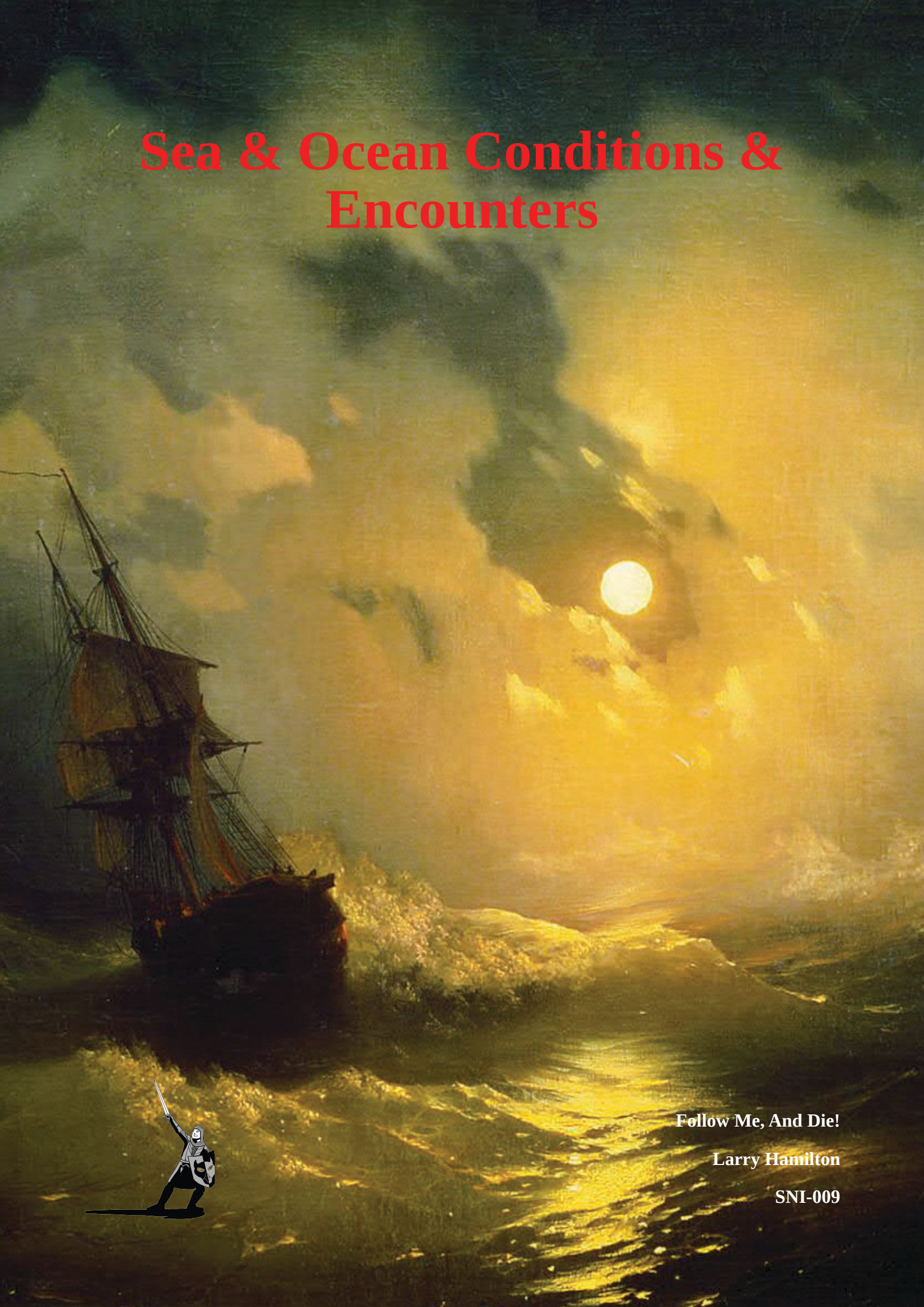


Sea & Ocean Conditions & Encounters



Follow Me, And Die!

Larry Hamilton

SNI-009

Sea & Ocean Conditions & Encounters

Ideas for Terrain, Travel, Weather, Hazards, and Encounters

This is a collection of ideas to aid Game Masters who need to plan or run an ocean voyage for their players. While a comprehensive list of things one may encounter in a sea voyage is impractical, this presents general ideas to help the GM insert different and interesting encounters and situations.

Author: Larry Hamilton

Text Copyright: Follow Me, And Die! Entertainment, LLC © 2019

Blog: followmeanddie.com

Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/FollowMeAndDie>

Follow Me, And Die! Avatar by Satine Phoenix

Cover Illustration: Public Domain - Ivan Konstantinovich Aivazovsky, *Stormy Sea at Night*, 1849

Other Illustrations: Compass Rose with 8 Points By ElfQrin - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15810329>; XYZ Axis by Larry Hamilton (c) 2019

Font: Liberation Serif, [SIL Open Font License 1.1](https://www.sil.com/FontLicense)

Seas and oceans are large bodies of water. While seas may be fresh water, oceans are saltwater unless your campaign world is different. On other planets seas and oceans could be of other substances like molten rock or metal.

TERRAIN TYPES:

One doesn't usually think of terrain when thinking of seas and oceans. However, there are lots of solid geographical formations bounding the bodies of water or out of sight beneath the waves.

- Beaches
- Rocks
- Sand Bars
- Reefs
- Atolls
- Shallows
- Submerged rocks/islands
- Islands & archipelagos
- Low & High Tide Variations
- Glaciers
- Floating Islands

WEATHER:

There are a wide variety of weather from the mundane to the catastrophic and miraculous. Remember the mnemonic: *Red sky at night, sailor's delight. Red sky in the morning, sailor's take warning.*

- Rain (Also Sleet or Snow)
- Fog
- Thunderstorms
- Hurricanes
- Typhoon
- Tornadoes
- Water Spouts
- Rogue Waves
- Tsunamis
- Blistering sun
- Wind - from none to gales

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS:

Any terrain can be a hazard if the ship is out of control or encountered unawares.

- See Terrain Types
- Ship Wrecks - Run aground or submerged at sea.
- Abandoned Ships
- Ghost Ships
- Whirlpool/Maelstrom
- Sunburn year round
- Heatstroke
- Heat Exhaustion
- Frostbite in winter or near the Arctic/Antarctic.
- Mirage: - A real physical phenomena caused by how air of different temperatures affect light rays.
- Hallucinations – Seeing things that aren't there. Can be caused by being too hot or too cold, or bad food & water or other illness, or magic.

HEALTH HAZARDS ON THE OCEAN:

Long ocean voyages have all kinds of hazards to the crew and passengers.

In arctic or antarctic regions cold is a hazard.

- Frostbite
- Hypothermia

Sunburn and eye damage is possible at any temperature if the skies are clear.

In temperate and tropical regions heat is an issue resulting in various health challenges.

- Heat Stroke
- Heat Exhaustion
- Heat Cramps
- Dehydration

Lack of adequate water is a major issue, especially in salty seas and oceans. Drinking salt water gives the illusion of slaking thirst but actually accelerates the body's decline due to lack of water.

Lack of clean water is also an issue. Diseases can immobilize or eliminate the crew and a large or rowed vessel will be at risk of being adrift.

Charts will indicate locations of known fresh water.

ENCOUNTERS

CREATURES

- Sea Serpents
- Giant Octopi
- Giant Squid
- Kracken
- Merpeople
- Regular Fish (Flying fish)
- Sharks
- Giant Fish
- Dolphins
- Seals
- Penguins
- Whales
- Crabs
- Lobsters
- Slugs
- Snails
- Sea Horses
- Island sized monsters, like enormous or colossal sea turtles or dragon turtles.

VESSELS

- Canoe
- Boat
- Ship's Boat
- Long Ship
- Galley
- 1 or more masts

Nature Of Vessels

- Ship Wrecks
- Abandoned Ships
- Ghost Ships
- Pirates/Privateers
- Navies
- Fishermen
- Merchants
- Flying vessels
- Submarine vessels
- Weird occurrences due to magic, etc.

ARMAMENT

Vessels encountered will have some form of weapon available from a personal weapon, improvised weapon, or ship's weapon.

The smallest vessel will tend to have personal weapons like knives, daggers, spears, and perhaps bows. They can even improvise weapons out of oars, pikes, belaying pins, rope, tackle, etc.

Vessels with a larger crew will tend to have more formally crafted weapons like swords, cutlasses, spears, javelins, and bows. Armor will tend to be light, such as leather and shield to minimize chances of drowning in the event of going overboard or sinking.

Vessels large enough for shipborn weapons will be ballistas, small catapults, heavy mounted crossbows, spear throwers, and possibly fire throwing devices. Such as those for Greek fire. In addition to individual grappling hooks, larger devices to keep combating ships together may be used. The corvus, developed by the Romans, is a heavy plank with a spike that is dropped onto the deck of an enemy ship to give a sturdy platform for soldiers to advance and fight from. Large, sturdy ships, usually galleys will have a ram as part of the ship used to sink opposing ships.

Forecastles and aftcastles are multi-deck castle like structures on war ships that allow archers to fire down on enemy ships.

Defenses will depend on the type of ship. Warships will have walls to protect the crew.

All ships will have defenses against fire. Stores of sand to smother fires and buckets they can lower to the sea for water protect against fire. Pikes, hatchets, axes and other tools were used to push off borders, hack grappling lines, and chop away tangled or burning timbers.

Since ships tend to rise above the waves and are designed to catch the wind, they were a major fire hazard. Sails and rigging were the most vulnerable. The timbers of the ship won't catch easily without oil and pitch to help it get going. Once a ship is significantly ablaze, it is often a total loss and the crew is forced to abandon ship.

Wrecks

- Timbers
- Crude Raft
- Boat
- Burning ship left by pirates, monsters, or Navy

Beaches

- Driftwood
- Wreckage
- Cargo from Wreck
- Dead bodies
- Castaways

Other Things Floating at Sea

- Log(s)
- Bodies from land, sea, or air creatures
- Jelly Fish
- Amorphous blob of “something”
- Algae
- Seaweed
- Glaciers - Icebergs calve Hazards, floating islands/mountains

Archipelagos

Archipelagos are island chains or other groupings of islands relatively close together.

How far to nearest island?

Random Direction: d8 compass rose
Distance: d10 days travel

Hex Flower to chart paths?

See [Goblin's Henchman for using Hex Flowers](#).

- Submerged rocks
- Floating Pumice from undersea volcano
- Reefs
- Atolls
- Small, flat islands
- Islands with some elevation
- Islands with cliffs or a mountain
- Can be volcanic - live or dead?
- Caves?

Random islands

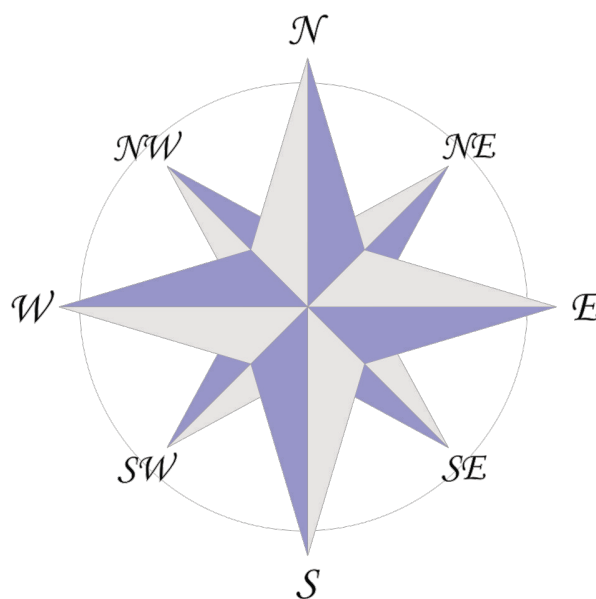
- Is there water?
- Is there food? On land, sea, or air?
- Is it inhabited by dangerous animals?
- Is it inhabited by monsters?
- Is it inhabited by intelligent creatures?
- Is there a beach?
- Is there a natural harbor? (If not ships will have to anchor in deeper water and approach by boat.)
- If a mountainous island, rocs or other large flying predators.

Volcanoes

- Gentle flows of lava in fixed channels.
- Explosive eruption that can destroy island.
- Pyroclastic flows that can wipe out population and infrastructure.
- Miles of pumice floating on the ocean. - Somehow it make sheets one can walk on but sudden shocks can cause breaks.

Compass Rose with 8 Points

Use a d8 to determine direction based on an 8 point compass rose.



HARBORS, LAGOONS, AND LANDINGS

Only small boats and ships with a shallow draft, such as Greek style galleys and Viking long ships must have deep water from natural or artificial harbors to come near to shore. Potential hazards are low tide catching unaware those who visitor a new shore.

Piers, Docks, Quays, Wharfs, Moles, Breakwater

Type of beach/shore:

- Sand
- Sand & small rocks
- Sand & Large Rocks
- Pebbles
- Pebbles & large rocks
- Large Rocks
- Low cliffs
- Medium cliffs
- High cliffs

Type of cliff:

Stable, unstable, or stable apart from heavy storms or earthquake.

- Earth/Clay
- Chalk
- Limestone
- Marble
- Granite
- Mixed

Manufactured Harbors:

- Pile Driver
- Dredger

Random Directions by Medium:

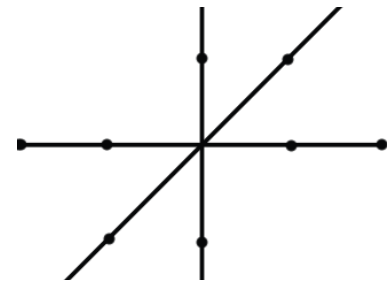
Land, Sea, Air, and Space.

3 dimensions is always possible if something can traverse the surrounding medium. To simplify on land we pick two dimensional directions, unless something from above or below interacts with the surface. The same goes for an ocean voyage.

For two dimensions a d8 gives the four cardinal directions, plus the 4 intermediate directions between them.

For three dimensions use three d10s with a different color for the X, Y, and Z axis. Each axis will have 5 general points: high, low, center, low, high. One set of high & low on each axis will represent positive and the other negative. To achieve more precise determination of position, you will need either a percent scale with 50% indicating center and 1% and 100% indicating extreme endpoints. Determine the maximum available distance based on the map scale. This allows a shallow sea to have a different depth than the other dimensions. Convert the available distance of each axis to a percentage.

d10	AXIS
1-2	High +
3-4	Low +
5-6	Center 0
7-8	Low -
9-10	High -



X, Y, Z Axis

Boat and Ship Building:

Towns and cities on the coast that have easy access to the shore may have the ability to manufacture boats and ships. This of course is dependent on the availability of lumber, so any ship builder on a treeless coast may be excellent ship builders but the resulting ships will cost more due to the increased costs of transporting logs and lumber. Also a boat wright or shipwright is needed. Without a knowledgeable and skilled person to lead the work, the end result will not be well built. This increases the chance for disaster.

Boatyards for building boats.

Shipyards for building ships.

Slips and dry docks.

A coastal town or city may not have shipyards but may have a dry dock or other facilities to enable them to do some form of repairs.

Fishing villages will have at least one boat builder, unless they use dug outs and rafts, then every fisherman builds their own. It is only with the advent of improved construction that specialists are required.

CITIES, RUINS, AND DUNGEONS

Such things can be found on islands of various sizes, or even beneath the waves.

Cities may be “lost” or hidden by jungle, terrain, or magic on remote islands.

Ruins of an ancient city on land may have current descendants living in the depths of the sea. They can have magic or technology to give them a protected atmosphere. Or they may have adapted over the centuries to be sea creatures.

TECHNOLOGY & MAGIC

Magic and technology both inoperable and functional with various degrees of remaining power may be found buried on an island or washed up on its beaches.

ECONOMICS & POLITICS

Those who can cross the water in force can challenge others or make a larger territory for themselves. This can be accomplished by ships of the water or air using magical or technological means. The ability to control and direct large sea creatures such as whales, sharks, giant sea turtles, and so forth will also have an impact.

Control of fishing grounds for food, and fresh water for land based life will also determine who has power.

A large archipelago may have factions competing for land above and other factions competing for territory below. Alliances of some surface and subsurface dwellers might arise. Faster ships, better communication and intelligence will also help leverage control.

Islands with large reserves of resources for construction of buildings, ships, armor, and weapons will be the focus of conflict. Controlling such places outright and beyond contest will make them centers of power.

Smaller islands might be the location of rare and valuable resources. The distance from other islands will determine how likely they are to regularly change hands. It may be that the wealth from a small island offers the opportunity to buy the might to remain

free. Or it might buy off the local power to let them mind their own local matters.

Those who live under the waves have the advantage of stealth and the ability to live off the sea, as a land force lives off the land. A large force of merpeople or other subsurface groups may not be friendly to surface dwellers. What happens to those shipwrecked? Are they left to drown, become food, get rescued, or are they made slaves in underwater caverns? Such slaves could mine materials inaccessible to their masters.

Throw in humans, elves, dwarves and other land dwellers with merpeople, and other intelligent sea dwellers and there is potential for lots of conflict, strange alliances, and other political situations.

TRADE GOODS

Various good would be traded between islands and islands and the mainland.

- Salt from evaporation of sea water.
- Shells of various creatures
- Teeth of various creatures
- Sand - rare varieties for glass or magic
- Coral
- Fish
- Seaweed
- Wood
- Nuts, fruits, & vegetables native to the island(s)
- Boats & Ships
- Spices
- Pigments & Dyes
- Pearls
- Gemstones
- Ores
- Hides & leather items of land or sea creatures
-

See my [Caravans & Trade](#) for specifics of trade.