade. Virtually every tribe has a shrine, at which ceremonies are conducted when the need arises, but few have even a single cleric. While regular prayers are offered, few nomads take Upuaut as patron—travel is part of daily life, and thus the god is regularly honored by actions.

Marqod is honored, though rarely devoutly except among healers. Qedeshet is worshipped for his aspects of diplomacy, wisdom, divination, and trade, but never as the god of literacy or invention. Indeed, Bedu myths regarding the god never make mention of these. Among tribes that rely on trade for survival, he often ranks second only to Duamutef. Every tribe venerates Shamash, for it is his laws that ensure the Bedu do not devolve into savages, and through his graces the nobles rule wisely and justly. Every nomad offers praise to Tammuz, though usually only at funerals—death is part of every culture, and to ignore him is beyond foolish.

Worship of Geb-Agni is very rare—nomads do not mine minerals, and few tribes work metal. Similarly, as hunters, Bedu see little need to honor Karmelos on a regular basis, though prayers may be offered to him before battle. Iblis is the great god of evil, and while he may be honored to keep him pacified, true veneration and promotion of his fell goals is outlawed. Tamarni has few devoted adherents, though she is venerated as goddess of the home.

Religion

It is a rare Faithful tribe that does not honor Duamutef as the major deity. While the god of the desert is largely uncaring, he did teach the nomads the skills they needed to survive, and he continues to watch over his chosen people. Every tribe can boast a minimum of one cleric,

Military

Except at the great oases, where there are caravans to protect, Bedu do not maintain standing armies. Every Bedu is expected to be a competent archer and rider, and is honor-bound to defend the tribe when called

upon. Paladins of Duamutef are the nearest the Bedu get to professional soldiers, though paladins of other cults lend muscle as necessary.

A typical Bedu warrior disdains armor, for it is encumbering and hot. Weapons of choice are the bow and scimitar, with long spears (a traditional hunting weapon) often used in place of proper lances. Every adult male is expected to own a wooden medium shield, though using one while hunting is dishonorable (being seen as a sign of weakness). Most ride regular camels or horses, with war camels favored by paladins and nobles.

Highly mobile, Bedu raiders long plagued the early caravans and frequently attacked initial attempts to construct caravanserai. Over time, the number of tribes raiding has greatly diminished, for there is less risk and better reward is guarding caravans, or undertaking responsibility for transporting wares across the hostile desert. More than a few were beaten in submission.

However, Bedu tribes living near the great cities are in much demand as mercenaries. Not only are they excellent mounted archers, but they know the local terrain and can live off the land, thus making them ideal scouts. Some cities maintain a permanent Bedu force, granting them fertile land outside the city walls in return for military service. Others broker contracts as required.

Law & Order

Bedu society is governed by many laws. Some, such as those of hospitality, are traditions, not punishable by any court or judge, but broken only rarely. Others are no different to the laws of the great cities.

Traditionally, the highest legal authority in any tribe is the highest ranking cleric of Tammuz, and not even the sheikh can overrule his verdicts. However, few tribes have more than one cleric, and his other duties often preclude him from involvement in every criminal or civil matter. To that end, nobles with proficient knowledge of the law may act in his place.

In order to ensure swift justice, and save the sheikh from being bothered with every single case, matters concerning just one family may be dealt with by their bey, and crimes that affect one clan by the appropriate mir. Clerics of Shamash, who know the laws by rote but have no legal rights to dispense justice, serve as advisors, ensuring the spirit and letter of the law is carried out without bias or prejudice. Judges are not just responsible for determining guilt or innocence, and passing sentence. In many instances they are mediators, seeking to bring disputes to an end that pleases both parties. This is more common in civil matters than criminal ones.

In matters concerning crimes committed by members of a different tribe, the system is slightly different. Even if the criminal is caught in the act, the suspect's tribe must receive a declaration of intent to prosecute before any trial can commence. The sheikh then has one month to turn over the accused to face justice (if he wasn't

captured by his victim's tribe) or agree that he may be tried (if already captured). Refusal typically leads to a tribal feud unless the cult of Tammuz can reach a suitable middle ground that avoids bloodshed.

As well as beheading, outlawry, dismemberment, and branding, Bedu accept trial by ordeal. No judge can enforce this—it must be demanded by the defendant. First, he must voice his innocence, for it is on this statement this ordeal relies. The accused then licks a hot metal object (a spoon is traditional), and then swills his mouth with water. Should the tongue be burned, he is a liar, and automatically found guilty of the original crime and attempting to pervert justice.

More unusual punishments include castration (for sexual offences), death by being wrapped in a carpet and then trampled under horses' hooves or bludgeoned to death with clubs (usually reserved for nobles and clerics in Faithful tribes), being buried up to one's neck in sand and left there for a certain time, being flayed and then made to walk the sands until death, and death by suffocation (buried alive in sand).

Blood feuds are also a legitimate way of handling crimes, though these actions must be approved by the judge. They are usually only invoked when the accused has ran away, thus preventing him from being brought to trial. For murder, the victim's cousins as far as 5th cousins are given legal dispensation to hunt down and kill the murderer. However, they have but only complete month to complete this deed. If he cannot be found, the murderer's family may appoint a proxy to die in his place. Rape warrants action from 3rd cousins and closer.

HONOR CODES

Bedu place immense emphasis on hospitality, courage, and personal honor. Breach of these codes is not punishable by judges, but does result in a loss of personal honor (handled by Glory in *Hellfrost*).

HOSPITALITY (DIYAFA)

This code requires all Bedu, no matter their financial status, to offer shelter and food to any visitor, though only for three days. During this time, the host may not insult or harm his guest, and must provide sustenance, shelter, and entertainment. The guest's responsibilities include treating his host with respect and not bringing shame to his household. Breaking these sacred tenets incurs a -10 Glory penalty for a minor infraction, and a -20 penalty for a major one.

If a true guest, it is traditional to give your host a gift, with a value in accordance with his social position. Too high, and it implies he is poor (an insult even to the poor). Too low, and it implies he is not worthy of his station. Offering payment for hospitality (as in coins or gems) is yet another insult to the host, for it suggests he is not generous. See adventure *NF1: The Curse of the Sand Lord* for more information on gift etiquette.

Land of Fire Realm Guide #0

COURAGE (HAMASA)

Requires that all men be willing to defend their tribe, not run from an enemy, and not show discomfort or pain. Every Bedu male displays this at least once in his life—before he can become an adult, he must be circumcised. In game terms, a Bedu who takes the Nerves of Steel Edge gains +2 Glory, while one who takes the Improved version earns a further +3 Glory.

PERSONAL HONOR

Divided into male (*sharaf*) and female (*ird*) codes. A complex system and continually in a state of flux, honor is lost and gained based on one's deeds and words. Sexual promiscuity (if not deemed adulterous, which is a crime) can taint one's honor, as can lying, cheating, displaying excessive emotion, speaking out of turn, disrespecting one's superiors, and so on. In game terms, such breeches of honor may warrant a slight Glory penalty.

Marriage

Marriage is a legally and spiritually binding agreement in Bedu society, as it is elsewhere. Members of the same clan cannot marry, and even members of the same tribe marrying is frowned upon. Certain tribes disallow marriage between Devoted and Faithful, but this is rapidly disappearing. Arranged marriages remain common, most often being used to cement tribal alliances. However, arranged does not mean forced, and both parties must voluntarily agree to the union. Marriages of love are far from unusual, though usually only among the lower classes. Still, no law prevents nobles marrying for this reason. With tribes separated geographically, the best place to arrange a marriage is at a market. While most tribes in a region take it in turns to host such a gathering, the major oases are prime spots, for here many tribes visit throughout the year.

Trade & Tribute

Trade lies at the heart of every tribe. Not only does it allow one tribe to exchange surplus goods for those it needs from another, but it is a means of passing on news, honoring existing friendships, ending disputes, cementing new alliances, and arranging marriages.

How trade between the long-dead cultures worked can only be speculated at, but during the reign of the jinn, when the great human empires were reduced to dust, nomad caravans traveled far and wide across the sands. As the freed slaves founded their cities, so local Bedu tribes found employment transporting goods to the far corners of Al-Shirkuh. Even today, most goods are carried across the interior by nomad caravans rather than the inhabitants of the cities.

This steady trade lies at the growth of the major oases. Always considered regional markets, the influx of caravans brought new wealth, and new dilemmas. Caravans demand certain services and goods, neither of which can be provided by purely nomadic people. Thus, the most powerful tribes, at least in terms of controlling the trade routes, are now semi-settled.

While there are tribes that regularly produce goods purely for export, few outside the major oases have the resources for such work—time is spent surviving, not growing fat on foreign coin and goods.

Purely nomadic tribes measure wealth not based on gold, silver, or precious gems, but on the size of one's herds of goats and camels, and flocks of sheep. Not only do livestock produce tradable goods, such as meat (which must be dried), wool, and horn, but their meat and milk forms a major part of the nomads' diet. Camels are essential for carrying goods, and more camels means one can transport larger quantities of cargo. In order to ensure the sheikh remains wealthy, nomad families gift him one goat, sheep, or camel each year. At oases, he also fattens his coffers by taxing visiting merchants.

In addition, each year, every family must tithe 10% of its income to the sheikh. The wares provided are not kept as his personal property, but are shared out among the poorer members of the tribe.

Raiding is still very much an accepted part of life. Though many tribes now refuse to raid caravans, taking livestock and women from a rival tribe is considered a perfectly legitimate means of acquiring wealth and finding a wife. However, raiding is governed by strict laws that have evolved over the millennia.

Bloodshed is to be avoided, as this leads to feuds. Any female prisoners must voluntarily consent to join the raiding tribe within three moons of their capture or be returned to their families unharmed. Raiding a clan or family within the same tribe or clan (as applicable) is a grave offense, for it weakens the bonds that keep the tribal entity safe from outside forces.

Architecture

While a rare few tribes have begun experimenting with stone dwellings, tents remain the norm. Indeed, the tent is so ingrained in Bedu mindset that the word for a family, *bayt*, is the same as for tent.

Regardless of size, tents comprise a rectangular, woolen shell supported by wooden poles. The sides are designed to completely open, revealing the space within, though normally only the front is opened except on special occasions. At night, this is lowered to keep out the chill night air. Except for the tents of nobles, most are low, not high to stand erect. This low design helps deflect wind, and keeps the interior warmer at night.

Internal divisions allow for multiple rooms and a modicum of privacy. Attached to the roof poles with hooks, they can be removed around or taken down as

required with minimal fuss. Carpets or rugs are laid on the floor, and cushions providing seating. Naturally, wealth and status lead not only to larger tents, but to richer designs and fabrics.

A typical tent is spacious enough to sleep one's immediate family—parents, unmarried siblings, and children. The higher one's social class, or at least one's personal wealth, the larger the tent, and the more inner divisions it has (so allowing for harems, private guest quarters, and so on). As a rough rule of thumb, it takes 5 minutes per person the tent sleeps to erect or dismantle a Bedu tent properly, and double that for a pavilion.

Heating and cooking is done over a small hearth. Pots are hung over the hearth on a metal tripod, a prized possession for any family, and a pot of coffee or herbal infusion is almost always found resting beside the hearth in case unexpected guests call.

TENT ETIQUETTE

It is considered extremely suspicious for any nomad to approach a tent from a side that is not rolled up—the host cannot see you approach, and only a cur planning wickedness would think of performing such an act. Similarly, non-family members walking in uninvited or rapping on a pole to announce one's presence is a sign of poor manners and a slight to one's honor.

Visitors, even friends, are expected to wait patiently outside at a polite distance (outside the range of melee weapons), and wait to be noticed. To perform any act while waiting is yet another sign of rudeness—you aren't being attentive to your host's welcome, and it shows a distinct lack of interest in the visit.

Once invited inside, one should remove one's outer footwear—trampling dirt into someone's home is extremely rude, and carpets are expensive, so wear and tear is kept to a minimum. Similarly, sporting any weapon except a dagger in someone's house, unless specifically granted permission, is an insult, implying you do not trust your host to obey the laws of hospitality.

A courteous host will seat guests to his left. Since most people are right-handed, and wear weapons on their left hip, this makes it hard for the host to draw a blade and attack without revealing his intentions. For a guest to be seated to the host's right implies a lack of trust.

Random Tribes

Aside from a handful of tribes living at the major oases, little information is provided on the countless other nomads wandering Al-Shirkuh. This section allows GMs to create basic information about a tribe with just a few draws from the action deck. It can be used for Bedu, Hyaenidae, and Cakali tribes.

GMs may wish to allow player characters nomads who choose to be from a tribe not detailed in *Land of Fire* to use this system to give their people more flavor. The sys-

tem does not directly affect character generation, but it may give players some guidance for picking Hindrances, and offers plenty of roleplaying opportunities once the game begins. When encountering nomads, a successful Knowledge (Heraldry) roll means a character recognizes the tribe. Actually knowing the tribe's particular traits and customs requires a Knowledge (Nomads) roll. Nomads living in the same geographic region as the encountered tribe (and along the immediate borders) use Common Knowledge for both rolls.

TRIBAL TRAIT

As with NPCs, tribes have different traits. These help to define their reputation with outsiders and neighboring tribes. Not every tribesman will share this trait—it is merely an indication of the tribe's overall mentality, and most commonly applies to its sheikh and mirs. While tribal traits do change, it takes many generations. As such, once the GM names a tribe and rolls their trait, the information should be recorded for future use.

Draw one card from the action deck and compare its color and value on the table below.

TRIBAL TRAIT TABLE

Red	Tribal Trait	Black	Tribal Trait
2	Passive	2	Aggressive
3	Trusting	3	Suspicious
4	Brave	4	Cowardly
5	Forgiving	5	Vengeful
6	Honest	6	Dishonest
7	Humble	7	Proud
8	Pious	8	Intolerant
9	Hardworking	9	Lazy
10	Temperate	10	Indulgent
J	Generous	J	Frugal
Q	Garrulous	Q	Taciturn
K	Merciful	K	Merciless
A	World-wise	A	Ignorant

If a Joker is drawn, the GM should draw again to determine the tribal trait. The trait is far more ingrained in society, and may be taken to extremes by some members of the tribe. A second Joker means the trait is extremely dominant, and possessed by most members.

UNUSUAL CUSTOMS

While nomads of all races share many common customs, tribes often have their own distinct practices. Draw one or more cards from the action deck (ignoring Jokers) and consult the various tables below to create customs. Note that certain customs may break generic religious taboos, but can never lead to cleric's sinning. Redraw or apply a waiver if the result would cause sin (such as clerics being required to eat meat if their faith prohibits it).

These are very much bare-bones entries, and GMs are encouraged to give why and how exactly custom applies

Land of Fire Realm Guide #0

some thought—reasons for specific customs are often found the tribe's folklore.

Groups: When an entry is marked "*", it applies to a specific group within the tribe. Draw a second card to determine to which group the custom applies and consult the relevant table. A "***" indicates two groups are involved, and two cards should be drawn to reveal the groups involved.

CLUB: DINING

Card	Custom
2	One group eats the leftovers of another*
3	Strict vegetarians*
4	Strict carnivores*
5	One group always eats first*
6	One group always eats last*
7	Certain food prohibited*
8	Eat only in their tent*
9	Perform a ritual before eating*
10	Eat only food offered them by another*
J	Eat only after dawn or dusk (pick one)*
Q	Eat in a special tent set aside for them*
K	Meals must include a certain food*
A	Eat only in private*

DIAMOND: HOUSING & FAMILY

Card	Custom
2	Unmarried * live in separate area/communally
3	Unmarried * live privately
4	Tents erected in a specific orientation*
5	* become part of bride's family
6	Group cannot enter the tent of another**
7	Extravagant living quarters*
8	Bastards always accepted/rejected (pick one)
9	Interfaith marriage prohibited
10	Groom's family pays dowry
J	May marry only members of same job
Q	Renamed at adulthood or marriage (pick one)
K	Children named after *
A	Remarriage prohibited/required (pick one)*

HEARTS: MISCELLANEOUS

Card	Custom
2	Special privileges for*
3	Private meetings forbidden
4	Tattooing required or prohibited (pick one)*
5	Unusual punishments for * criminal
6	Children raised by*
7	Fixed times for visiting*
8	Business always/never done during meals
9	Unusual significance of flora or fauna
10	Unusual significance of specific color
J	Must wear clothes of specific color*
Q	* prohibited from singing or dancing
K	Unusual greeting or farewell custom*
A	Tribe gifts visitors first

SPADE: MISCELLANEOUS

Card	Custom
2	Visitors must remain segregated for 24 hours
3	Use different names dealing with visitors*
4	Alcohol, tabac, & drugs prohibited for*
5	Unusual adulthood practice*
6	Art depicting sentient races prohibited
7	Only * tithe or never tithe (pick one)
8	Special privileges for *
9	Non-standard responsibilities*
10	Unusual nocturnal custom*
J	Only * may deal with/speak to visitors
Q	All * trained in a certain skill
K	All * banned for learning a certain skill
A	Group cannot speak to another**

GROUPS

This card determines to which group a specific custom applies. Outsiders may be given some leeway if they break this taboo. Use the tribal trait to help determine the tribe's reaction to the taboo.

Card	Custom
2	Convicted criminals
3	Visitors of all races
4	Visitors of one race (pick one)
5	All females
6	All males
7	Certain age group (child, adult, or elder)
8	Craftsmen
9	Entertainers
10	Hunters/warriors
J	Merchants
Q	Paladins or magicians
K	Priests or scholars
A	Nobles

RELIGIOUS VIEWS

Draw a card. A black suit means the tribe is Devoted. On a red card, consult the table below to determine the second most popular deity—Duamutef is always the primary deity. The tribe will always have at least one cleric of the indicated deity and a shrine. At the GM's discretion, large tribes may even have a temple (a pavilion, rather than a permanent structure). Redraw Jokers.

RELIGIOUS VIEW TABLE

Card	Deity
2	Iblis (secretly)
3-5	Apsu
6-7	Ashtart
8-9	Upuaut
10	Marqod
J-Q	Qedeshet
K	Shamash
A	Tammuz