

Expanded Races

A few altered and one new race for the world's greatest roleplaying game.

by JASON MENDELL



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Expanded Races

This chapter presents three new races to supplement those in the Player's Handbook: genasi, muls, and shifters. These new options are available when you make a character, provided that your DM allows them in your campaign.

Genasi

Those who think of other planes at all consider them remote, distant realms, but planar influence can be felt throughout the world. It sometimes manifests in beings who, through an accident of birth, carry the power of the planes in their blood. The genasi are one such people, the offspring of genies and mortals.

The Elemental Planes are often inhospitable to natives of the Material Plane: crushing earth, searing flames, boundless skies, and endless seas make visiting these places dangerous for even a short time. The powerful genies, however, don't face such troubles when venturing into the mortal world. They adapt well to the mingled elements of the Material Plane, and they sometimes visit—whether of their own volition or compelled by magic. Some genies can adopt mortal guise and travel incognito.

During these visits, a mortal might catch a genie's eye. Friendship forms, romance blooms, and sometimes children result. These children are genasi: individuals with ties to two worlds, yet belonging to neither. Some genasi are born of mortal–genie unions, others have two genasi as parents, and a rare few have a genie further up their family tree, manifesting an elemental heritage that's lain dormant for generations.

Occasionally, genasi result from exposure to a surge of elemental power, through phenomena such as an eruption from the Inner Planes or a planar convergence. Elemental energy saturates any creatures in the area and might alter their nature enough that their offspring with other mortals are born as genasi.

Heirs to Elemental Power

Genasi inherit something from both sides of their dual nature. They resemble humans but have unusual skin color (red, green, blue, or gray), and there is something odd about them. The elemental blood flowing through their veins manifests differently in each genasi, often as magical power.

Seen in silhouette, a genasi can usually pass for human. Those of earth or water descent tend to be heavier, while those of air or fire tend to be lighter. A given genasi might have some features reminiscent of the mortal parent (pointed ears from an elf, a stockier frame and thick hair from a dwarf, small hands and feet from a halfling, exceedingly large eyes from a gnome, and so on).

Genasi almost never have contact with their elemental parents. Genies seldom have interest in their mortal

offspring, seeing them as accidents. Many feel nothing for their genasi children at all.

Some genasi live as outcasts, driven into exile for their unsettling appearance and strange magic, or assuming leadership of savage humanoids and weird cults in untamed lands. Others gain positions of great influence, especially where elemental beings are revered. A few genasi leave the Material Plane to find refuge in the households of their genie parents.

Wild and Confident

Genasi rarely lack confidence, seeing themselves as equal to almost any challenge in their path. This certainty might manifest as graceful self-assurance in one genasi and as arrogance in another. Such self-confidence can sometimes blind genasi to risk, and their great plans often get them and others into trouble.

Too much failure can chip away at even a genasi's sense of self, so they constantly push themselves to improve, honing their talents and perfecting their craft.

Genasi Lands

As rare beings, genasi might go their entire lives without encountering another one of their kind. There are no great genasi cities or empires. Genasi seldom have communities of their own and typically adopt the cultures and societies into which they are born. The more strange their appearance, the harder time they have. Many genasi lose themselves in teeming cities, where their distinctiveness hardly raises an eyebrow in places accustomed to a variety of different people.

Those living on the frontier, though, have a much harder time. People there tend to be less accepting of differences. Sometimes a cold shoulder and a suspicious glare are the best genasi can hope for; in more backward places, they face ostracism and even violence from people who mistake them for fiends. Facing a hard life, these genasi seek isolation in the wilds, making their homes in mountains or forests, near lakes, or underground.

Most air and fire genasi in the Realms are descendants of the djinn and efreet who once ruled Calimshan. When those rulers were overthrown, their planetouched children were scattered. Over thousands of years, the bloodlines of those genasi have spread into other lands. Though far from common, air and fire genasi are more likely to be found in the western regions of Faerûn, along the coast from Calimshan north up to the Sword Coast, and into the Western Heartlands to the east. Some remain in their ancient homeland.

In contrast, water and earth genasi have no common history. Individuals have difficulty tracing their own lineage, and bloodlines occasionally skip a generation or two. Many earth genasi originated in the North and spread out from there. Water genasi come from coastal areas, the largest concentration of them hailing from the regions surrounding the Sea of Fallen Stars.

The distant land of Zakhara is known only in legends to most inhabitants of Faerûn. There, genies and spellcasters enter into bargains, and genasi can result from such pacts. Those genasi have been sources of great weal and woe in the history of that land.

Genasi Names

Genasi use the naming conventions of the people among whom they were raised. They might later assume distinctive names to capture their heritage, such as Flame, Ember, Wave, or Onyx.

Genasi Traits

Your genasi character has certain characteristics in common with all other genasi.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Age. Genasi mature at about the same rate as humans and reach adulthood in their late teens. They live somewhat longer than humans do, up to 120 years.

Alignment. Independent and self-reliant, genasi tend toward a neutral alignment.

Size. Genasi are as varied as their mortal parents but are generally built like humans, standing anywhere from 5 feet to over 6 feet tall. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Thanks to your elemental heritage, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Primordial. Primordial is a guttural language, filled with harsh syllables and hard consonants.

Subraces. Four major subraces of genasi are found among the worlds of D&D: air genasi, earth genasi, fire genasi, and water genasi. Choose one of these subraces.

Air Genasi

As an air genasi, you are descended from the djinn. As changeable as the weather, your moods shift from calm to wild and violent with little warning, but these storms rarely last long.

Air genasi typically have light blue skin, hair, and eyes. A faint but constant breeze accompanies them, tousling the hair and stirring the clothing. Some air genasi speak with breathy voices, marked by a faint echo. A few display odd patterns in their flesh or grow crystals from their scalps.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intellect score increases by 1.

Light. You can slow your descent naturally to avoid taking fall damage. When you fall more than 5 feet, you naturally mimic the effects of *Feather Fall*.

Unending Breath. You can hold your breath indefinitely while you are not incapacitated.

Of the Wind. You have resistance to thunder damage.

Elemental Manifestation. You know the *gust* cantrip.

When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *catapult* spell as a 2nd-level spell once with this trait, and you regain the ability to cast these this way when you finish a long rest. Constitution is your spell casting ability for these spells.

Earth Genasi

As an earth genasi, you are descended from the cruel and greedy dao, though you aren't necessarily evil. You have inherited some measure of control over earth, reveling in superior strength and solid power. You tend to avoid rash decisions, pausing long enough to consider your options before taking action.

Elemental earth manifests differently from one individual to the next. Some earth genasi always have bits of dust falling from their bodies and mud clinging to their clothes, never getting clean no matter how often they bathe. Others are as shiny and polished as gemstones, with skin tones of deep brown or black, eyes sparkling like agates. Earth genasi can also have smooth metallic flesh, dull iron skin spotted with rust, a pebbled and rough hide, or even a coating of tiny embedded crystals. The most arresting have fissures in their flesh, from which faint light shines.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1.

Solid. You have advantage on checks versus being forcefully moved, pulled, or pushed.

Earth Walk. You can move across difficult terrain made of earth or stone without expending extra movement.

Of the Ground. You have resistance to bludgeoning damage from non-magical weapons.

Elemental Manifestation. You know the *mold earth* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *earth tremor* spell as a 2nd-level spell once with this trait, and you regain the ability to cast these this way when you finish a long rest. Constitution is your spell casting ability for these spells.

Fire Genasi

As a fire genasi, you have inherited the volatile mood and keen mind of the efreet. You tend toward impatience and making snap judgments. Rather than hide your distinctive appearance, you exult in it.

Nearly all fire genasi are feverishly hot as if burning inside, an impression reinforced by flaming red, coalblack, or ash-gray skin tones. The more human-looking have fiery red hair that writhes under extreme emotion, while more exotic specimens sport actual flames dancing on their heads. Fire genasi voices might sound like crackling flames, and their eyes flare when angered. Some are accompanied by the faint scent of brimstone.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Warm. You can endure extremes in temperature with no ill effects.

Superior Darkvision. You can see in dim light up to 120 feet as if you were in bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. Your ties to the Elemental Plane of Fire

make your darkvision unusual: everything you see in darkness is in a shade of red.

Of the Flame. You have resistance to fire-based effects and damage.

Elemental Manifestation. You know the *control flames* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *burning hands* spell as a 2nd-level spell once with this trait, and you regain the ability to cast these this way when you finish a long rest. Constitution is your spell casting ability for these spells.

Lightning Genasi

As a lightning genasi, you are descended from the djinn. As excitable as the weather, your moods are hyperactive and bounding with energy, but you are quick-witted and fast-acting in the face of danger.

Lightning genasi typically have light or dark purple skin, yellow hair, and yellow eyes. A constant field of static electricity surrounds their bodies, making their hair stand up on its ends. Some lightning genasi speak with a rapid cadence or produce bursts of booming tones. A few display involuntary muscles twitches.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Swift. Your base movement speed is increased to 40.

Quick Reflexes. You can use your reaction to avoid being struck by an attack. If you are hit by a melee or ranged attack, you can roll a d20 and add your Dexterity modifier to the roll. Then, you can use that number in place of your AC to determine if the enemy hits.

Of the Storm. You have resistance to lightning-based effects and damage.

Elemental Manifestation. You know the *shocking grasp* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *thunderwave* spell as a 2nd-level spell once with this trait, and you regain the ability to cast these this way when you finish a long rest. Constitution is your spell casting ability for these spells.

Water Genasi

The lapping of waves, the spray of sea foam on the wind, the ocean depths—all of these things call to your heart. You wander freely and take pride in your independence, though others might consider you selfish.

Most water genasi look as if they just finished bathing, with beads of moisture collecting on their skin and hair. They smell of fresh rain and clean water. Blue or green skin is common, and most have somewhat overlarge eyes, blue-black in color. A water genasi's hair might float freely, swaying and waving as if underwater. Some have voices with undertones reminiscent of whale song or trickling streams.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Amphibious. You can breathe air and water.

Swim. You having a swimming speed of 30 feet.

Of the Wet. You have resistance to acid damage.

Elemental Manifestation. You know the *shape water*

cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *create or destroy water* spell as a 2nd-level spell once with this trait, and you regain the ability to cast these this way when you finish a long rest. Constitution is your spell casting ability for these spells.

Mul

Half-breeds exist throughout the world of Toril. However, few might be as intriguing and physically gifted as muls. Existing as the product of two worlds but truly belonging to neither, muls combine the best qualities of their dwarf and human parents: the human stature, agility, and mental flexibility backed by the physical endurance and resilience of dwarves. Because of their strength, toughness, quickness, and unparalleled stamina, the race has caught the attention of slavers in the eastern deserts. It is in that particular region where muls are the most prevalent. Some win their freedom, escape, or are simply born to the unusual pairing of a human and dwarf in less disreputable lands.

Bred for Slavery

Most muls begin their lives as slaves. Slaveholders throughout the Zakhara Region have long known that tremendous hardiness and stamina result from mixing human and dwarven lines. Muls make outstanding gladiators, slave warriors, and heavy laborers, enduring toil and hardships that would kill lesser folk.

Muls who set their hearts on freedom are difficult to keep in chains. Some escape to the wilds and become raiders or join tribes of ex-slaves, whereas others who escape become mercenaries and sell their fighting skills to whomever they can. Muls who don't flee captivity can win their freedom in the arena or by completing a dangerous task for their masters. A few highly prized gladiators receive so many privileges and comforts that they are effectively free, enjoying great latitude to go where they want and do as they wish.

Regardless of their method of freedom, muls tend to fit well into normal society as they look like rather bulky humans. It wouldn't be surprising to see a mul in any geographical environment as they are extremely hardy and conditioned for survival

Determined and Strong

Muscular and fit, muls resemble powerfully built humans. Although one might expect muls to average somewhere between dwarf and human stature, they are taller than most humans. Male muls have truly heroic proportions—broad shoulders, narrow waists, powerful thighs, and thick arms. Females, while not as heavily muscled, are tall, strong, and athletic. Many muls of both genders are hairless, although some grow topknots of dark hair. Their faces hint at their dwarven ancestry, with strong, stern features and small, swept-back ears that come to subtle points. Mul skin and

eye colors are as varied as they are in humans, but many muls have a copper or deeply bronzed complexion, and a few have eyes of a startling honey-gold or green-gold color.

Muls have little collective racial identity and adopt the dress and fashion of their homes. However, they are fond of tattoos and favor simple geometric patterns rather than depictions of creatures or objects. In this way, they honor their dwarven heritage with designs reminiscent of dwarven motifs.

Mul Lands

Most muls hail from Zakhara, but vacate that land in order to escape the harsh reminders of the years they typically spend in chains. As such, muls will not usually be found together clustered in one location. They tend to gravitate towards human settlements because of their ability to blend in fairly well.

However, a few muls can be found in dwarven mining citadels. A mul's ability to keep pace with their dwarven kin is not often overlooked. For the handful that find their way into this powerful arms of the scruffy race, they are welcomed as brethren and regularly adopted as clansmen.

Mul Names

Muls sold as laborers will have common slave names. Muls sold as gladiators will often be given more striking and exotic names. However, muls that are born away from the shackles of servitude typically choose names that reflect the people around them.

Mul Traits

Your mul character has qualities that are similar to dwarves and some that are unique to muls.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1 and your Constitution score increases by 2.

Age. Muls reach maturity around the same ages as humans do and reach adulthood around the age of 20. However, they live much longer than humans, often exceeding 180 years.

Alignment. Most muls are neutral in nature as they tend to honor their own personal code of duty rather than that of order or chaos. They tend to lean towards good as most free muls seek out to right the injustices committed against their race.

Size. Muls stand on the upper end of 5 feet and can reach heights of well over 6 feet. Typically, a mul weighs anywhere between 200-300 pounds. They are classified as Medium in size.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet. Your speed is not reduced by heavy armor.

Tireless. Muls don't require as much rest as normal races to maintain their stamina. They only sleep for 2 hours a night.

Able-Bodied. Muls have proficiency on any check requiring physical activity such as Athletics.

Vitalism. Muls heal damage quicker than other races.

Rest hit points recovery is doubled. Additionally, muls gain fast healing 1 at 10th level. At 15th level, that increases to fast healing 2. At 20th level, that increases to fast healing 3.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and dwarvish. Dwarvish is full of hard consonants and guttural sounds, and those characteristics spill over into whatever other language a mul might speak.

Shifter

On the outskirts of civilized society—far removed from the comforts of the lavish cities that most common folk have access to—live the bestial shifters. Most regular people try very hard to disassociate themselves with these creatures due to preconceived notions of “tainted blood”. Shifters typically travel the untamed, open-air lands reveling in its beauty. Their bodies look as though they have a multitude of animal features. These traits often vary due to the many different types of lycanthropes that exist in the world. Their hearts are tied to the wild, but they often do not wish to be forced into the solitary life, as they desire the comforts that any creature could find with a pack.

Inheritors of Animal Blood

Shifters inherit something from both sides of their dual nature. They resemble humans but have animalistic features, and there is something feral about them. The lycanthropic blood flowing through their veins manifests differently in each shifter, often as special physical abilities.

It is very difficult for shifters to pass for human. Typically speaking, they have sharp teeth, bestial eyes, and sharp nails. These traits make it difficult for them to blend into normal life in urban environments. They prefer the nomadic lifestyle because of this situation.

In fact, most shifters live as outlanders, finding refuge in rural areas due to their prowess for hunting, or some lead parties of adventurers into the depths of the untamed lands because of their affinity for nature. Rarely will individual shifters attempt to live among the civilized peoples of Faerun. Rarer still will they attempt to find a home with lycanthropes that share the same heritage.

Wild and Weary

Shifters both embrace and shun their wild tendencies. Though they are self-reliant and free-spirited, their fear of becoming lost in the savagery of their blood tends to limit their actions. They still find confidence in their abilities, and some overcome that self-doubt in order to live a more fulfilling life.

However, some prejudices do exist due to their lycanthropic heritage. The fear that a shifter might go wild and destroy a homestead or murder the local cattle. This is because of a common misconception that all lycanthropes

are invariably and irreversibly evil, including shifters. Most shifters cope well, but some crack under the weight of the stares and turn to a life of crime.

Shifter Lands

Just like lycanthropes, shifters can be found scattered throughout all of Faerûn, but a few gather in larger communities. The Werewoods near Baldur's Gate and the Glimmerwood in Luruar are two such locations where lycanthropes are found in larger numbers and hence, as a result, so are shifters. However, most shifters, even in these regions, stave away from the dark influence of their ancestors. Other large shifter communities are found in the Great Dale and the Forest of Lethyr, as well as Dambrath where the local culture is xenophobic and has a hatred for drow.

Those living on the frontier, though, have a much harder time. People there tend to be less accepting of differences. Sometimes a cold shoulder and a suspicious glare are the best a shifter can hope for; in more backward places, they face ostracism and even violence from people who mistake them for lycanthropes. Facing a hard life, these shifters seek isolation in the wilds, making their homes in mountains or forests, near lakes, or underground.

Though false, this conception shapes the lives of shifters, who rarely achieve a prominent status in civilized society.

Shifter Names

Shifters use the naming conventions of the people among whom they were raised. They might later assume distinctive names to capture their heritage, such as Fang, Claw, Tusk, or Fur.

Shifter Traits

Your shifter character has certain characteristics in common with all other shifter.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1.

Age. Shifters mature at about the same rate as humans and reach adulthood in their early twenties. They typically live about as long as humans.

Alignment. Shifters are strongly influenced by their animal nature. Longtooth and wormtails typically find solace in roving parties or a group of adventures. Razorclaw, greatmaw, and goretusk are more independent types. Moral motivations vary greatly and encompass the entire alignment spectrum.

Size. Shifter height is usually on the upper end of 5 feet and they can reach heights of around 6 feet. Typically, a Shifter weighs anywhere between 130-200 pounds. They are classified as Medium in size.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 40 feet.

Darkvision. Thanks to your lycanthropic heritage, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright

light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Keen Senses. You have proficiency with any Wisdom (Perception) checks made to hear or smell something

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and one extra language of your choice. Shifters typically learn the languages of other peoples they deal with, including obscure dialects. They are fond of sprinkling their speech with rolling consonants and growling noises when frustrated.

Subraces. Different lycanthropic strains run through different creatures to create the current subraces of the shifters: goretusk, greatmaw, longtooth, razorclaw, and wormtail. Choose one of the subraces.

Goretusk

As a goretusk shifter, you are descended from the wereboars. You have a stubborn nature that usually causes your behavior to be brash and straightforward.

Goretusk shifters usually have porcine features. Their bottom incisors might be slightly longer. Their noses might be a little flatter. Their bodies might be a little shorter and stouter than a regular human.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity and Constitution scores increase by 1.

Charger. When you use the Dash Action, you can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack or to shove a creature. If you move at least 10 feet in a straight line immediately before taking this bonus action, you either gain a +5 bonus to the attack's damage roll or push the target up to 10 feet away from you. You must finish a short rest to use the ability again.

Savage Attacker. When you roll damage for a melee weapon attack, you can reroll the weapon's damage dice and use either total for 1 minute. You must finish a short rest to use the ability again.

Greatmaw Shifter

As a greatmaw shifter, you are descended from werebears. You have a curious nature that usually causes your behavior to be inquisitive and exploratory.

Greatmaw shifters usually have ursine features. Their brows might be thicker and more pronounced. Their bodies might be taller and bigger than a regular human. They might be a little hairier than normal.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution and Wisdom scores increase by 1.

Tough Hide. You gain unnaturally thick skin. Add +2 natural armor to your AC for 1 minute. You must finish a short rest to use the ability again.

Bear Hug. Your powerful arms latch onto whatever they grab and crush them with force. Make an attack roll adding your Strength modifier and Proficiency bonus. If you succeed, the foe takes 1d12 + Strength modifier + Proficiency Bonus damage and is grappled. You must finish a short rest to use the ability again.

Longtooth Shifter

As a longtooth shifter, you are descended from werewolves. You have a cunning nature that usually causes your behavior to be keen and perceptive.

Longtooth shifters usually have canine features. Their nose, jaw, and mouth might be a little elongated. Their bodies might be lither. Their ears might be a little pointier and longer.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity and Charisma scores increase by 1.

Mobile. Your speed increases to 50 ft for 1 minute. When you use the Dash Action, difficult terrain doesn't cost you extra movement on that turn. You must finish a short rest to use the ability again.

Pack Hunter. When a creature within 5 feet of you takes damage from an attack that isn't yours, you can make a melee attack against them as a bonus action. You must finish a short rest to use the ability again.

Razorclaw Shifter

As a razorclaw shifter, you are descended from weretigers. You have a dominating nature that usually causes your behavior to be aggressive and action-oriented.

Razorclaw shifters usually have feline features. Their eyes might have slits. Their bodies might be more flexible than usual. Their teeth might be extremely sharp.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity and Intellect scores increase by 1.

Claws. You produce powerful claws for 1 minute that allow you to strike out at your enemies. You can make a claw attack that deals 1d8 (+ your Strength or Dexterity bonus) damage to your foe. You must finish a short rest to use the ability again.

Pounce. You leap onto your foe with weapons outstretched. At the end of a Dash Action, you can make an attack with both of your claws and/or any weapon you are holding. You can only make an attack with a two-handed weapon without using your claws. You must finish a short rest to use the ability again.

Wormtail Shifter

As a wormtail shifter, you are descended from wererats. You have a timid nature that usually causes your behavior to be nervous and twitchy.

Wormtail shifters usually have murine features. Their eyes might be beady. Their bodies might be tinier than most humans. Their front teeth might be exceedingly large.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity and Wisdom scores increase by 1.

Skulker. You are expert at slinking through shadows. You can try to hide when you are lightly obscured from the creature from which you are hiding. When you are hidden from a creature and miss it with a ranged weapon attack, making the attack doesn't reveal your position. Finally, dim light doesn't impose disadvantage on your Wisdom (Perception) checks relying on sight gain. This lasts for 1 minute. You can't use this ability until you finish a short or

long rest.

Nimbleness. You can move through the space of any creature larger than you. You must finish a short rest to use the ability again.