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Barbarian 5e guide 2019

This guide is meant as a deep dive into the DnD 5e barbarian. For a quick overview of the barbarian class, see the breakdown of DnD 5e classes. You can see the characteristics of the barbaric class here. In this post, we will be exploring the barbaric class features and how to optimize the barbarian by selecting the Race, Ability Score, Spells, Feats, etc. The following color code has been introduced so that at a glance you can identify how good this option will be for the barbarian. This color coding is not a hard and fast rule, there are plenty of sub-optimized options out there that will be viable for the party and will be fun to play. Red will not contribute to the effectiveness of your character build at all Orange is an OK option Green is a good option Blue is a great option, you can strongly consider this option for your character Sky Blue is a wonderful option. If you don't take this option your character wouldn't be optimized, so when you're ready, grab the biggest weapon you can find and break it away! Before you start races barbarians need STR and CON, and many, many, of it! Critically, it is important to choose a race of size larger than small, so do not roll at a disadvantage heavy weapons. Dragonborn: STR bonus is what we are looking for and Breath Weapon gives the barbarian some AoE presence. Cha sees some fringe benefits in the Path of the Berserker subdivision. Dwarf: CON boost and Darkvision. It's not terrible, it's not ideal. Hill: Multiple hit points are not bad, but not necessary, as the dwarf already gets a bonus con and barbarians are the biggest hit dice. WIS went is common so a bonus here also helps. Mountain: Adding str bonus to dwarf race traits makes this the perfect choice for a barbarian. Elf: DEX is ok and there are a few other racial traits here that are good to have. Unfortunately, the STR bonus would be ideal and elves would miss that. Dwarf Elf: No STR bonus and sunlight sensitivity. Terrible. Tall Elf: Barbarians are the furthest thing from a roller class (unless multiclassing). Do not choose a high elf unless you are not interested in optimization at all. Wood Elf: Again, WIS helps somewhat with saving drums. Gnome: Gnomes are classified as small, so heavy weapons are pretty much useless. INT is also not what you are looking for. Forest: It is not worth sacrificing heavy weapons. Rock: It is not worth sacrificing heavy weapons. Half-Elf: CHA score increase plus two other ability scores of your choice makes for a fairly well rounded barbarian. Free skills are also always welcome. Half-orc: The traditional choice of barbarians, and for good reason. Str and CON score increases, Darkvision, and bullying skill proficy are all ideal. Relentless perseverance and savage attacks are superfluous with the characteristics of the barbaric class. Halfling: Halflings are small in size and want to take advantage of those heavy weapons. Easy foot: You're a barbarian, hiding the last thing you want! Stout: Small CON score and poison resistance can help you survive. People are always decent. Vanilla: Regular people will be well rounded. Variant: Variant people are usually good, and this is no exception for barbarians. Variant people can increase their STR and CON and get a free feat. Feats will be discussed below. Tiefling: Of course, the roller is better suited. Ability Scores Ability Score increases (ASi) to 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th. Barbarians value STR above all else and then CON. DEX should not be ignored, so either equip armor or rely on the Unstretzerd Defense class function. Str: Barbarians want to hit things and hit them hard. They also want to hit things with the biggest weapon they can with their hands, so they pump STR as high as possible. DEX: Good DEX means higher AC and access to better armor options. People expect you to complete the role of the tank, so consider some DEX. CON: Like the tank, expect a lot of hits to come your way, as you'll probably be on the front line. For unrenzered protection, the CON bonus also contributes to AC. INT: Dump, that's for sure. You're not here trying a PhD. WIS: WIS went on happening all the time, but the Barbarians are likely to survive yet another failed save. Cha: Helps with bullying and the path of the Berserker subdivision. Barbarian Class Progression Level 1 Hit Points: Barbarians are blessed with d12 hit cubes, the best around. Saves: CON saves are created very often, and STR saves don't happen now and again. Weapon/Armor Proficiencies: Barbarians have access to most of the weapons and armor they ever need. Skills: There are only two skills in a small list, but there are some good options here. Animal Treatment (WIS): Usually not very helpful, especially if you cannot speak with animals. Athletics (STR): You'll probably be the athlete in the group and one that will wrestle or shove at the enemy. Bullying (CHA): Bullying seems like it's made into a scary looking barbarian, but it's unfortunately not an STR based skill. Nature (INT): The INT will be pathetic, so you won't be able to make good use of this skill even if you wanted to. Sighting (Wis): The best skill in the game. If you can get Detection, it's usually the right choice to pick up. Survival (WIS): Survival profi ness can save the entire party. Get it if no one else does. Fury: This is the reason to play a barbarian. Advantage STR controls and STR saving throws, bonus damage, and damage resistance pair perfectly with the style of play. Rage is also the reason it doesn't go for heavy armor proficence, as it doesn't get the benefits in this case. Regardless, running around without armor or medium armor should serve only fine. Unarmored Defense: Perfect role-playing game if you're going to play the typical shirtless barbarian and can help you make a boost at AC's early level. If you already have access to the best medium armor (half plate), Un armoured Protection is strictly worse for most stat combinations then Achieve. Achieve. That means you can really just boost your DEX high enough to equip medium armor and let the damage resistance and high hit point pool handle the rest. On the other hand, with 20 DEX + 20 CON+ in the shield, you can achieve the highest possible AC playable classes in D&amp;amp; D 5e, so it's pretty good too. Level 2 Audacious Attack: Perfect landing devastating blows against your enemies. Attack reels against you, the advantage of which does not matter too much due to the damage resistance and significant hit points. You are not (quite) invincible though, so be careful using this when you are completely around as each attack rolls against you will have an advantage. Danger Sense: Advantage of the DEX has gone awesome and will surely contribute to longevity in battle. Level 3 3. Neither option is downright useless, so choose the subdivision that benefits the party the most, or simply what you think you will enjoy. The Ancient Guardian's Way Source: Xanathar's guide to everything, as its name shows, the Ancient Guardian's path stands out in refueling and defending the party. For this purpose, it builds one of the best of all D&amp;t; D 5e, but if you're looking to maximize the damage you won't find it here. Ancient Protectors: Ancient protectors strongly discourage your enemies from attacking anyone but you when it affects them, and that's exactly what you want, like the barbaric path of the Ancient Guardian. Ghost Shield: A wonderful use of the reaction to balance fairly well. There's no reason not to use it in every fight unless your anger has gone away. Party members will be delighted! Consult the spirits: Augury and Clairvoyance both have powerful utility spells that can be cast without magical prowess. You can only cast one of them for every short rest, but it doesn't detract from how good this feature is. Don't underestimate Augury's usefulness, especially when playing with indecisive people. Avengers: Increase the usefulness of the Spirit Shield for free! Redirecting damage to party members is that whatever you fight in each round is very powerful. Path of the Battlerager Source: Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide Path of the Battlerager is a strange subdivision. The most important thing to know is that it is limited to dwarfs, but fortunately dwarfs are one of the best species of barbarians. Second, to even consider playing this subdivision you need to make sure that you can get spiked armor. It's probably a good idea to talk to DM about this and be sure to be willing to give you acquire it relatively early. Apart from these odd things, the Battlerager trail is not particularly strong compared to other subdivisions. This can be fun, however, especially when played as a grappler to build. Battlerager Armor: This is what encourages you to wrestle. Not much damage, but it does give you an extra attack as a bonus action. Abandon: Temporary hit points increase survival. They come at a cost of using reckless attack so the mediocre AC of spiked armor can be problematic. Battlerager Charge: Dashing as a bonus action will help you get up close and get your attacks or wrestle effectively. Prickly retaliation: The damage alone is quite low, but it adds up when you get attacked a lot, which is very likely. Berserker's Road Source: Berserker's journey is what most people associate with the barbarian archetype. If you just want to hit things and you're really good at beating things up, this is the subdivision for you. While none of the features are very exciting or unique, this build is simple and efficient. Madness: Madness makes the damage go through the roof. A level of exhaustion isn't too backbreaking, but three levels of exhaustion your character is getting having a very hard time doing anything in combat. Mindless Rage: Smart enemies try to stop you from taking part in the fight if you notice how much damage you can handle. Fascinated and terrified by annoying conditions that can be hard to get out of, so Mindless Rage really comes with a clutch. Intimidating presence: Not the best as it uses the action, especially if you are one of the main damage dealers in the group. If for some reason you can not attack (enemies out of reach melee, for example), this is a very good way to spend your turn. If you plan to have an intimidating presence on a regular basis, you probably don't have to be dumping the CHA stat. Retaliation: A great way to get more damage and use your reaction when toe-toe is a baddie. Path of the Storm Herald Source: Xanathar's Guide to Everything The Path of the Storm Herald is well adapted to change. From the third level, each time you level up, you can choose an environment from the desert, sea or tundra, and this will affect what capabilities you have. Unfortunately, we don't always level up if it would be ideal, and generally don't know what dangers lie ahead. Still, it's mechanically interesting and keeps things fresh while it's useful to have any party makeup you run. Storm Aura: Aura is cool in order for this to go on a turn of events after you start raging you need to use the bonus action though. Desert: The damage is not great and it indiscriminately affects all creatures in the aura. If you want some AoE damage your desert aura works well. It's only one target, but at least it won't hurt your allies like the desert aura. The damage is still pretty low though. Tundra: Temporary hit points for everyone at the party! If they're in the aura. Plus you can do this all the time, upload it up as you see fit. Storm Soul: If you know that you'll come across a lot of fire, lightning, or cold damage, the choice here will be obvious. Nothing here is essential for the subclass, so the usefulness really depends on what you will deal with in the Desert: Probably the safest bet, as there are many sources of devastating fire damage (Fireball, anyone?). Sea: Unless you care about lightning damage coming your way, water breathing and swimming speed are very situational. Tundra: I don't know what you would use for a giant ice cube, but I'm sure people have found a purpose. Resistance to cold is as useful as lightning. Shading storm: looks good on paper, but the aura radius is pretty small, and if you know you'll hit some strong AoE elementary damage, sticking it close together is a terrible idea. Raging Storm: Makes your aura more useful, so all three options will be pretty good. Desert: The damage here will never be huge and there is a DEX save word. Still, it's a possible option for your reaction. Sea: If you manage to knock the enemy prone, the rest of the attack will have an advantage (it's used as a reaction!). If your Rogue friend is higher on the initiative order than the enemy, free Sneak Attacks! Tundra: Great for preventing fleeing opponents to do so. Path of the Totem Warrior Source: Player's Handbook (expanded by Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide) The way to Totem Warrior is the full package. There are options for refusing, dealing with damage, mobility, and assisting the party. On top of that, the game with this subclass is less clear and requires more thinking, so it's a lot of fun to play. The expanded options of totem spirit for moose and tiger, can be found in the Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide. Ghost Seeker: Not useful for most of the time, but a good reason to choose your Animal Handling profi ness when you roll your character. Totem Ghost: This is an important choice. Although there are five options, only three are worth considering. Bear: The bear Totem Spirit feels outright defeated. Resistance to all damage while raging (except for the psychic) is crazy. Eagle: Great if you need some extra mobility on the battlefield. Moose: You don't really need even higher movement speeds and the eagle tends to be better for this purpose. Tiger: Jumping is rarely, if ever, beneficial. Wolf: If other melee party members are able to deal plenty of damage to the attack roll, the wolf stands out. If you have a party full of rollers, it doesn't help. The beast aspect: you can choose the same animal as the third level, or another option. Bear: Many people don't enjoy playing restrictive load-bearing ability or just begging for a DM in a bag of Holding. However, the advantage of STR checks comes in handy when trying to force your way through a closed door or other obstacles. Unfortunately it only works with objects. Eagle: Nice for scouting, although barbarians are not usually the choice of party scout. If the species does not have Darkvision, then negating the downside of detection checks is great. Moose: If you play travel time between places and include random encounters, this is very useful. If you tend to just skip travel in predefined locations, avoid the moose here. Tiger: Proficy with two additional skills is pretty great, unfortunately two of the four options are now available as class-based skills. Wolf: Similar to the moose aspect of the beast. Spirit Walker: Commune with nature as a ritual is often useful. If you are struggling to survive in a new place, you can easily find food and water. It also helps to look for something special, like a building or a magical creature. Totemic Attunement: You can re-select the same animal as the 3rd animal. Bear: Draw fire from your weaker allies onto yourself. If you chose the bear at the 3rd level, you can resist the damage to throw your way anyway. Eagle: Flying is infinitely useful, even if it only works in short series. Make sure you have a plan before you launch yourself into the air! Or no, you're a barbarian after all. Moose: Knock enemies prone and deal some damage at the same time with a bonus action. It is very annoying to any opponent if you can pull it off regularly. Tiger: Bonus action weapon attacks are always great, but you'll have to meet the movement requirement to do so. You can't use this capability at all in tight spaces or places with obstacles. Wolf: Another way to knock enemies tends to be like a bonus action. There is no further damage, but you only need to connect to its use with one attack, so the next attack can gain an advantage. Choosing between this or the moose is a personal preference. Zealot's Journey Source: Xanathar's guide to everything cool about role-playing. Death is more of an inconvenience than an end-of-game problem. Coupled with a little extra damage, the Path of the Zealot is a fine subdivision, but lacks any serious direction. Divine Fury: Simple added damage to the attack. Some of the creatures deal necrotic damage, but the radiant damage is less. Warrior of the Gods: Barbarians are not afraid of death, and the Warrior of the Gods makes home more comfortable. Spells like Raise Dead become virtually free to use on you. Fanatic Focus: Permanently saves you from death with powerful effects from a saving throw. Fervent presence: A huge battle over this ability gives the party a kind of super turn advantage over attack rolls and saving drums. It would be much nicer if it worked on you as well though. Rage Beyond Death: Basically you can't die while raging. If there is a way to heal yourself with a small amount of hit points (magic element, concoction of healing, etc.), you can do so before ending anger, so you do not die. Level 5 Extra Attack: Each battle class is excited when you get extra attacks as it effectively doubles the damage output. Now you can only reckless attack both attacks ... Fast Movement: You don't want heavy armor, so the barbarian will benefit from fast movement. Although very useful, especially when playing on battle maps, Fast Movement is not as effective as most other barbarians Features. Level 7 feral instinct: really useful. It's a big deal for the barbarian to be on the front line to protect the more vulnerable party members, so advantage initiative helps there. Avoiding the surprise attacks against you is another tool on the long list of ways to mitigate damage coming from your character. Level 9 brutal critic: Makes critical hits brutally effective, but only happens 5% of the time that the attack roll. Level 11 Relentless Fury: A decent CON score might pull off several times in a short rest, giving you a real spike in the side of your enemies. If you finally get knocked to 0 hit points, hopefully you've had enough impact on the battlefield that the battle will end shortly thereafter. 15. Level Persistent Rage: An annoying part of Rage is that situations do not occur when you are unable to move or there is not enough movement to engage the next enemy, which could end up in an unpleasant time. Since rage is limited to a finite amount of times for a long rest, Persistent Rage will help you preserve your uses so you can activate it for any hard battle throughout the day. If the anger lasts longer than 4 hours, please consult a doctor. Level 18 Indomitable Might: If you like to wrestle and have a maxed or almost maxed out STR score, there will be plenty your opponent can do to stop you. Other uses for STR capability checks are often less important, but nice to have nonetheless. Level 20 Primal Champion: The right capstone for the barbaric class, making it the tankiest tank who ever lived. If you're wearing medium armor, unarmoured protection can offer a high AC when you reach level 20, so make sure you check both options. Feats below are some feats, which are often regarded as 5e barbaric. Barbarians are lucky to really just depend on STR (CON and DEX are important, but not critically), so they can keep their own if you choose to make one or more feats appeal to you. Their effectiveness may vary depending on which Primal Path the character chooses. Warning: Barbarians have Feral Instinct to assist during initiation rolls. Further improvements to the initiative offer declining returns and are therefore wasted. Grappler: If you struggle with the thing this feat provides plenty of fun. Great Weapon Master: Probably the best feat for a barbarian using a am two-handed weapon, regardless of whether you build. Extra attacks from this feat often occur when you're in the thick of things. Bonus damage at the cost of an attack trainer penalty is risky and should be used sparingly until the attack roll bonus is high enough. Lucky: Lucky is a feat that is useful for any character. Mobile: Redundant. Polearm Master: Provides extra attacks in the form of bonus actions and opportunity attacks, but great weapon master and sentinel better. It is quite interesting along with Great Weapon Master when applying the damage bonus to the extra attacks. Sentinel: Sentinel really shines on a This reduces the opportunities for the enemy to be nearby by restricting movement and punishing them for trying to move or attack someone else. Keep in mind that you really want to be attacked as a barbarian (as opposed to attacks hitting your arty teammates). Tough: Tough makes you even tankier, but it's really not worth the time. You're probably better off increasing CON or DEX if you need to survive, as these statistics also have other benefits, such as strengthening and saving capability checks. I hope you liked the guide! If you have any questions or feel that you missed something in the 5e barbarian, go ahead and post a comment below. If you like the content subscribe arcane eye! Eylet

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