



For OSRIC
and 1E Games

Olde School Swashbuckler

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The Swashbuckler

Swashbucklers specialize in quick, unarmored movement. Light weapons benefit from their quick, steady hands. They often begin their careers as muggers, thugs and enforcers for the criminal underground, but they are not necessarily immoral. Many of them only take up a sword and dagger to guard against violent gangs and corrupt nobles. Most swashbucklers hail from the great cities (and festering slums) of the campaign world, but a substantial minority haunt merchants' roads and the lawless seas. These swashbucklers are highwaymen, pirates or privateers: professions that suit their special skills. In any event, swashbucklers are not battered military veterans or mail-wearing heroes from bloody battlefields. They fight on rooftops, in ship's rigging and atop the tables of feast halls.

Swashbucklers are not as battle-hardened as fighters and aren't as stealthy as thieves, but they excel at leaping to and from the thick of battle. Where other warriors see a room as a cage, swashbucklers see it as a tool to help bound from place to place. Most members of the class are not acrobats per se, but all of them can smoothly leap over railings, slide down tapestries or run along beams. In combat, a swashbuckler can dodge past the front ranks of the enemy to land quick blows with either hand.

Swashbucklers prefer agile, clever and stylish fighting. They sometimes look down on the sturdy, practical methods used by fighters and other armored warriors. Most learn to fight in the rough and tumble environments of their youths, but they supplement this with formal training in academies devoted to fencing and the "art of gentlemanly defense." Swashbucklers who settle in a particular city open schools of their

own. Their students include street fighters, petty nobles and would-be duelists. Academies tend to be fiercely competitive and their students can be loyal enough to serve as a swashbuckler's private army.

Historically, the term "swashbuckler" was coined 16th century to describe to rough, arrogant swordsmen. It evoked the sound of a fighting style that uses a sword with a buckler in the off-hand, "swashing and making a noise on the buckler."

Swashbuckler Roles

Here are five ways to include swashbucklers in your campaign.

Bravo: This swashbuckler is a street fighter, bodyguard or criminal enforcer who works for anyone in need of skilled violence. Chaotic swashbucklers tend to freelance for various groups, while neutral swashbucklers might accept a permanent position.

Duelist: In any society where people are expected to defend their honor with a blade, there will be those who are ill-equipped to do so. Swashbucklers can take up the cause of an incompetent duelist, fighting in his stead. These duels include genuine affairs of honor as well as legalized assassination.

Fencing Master: High level swashbucklers run academies of fence but wealthy patrons often prefer a personal touch. A fencing master teaches her charges how to use a blade. These teachers often develop close bonds with students, who later grow into powerful figures in the campaign world. Such swashbucklers often serve as informal bodyguards and even "babysitters."

Outlaw: "Stand and deliver!" Swashbucklers who turn outlaw accost victims in out of the way places. Outlaws make sure to plan their escapes as well, so that even

though most forests afford little purchase for feats of daring (see "Daring," pp. 4-5), they still know enough of the forest to get the loot and get away. Of course, some outlaws only take to the life to fund a revolution against the corrupt nobility.

Pirate or Privateer: Swashbucklers know how to fly up and down rigging, leap from ship to ship and fight furious boarding actions. Lightly armored pirates (privateers are merely pirates with a government license) are less likely to drown and hard to swarm.

The Swashbuckler Character

Minimum Scores:	Strength 12, Dexterity 15, Intelligence 12, Charisma 13
Hit Die Type:	d8
Initial Hit Dice:	1
Alignment:	Any non-lawful
Experience Bonus:	None
Armor/Shield Permitted:	Leather, studded leather and bucklers only.
Weapons Permitted:	Club, dagger, dart, oil, sling, short bow, sword (other than bastard swords and two-handed swords)
Weapon Proficiencies:	3 + 1 every two levels.
Non-Proficiency Penalty:	-2
Weapon Specialization:	Optional – see below.

Core Traits

Attacks and Saving Throws:

Swashbucklers use the same "to hit" tables as fighters, paladins or rangers. They make saving throws as thieves. Furthermore, swashbucklers are entitled to use the same Constitution adjustments as fighters, paladins and rangers, but do *not* have access to exceptional (or "percentile") Strength scores.

Magic Items: Swashbucklers may use magic items allowed to fighters unless they are disallowed weapons or items that enhance the character's Strength score. Swashbucklers may also use thief magic items that enhance climbing abilities, but no others.

Racial Level Limits and Multi-classing:

Reduce swashbuckler level limits by 1 if the character's Strength or Dexterity is less than 16.

Aside from humans, members of other races may become swashbucklers and multi-classed swashbucklers subject to the following restrictions. (Note that dwarves may not become swashbucklers.)

Elf: 8; may multi-class as a magic user/swashbuckler or swashbuckler/thief.

Gnome: 6; may multi-class as an illusionist/swashbuckler.

Halfling: 7; may multi-class as a swashbuckler/thief.

Half-Elf: 10; may multi-class as a cleric/swashbuckler, magic user/swashbuckler or swashbuckler/thief.

Half-Orc: 9; may multi-class as a swashbuckler/thief.

Swashbuckler Class Abilities

Climb Walls: A swashbuckler may climb walls as a thief of equal level. Swashbucklers use the same racial and ability score

Swashbuckler Advancement Table

Level	Experience Points Required	Hit Dice (d8)	Level Title	Notes
1	0	1	Ruffian	Climb Walls, Daring, Surprising, Two Weapon Expert
2	2250	2	Escrimador	
3	4500	3	Rake	
4	9000	4	Duelist	
5	18000	5	Destrezador	
6	35000	6	Foyner	
7	70000	7	Undertaker	
8	125000	8	Provost	Bonus Attacks
9	200000	9	Swashbuckler	
10	400000	10	Maestro	Followers
11+*	700000	10+3		

Each level gained thereafter requires 300000 experience points and adds +3 hit points.

adjustments as thieves.

Daring: Swashbucklers are used to maneuvering in built up areas such as rooftops, palaces and other places festooned with banisters, tapestries and chandeliers. Swashbucklers use these features to evade attack and to quickly swing or slide from place to place.

A swashbuckler within five feet of an appropriate feature can perform one of the following maneuvers:

Daring Dodge: The swashbuckler can avoid attacks by multiple, inferior foes while moving at his full movement rate. He may only avoid attacks in this fashion from attackers with less than one hit die *or* those with hit dice equal to or less than one quarter the swashbuckler's level. The swashbuckler's player must make a saving throw versus Breath Weapon. If it succeeds, all nonmagical attacks (including attacks with magical weapons that require a "to-hit" roll) from these inferior enemies

automatically miss. This saving throw suffers a penalty of -1 for every 5 attackers with less than one hit die, and a -1 for every additional attacker with one or more hit dice (excluding attackers that cannot be affected by a daring dodge). If the daring dodge fails, the swashbuckler can be attacked normally.

Daring Escape: The swashbuckler can leave combat at up to double his normal movement rate (running or fleeing) without risking a free melee attack or backstab attempt. He swings from a rope, slides down a banister or flips over a railing. If the swashbuckler's player succeeds at one saving throw versus Wands for *each attacker*, he succeeds. Otherwise, the swashbuckler flees, but is subject to standard risks and penalties. Each saving throw suffers a bonus or penalty equal to the difference between the swashbuckler's level and the level or hit dice of a potential attacker. Daring escape does not protect the swashbuckler from attacks in other

situations. It only applies when the swashbuckler might suffer an extra or special attack in exchange for escaping melee combat.

Daring Fall: The swashbuckler can negate the effects of a fall by (for example) grabbing a rope, cutting into a tapestry or catching and swinging from a series of gargoyles and buttresses. This reduces his effective fall by 10 feet or the length of the object being used to break his fall.

A swashbuckler may not attack in any round in which he uses daring. If he attempts to turn an accidental fall into a daring fall, he may no longer attack in that round, but if he's already attempted an attack, he may not attempt a daring fall at all.

The DM has final authority as to whether a swashbuckler can use nearby objects to facilitate feats of daring. If the DM doesn't have a set idea of whether or not the environment supports feats of daring, he may use the following guideline:

- Virtually all sailing ships support feats of daring.
- 50% of urban or castle locations support feats of daring.
- 25% of dungeon locations support feats of daring.
- 10% of wilderness locations support feats of daring.

This guideline is for DMs only. The DM may overrule these percentages at any time.

Surprising: Swashbucklers impose a -1 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls. This only applies to the swashbuckler's chance of surprising an opponent and does not render the opponent vulnerable to other characters.

Two Weapon Expertise: Swashbucklers fight with two weapons at no penalty.

Advanced Abilities

Bonus Attacks (8th level): Swashbucklers gain additional attacks as fighters do, but less swiftly. A swashbuckler has one attack at 1st to 7th level, 3/2 attacks at 8th to 14th level, and two attacks at 15th and above. If the optional weapon specialization rules are permitted by the GM, swashbucklers may specialize as fighters do, save that they receive fewer proficiencies and gain extra attacks more slowly as described above. Furthermore, swashbucklers may not double specialize.

Swashbucklers do not double their attacks per round when they use two weapons. Instead, they add additional attacks to a base of two attacks.

Followers (10th level): At 10th level (Maestro, or "Name Level") a swashbuckler may found an academy of defense. This facility requires specialized items including practice dummies, gymnastic equipment and practice weapons. The choice of location also influences its cost. The DM determines the exact number and makeup of followers. These are generally similar in level and number to the followers gained by high level thieves.

Class Options

As the swashbuckler is a new class you don't need to worry about cleaving to an "official" version. Here are a few ways to modify the class to better suit your campaign.

The Stealthy Swashbuckler: This character is more of a fighter/thief type and suits humans (who have trouble mastering both classes). Replace the daring and surprising abilities with the ability to move silently and hide in shadows as a thief of equal level. Characters cannot multi-class this swashbuckler with the thief class.

The Tough Swashbuckler: This character is more like a mainstream fighter. Remove the swashbuckler's surprising and two weapon expertise (or other core fighting style – see below) abilities. Increase hit dice to d10s (maximum 9d10 at 9th level, +3 per level thereafter) and allow the use of any weapon. This swashbuckler's saving throws are equivalent to those of fighters, not thieves.

The Mystic Swashbuckler: This version of the class gives the character minor magical talents. The character loses two weapon expertise (or another core fighting style) and enhanced surprise but gains the ability to cast the same number of spells per day as a ranger of equal level. The swashbuckler uses the ranger's druid spell slots for magic user spells and that class' magic user spell slots for cleric spells. This swashbuckler may not be multi-classed. Gnomes may not be a member of this variant.

Core Fighting Styles: Two weapon expertise simulates a particular fighting style. You can replace that ability with one of the following options:

Archery: The swashbuckler gains a +1 bonus "to hit" targets within 30 feet and the range of his bow doubles. The swashbuckler can also use a long bow.

Buckler Fighting: The swashbuckler gains a +1 AC bonus for using a buckler (small shield), but can simultaneously employ the shield as a weapon, inflicting 1d3 points of damage. Remember that in this case, the swashbuckler suffers the standard penalties for fighting with two weapons.

Dodging: The swashbuckler gains a +2 AC bonus against one opponent each round.

Evasive: The swashbuckler gains a +1 AC bonus against all melee attackers as long as he has one hand free.

Throwing: The swashbuckler does not need to waste an attack to draw forth any small, handheld throwing weapon. He also gains an additional 1/2 attack per round when he throws a dagger, dart, rock or other small throwing weapon.

Custom: If you own Mob United Media's **First Edition Feats**, you can replace two weapon expertise with two Combat Proficiencies. The swashbuckler gains these in addition to his weapon proficiency slots. Page 7 lists permitted Combat Proficiencies.

Design Notes

Why is the swashbuckler designed this way? Let's talk about the class' abilities.

Core Abilities: Swashbucklers are nominally a fighter sub-class, but take full advantage of the 1E rules' loose guidelines for what a "fighter sub-class" actually is. The class' fewer hit points and light armor encourages a "hit and run" fighting style. Thieves' saving throws compensate for the lack of raw durability. To imagine this class in action, watch swashbuckling classics like Fairbanks' *Robin Hood* and *Captain Blood*. The newer *Pirates of the Caribbean* series also showcases the swashbuckling style: fast, furious and able to take advantage of the environment.

One thing you'll notice in these films is that their heroes don't just "grind" through opponents. They'll run away, then bounce back, and toss the scenery between themselves and danger. The class' rules support this. Do *not* play this character like a fighter. Continual toe to toe combat is a good way to get your swashbuckler killed!

Climb Walls: This ability supports play in the classic "Robin Hood" mold for players who want to sneak into castles. It does step on the thief's toes too much, since in many cases, a thief character climbs walls

to fasten a rope or otherwise help her companions up.

Daring: This is the core “cool” ability of the class, designed to simulate cinematic dering-do. One of the great things about 1E or OSRIC rules is that they don’t shy away from special cases. You can design a class ability to perform a particular function to specifications instead of compromising for the sake of compatibility. Daring is designed to avoid doing anything better served by a spell or another class ability (including those of acrobatic characters found in other 1E rules). The emphasis on the environment puts the power firmly in the DM’s hands. It’s up to her whether or not the right “props” are present to allow a daring move. DMs, don’t be too generous or stingy with this ability.

Daring is designed to balance out with the swashbuckler’s d8 hit dice. A swashbuckler can’t withstand direct combat for as long as most warriors, so daring provides a means of escape when he’s down to a few hit points.

Surprising: Swashbucklers are primarily offensive fighters. Instead of staying in for the long haul they strike swiftly and use the environment to avoid engaging the enemy for too long. Enhanced surprise also allows swashbucklers to avoid combat by choosing a moment of surprise to flee.

Two Weapon Expertise: Two weapon expertise is probably the swashbuckler’s most controversial ability. Some DMs feel a bit burned from bad experiences with dual-wielding warriors and there’s a sense that the ability’s been a bit overplayed.

In 1E rules, two weapon fighting is an “equalizer” for monsters that have a claw/claw/bite or other multiple attack routine. High level (and high Dexterity) characters can easily overcome the penalties for two weapon fighting, but high level fighters,

paladins and rangers are by this time often have access to magical shields. Thus, two weapon fighting changes from a character-based to an equipment-based limitation.

Two weapon expertise is a potent low level ability, but it’s balanced by a swashbuckler’s light armor and by denying the swashbuckler access to exceptional Strength and Strength-enhancing magic items. This keeps “to hit” and damage bonuses reasonable and easily outstripped by a high level fighter with a heavy weapon or a Strength-enhancing magic item. Naturally, the fighter will also have a superior AC. The swashbuckler’s player gains the ability to use two weapons without the headache of tracking various modifiers as well as an extra attack.

Using the Swashbuckler with First Edition Feats and 1E Heroic Abilities

If you own Mob United Media’s **First Edition Feats** or **1E Heroic Abilities** you’ll want to be able to use the swashbuckler with those products. Here’s how you do it:

First Edition Feats: Swashbucklers can learn the following Combat Proficiencies: Archery, Defending Others, Disarming, Dodging, Melee Split Move, Shield Bash, Single Weapon Style, Throwing Blade/Dart/Rock and Two Weapon Fighting. Note that the following core combat styles are incompatible with the following Combat Proficiencies. You may not have both.

Incompatible Fighting Styles

Core Fighting Style	Incompatible Combat Proficiency
Two Weapon Expertise	Two Weapon Fighting
Archery	Archery
Buckler Fighting	Shield Bash
Dodging	Dodging
Evasive	Single Weapon Style
Throwing	Throwing Blade/Dart/Rock

1E Heroic Abilites: Swashbucklers may improve Strength, Dexterity and Intelligence. Dexterity is the swashbuckler's exceptional requisite. Single class swashbucklers don't have thief abilities, but can use their exceptional requisite to boost heroic efforts as usual.

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