

# MINOTAUR MAZE



inotaur Maze is a Fifth Edition plug-in adventure for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3, 5, 8, or 11. This document offers details for the 3rd-level version. For the full adjustments for all level ranges, sign up for the DMDave Patreon. The

characters must travel deep into the Low, the system of caves and tunnels far beneath the continent, where a maze will threaten to lead them astray before they face the guardian at its center, a mighty minotaur.

# PLUG-IN ADVENTURE

As a plug-in adventure, the adventure content serves as dropin material for game masters who wish to add a dungeon to a preexisting campaign or need a side quest. If you need a hook for this adventure, the full adventure contains eight possible goals for your party.

*Gold Reward.* If the character's patron can afford it, they are willing to offer a total of 500 gp per level of the adventure for the characters to brave the dangers of the minotaur maze.

#### OMERIA PLACEMENT

There are entrances into the Low in many places; however, this adventure is best suited to the caves below the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. The mountain range that separates Northern and Central Omeria is home to inaks and

subterranean drakes, and one wrong turn will lead you into the Low.

# RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run the adventure, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. If you don't have a copy, you can access a free basic ruleset from the official source.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under specific circumstances, as described in the text.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block as a way of saying, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the Appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.

Spells and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core manual for players. *Magic items* are described in the core manual for game masters unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in the Appendix.

# NAVIGATING THE LOW

The Low is a tangled web of tunnels, chasms, and ancient ruins. Each day, the players must designate one party member or NPC as the navigator. The navigator makes a Wisdom (Survival) check to determine the party's progress for the day. A navigator with proficiency in cartographer's tools or the Natural Explorer feature with the underground as their favored terrain has advantage on this check. Successfully navigating to the minotaur maze requires 3 successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) checks. These checks do not need to be successive.

Each day spent in the Low brings the risk of danger. Each day, roll a d10. On a result of 3 or lower, the party triggers a random encounter. Most of these random encounters come in the form of difficult terrain and can be avoided by turning back and searching for another path. If the party chooses to backtrack to avoid a random encounter, treat the day's navigation check as a failure regardless of what the navigator rolls.

#### THE LOW RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

#### d6 Encounter

- 1 Chasm
- 2 Exhausting Terrain
- 3 Inak colony
- 4 Mushroom Grotto
- 5 Steam Vent
- 6 Strange Dreams

#### CHASM

A vast chasm 60 feet wide and 200 feet deep blocks the tunnel forward. The remains of a bridge have long since rotted away.

### EXHAUSTING TERRAIN

The party travels through a particularly difficult section of the Low full of sucking mud, boulder scrambles, and vertical climbs. At the end of the day, each character must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a character gains 1 level of exhaustion. A character that fails this saving throw by 5 or more takes 2 levels of exhaustion.

#### INAK COLONY

The party stumbles into the outskirts of an inak city in a massive vertical shaft. They are met by a patrol of inaks who, while wary, are not outright hostile. They gesture insistently for the party to leave.

If a character is able to communicate with the inaks, they explain that outsiders are not welcome in their cities. A character can convince the inaks to trade with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. They have access to all of the nonmagical goods listed in the core rulebook for players, including rations, but ask twice the normal price. At

the GM's discretion, they may also have a magic item or two they are willing to sell for twice the going price as well.

*Encounter: This is Our City.* If the party offends the inaks or otherwise provokes them, the inaks attempt to drive the group away by force. In this version, the party will initially be confronted by seven **inaks** (see the Appendix). Each round after the first on initiative count 20, 1d4+1 additional **inaks** arrive. With hundreds of **inaks** at their disposal, the forces keep coming until the party dies or retreats.

#### Mushroom Grotto

The tunnel widens into a large cavern packed with fungus of all shapes and sizes. Woody shelf fungus forms ledges around the walls, tall, thin mushrooms create a forest-like effect in the center, and the entire region is dimly lit by glowing green mushrooms.

A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check can identify several edible mushrooms that can be harvested to provide a total of 2d6 days worth or rations. A character that exceeds this check by 5 or more also finds a species of mushroom that can be distilled into a useful poison.

*Treasure: Poisonous Potential* Harvesting the poisonous mushrooms requires a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check. A character that fails this check by 5 or more is exposed to the mushroom's poison. The mushroom can then be distilled into assassin's blood by a creature that spends 2 hours and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence check using proficiency in a poisoner's kit. The nature of the poison depends on the level of the adventure.

### STEAM VENT

The air grows warmer and more humid as the party progresses through the tunnels until it feels like a steam room. A faint sulfurous odor permeates the steam and distant whooshes of air indicating that steam vents are to blame. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (History) check knows that steam vents in the Low are very hot and exposure to the toxic gases can cause lung damage.

Hazard: Toxic Vents. The next half mile of tunnels are filled with steam vents and toxic gases. Each character that traverses these tunnels takes 7 (2d6) fire damage and must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (1d10) acid damage and experience ongoing lung damage. A creature with lung damage must remake the saving throw each day at dawn, taking acid damage on a failed save. The lung damage is cured after 3 successful saving throws or the creature is targeted with lesser restoration or similar magic.

#### STRANGE DREAMS

Unless the characters sleep under the protection of the *tiny hut* spell or similar magic, they suffer from terrible nightmares and wake to find that twisted purple mushrooms have grown around them while they slept. Each character exposed to the mushrooms must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or they do not gain the benefits of a long rest and gain 1 level of exhaustion.

# THE MINOTAUR MAZE

Asking whether a maze or a minotaur came first is not unlike asking whether the egg or the hen was there first. As far as anyone can remember, both have existed. Maybe Zarat Greathorn, the guardian of this particular maze, was once tasked to protect it by another entity. But if so, it was too long ago to remember. Maybe he built the maze himself, to serve as his lair. It is certainly what he would claim if asked. But the true origins and possible purpose of this labyrinthine structure and its bovine guardian has been lost to time.

### GENERAL FEATURES

The minotaur maze has the following features, unless otherwise stated in a location description:

**Architecture.** The minotaur maze is made of rough tunnels carved from the bedrock of the Low. The uneven corridors average 10 feet wide and 12 feet tall.

*Illumination.* Bioluminescent slime mold creeps along the ceiling and glows with dim yellow light.

**Magical Miasma.** The minotaur maze is suffused by a magical miasma that appears as glittering yellow sparkles in the corners of a creature's vision. The miasma has the following magical suppression properties:

- Divination magic is partially suppressed. Creatures within
  the miasma have advantage on saves against divination
  spell effects. If there is no saving throw associated with
  the spell, the caster must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution
  saving throw or the spell fails to function and the spell slot
  is lost.
- Teleportation magic has a high risk of failure. Any
  creature that attempts to teleport into or within the
  miasma must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving
  throw or the spell fails to function, wasting the spell slot,
  and the creature takes 5 (1d10) force damage.



- Every time a spell is cast, roll a d20. On a result of 1, the spell fails to manifest and the spell slot is wasted.
- As a magical effect, the magical miasma is suppressed by the spell antimagic field and similar effects.

**Random Encounters.** Dozens of minotaurs patrol the maze. For every 30 minutes the party spends in the maze, roll a d6. On a result of 5 or higher, the party encounters a patrol of 1d4+2 **adolescent minotaurs** (use the **orc** stat block, but they are monstrosities and only speak Abyssal).

#### NAVIGATING THE MAZE

The minotaur maze is a natural labyrinth of stone tunnels that become more convoluted the closer to the center of the maze the party gets. Each time they leave a location in the maze, one character acting as the navigator makes a Wisdom (Survival) check. This check begins at DC 10 and increases by 5 after each successful check. The party may choose a new navigator for each check and the successes don't have to be consecutive. Traveling between locations takes 3d4 minutes.

To determine which location the party arrives at, roll 1d8 on the Minotaur Maze Random Location table, or choose a location you like. After the third successful navigation check, you do not need to roll for location. Instead, the party finds the center of the maze (area 9).

#### MINOTAUR MAZE RANDOM LOCATIONS

| 10 |          |   |
|----|----------|---|
| d8 | Location | ١ |
|    |          |   |

- 1 Endless Tunnels
- 2 Ruins
- 3 Unstable Ground
- 4 Soporific Fungi
- 5 Webs
- 6 Boneyard
- 7 Flood
- 8 Explosive Gas

#### 1 - ENDLESS TUNNELS

This section of the maze is clearly man-made and incredibly monotonous. The branching tunnels seem to go on forever without changing.

Hazard: Endless Loop. An ancient spell protects this section of the maze, causing those who enter it to wander in circles without realizing it. Have the character or NPC currently acting as the navigator make a Wisdom saving throw. A party in the habit of marking the way they've come or a navigator with an ability that improves their memory or navigation skills gains advantage on this roll. After a number of minutes equal to 30 minus the save result (minimum 5), the navigator realizes that the group is walking in circles.

Once the party knows they are in an endless loop of tunnels, a character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check can figure out how to break free of the spell effect so that the party can leave.



#### 2 - RUINS

Before the minotaurs claimed the maze, it was inhabited by a dwarven clan. This section of the tunnels is unsettlingly silent and noticeably cooler than other locations in the maze. The minotaurs fear this place and patrols avoid it.

A creature that succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check or who uses the *detect evil and good* spell or a similar ability can tell that its violent history has caused the area around the ruins to become desecrated ground. A vial of holy water purifies a 10-foot-square area of desecrated ground when sprinkled on it, and a *hallow* spell purifies desecrated ground within its area.

**Encounter: Restless Souls.** The spirits of the dead still haunt the ruins. While the location is desecrated, any undead in the region have advantage on all saving throws. In this version, there is one **wight** present.

**Treasure:** We Knew the Way. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds an old map of the maze along with 50 gp per adventure level. While the maze has changed in the years since the map was made, it still grants advantage on navigation checks to reach the center.

### 3 - Unstable Ground

A sinkhole appeared in this section of the maze a few months ago. The minotaurs have created crude wooden bridges to get across, but the area around the holes are still dangerously unstable.

The bridges are difficult terrain and do not require a check to cross. Each 5-foot-square section of the ground has AC 17, immunity to poison and psychic damage, vulnerability to thunder damage, and collapses if it takes more than 10 damage from a single attack. If a section of the ground collapses, any creature standing on it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall 10 feet per level of the adventure into the chasm below.

A female scream echoes from just out of sight. Edniss Bloodpast (neutral good female dwarf **acolyte** with only 1 remaining spell slot) came to the maze to bring peace to her ancestors who once lived in area 2 of the maze. Her team was attacked by a minotaur patrol and she was the only one to escape only to become cornered by a new monster here.



**Encounter:** A Dangerous Rescue. In this version, Edniss is being terrorized by one gargoyle.

#### 4 - Soporific Fungi

Thin white veins of fungal mycelium cling to the walls and floors. As the party progresses through the tunnel, they begin to notice small mushrooms with lacy white skirts trailing delicately from under smooth lavender caps. A character that succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies these as lacy nightcaps, a rare and dangerous type of fungi whose spores create a powerful soporific effect for beasts and humanoids.

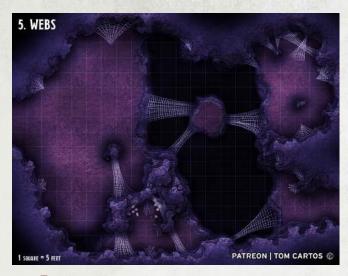
*Hazard: Nap Time.* Any beast or humanoid creature that spends more than 1 minute in the presence of lacy nightcaps must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or fall asleep. The creature wakes up if it takes damage, but otherwise slumbers indefinitely.

#### 5 - WEBS

What starts as a single web blocking the path quickly becomes an entire section of tunnels draped with large, sticky webs. The tunnel opens into a cavern with spider web bridges crossing a dark pit. The webs on the far side of the pit are dotted with webbed bundles. The minotaurs grew annoyed with the spider's webs and recently did some pest control, so this area is currently unoccupied and the spiders' eggs are smashed.

The webs count as difficult terrain. The web bridges are strong enough to bear the weight of a large creature. Each 5-foot cube of webs has AC 10, 5 hp, vulnerability to fire damage and immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage. The pit is 10 feet deep for every 2 levels of the adventure (rounded up).

*Treasure: Dry Husks.* Some of the webbed bundles on the far side of the pit contain the dry husks of the spiders' old snacks. A character that spends 10 minutes and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the remains of an adventurer with a pack containing 100 gp, seven gems worth 10 gp each, and a *potion of healing*.



#### 6 - BONEYARD

The foul scent of decomposing flesh grows stronger as the characters approach this section of the tunnels. Soon the source becomes obvious: the bodies of minotaurs, spiders, and other creatures in varying states of decay are piled in this section of the maze. Any valuables have been stripped from the bodies.

Three recently deceased dwarves lie at the top of the heap. If Edniss is with the group, she recognizes these dwarves as her companions.

*Hazard: That's Nasty.* The pile of bodies and the creatures that live in this region are all infected with sewer plague.

**Encounter: Scavengers.** Monsters in this location live off of the carcasses the minotaurs bring. They attack anyone that enters the boneyard but attempt to flee and hide if reduced below half of their maximum hit points. In this version, there are one **rust monster** and two **swarms of insects** present.



### 7 - FLOOD

An underground river has eroded a 15-foot-long section of the maze, creating a high-pressure waterfall that blocks the path forward.

*Hazard: Washed away.* A creature that moves through the waterfall must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be swept away by the current. A creature swept away by the river resurfaces outside of the minotaur maze and must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion.

### 8 - EXPLOSIVE GAS

The tunnel dips down before steeply rising and opening into a small chamber curiously devoid of life, including the bioluminescent slime mold that lights most of the maze.

*Hazard: Explosive Gas.* This chamber contains an unbreathable, highly explosive gas. If it is exposed to any source of fire, the gas ignites and explodes in a concussive blast. Any creature in the chamber takes 11 (2d10) fire damage plus 11 (2d10) thunder damage.

If the gas explodes, roll to check for a minotaur patrol immediately (see General Features).

#### 9 - CENTER OF THE MAZE

Zarat Greathorn is the leader of the minotaurs by virtue of being the biggest and strongest. He lounges at the center of the maze, directing the weaker minotaurs to do his bidding and protecting his secret treasure stash.

The area around Zarat is protected by various traps and obstacles. Zarat and his minions know the location and nature of these traps and have advantage on any skill checks or saving throws required to navigate them.

*9a. Dead end* A trip wire is strung 3 inches above the ground 10 feet away from the end of the tunnel (DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot). The trap can be disabled with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A character without thieves' tools can attempt this check with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers.

When the wire is tripped, a net disguised as bioluminescent slime mold is released, covering the 10-foot area in front of the dead end. Any creatures under it when it falls must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or become restrained and knocked prone. A creature that succeeds on this check is restrained but not knocked prone. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. The net has AC 10, 20 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

*9b. Giant step.* The tunnel sharply rises 6 feet up. A creature that can't typically jump that high must succeed on a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check to get over the rise. On a failure, the creature is stuck and can't remake the check until its next turn.

**9c. Fallen rocks.** Recently destroyed tunnel walls cover the ground with precariously piled stone debris that function as difficult terrain. A creature moving through the fallen rocks must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. Zarat and his minions jump over these rocks when possible.

*9d. Cave anemones.* Large fungal formations resembling orange sea anemones grow from the walls of the cavern. A creature that succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies these as cave anemones, a species of fungus that secretes a corrosive liquid that corrodes any nonmagical metal object that touches it.

- After dealing damage, a weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed.
- Ammunition made of metal is destroyed after dealing damage.
- Armor and shields take a permanent and cumulative -1
  penalty to the AC they offer. Armor reduced to an AC of 10
  or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus is destroyed.

**9e.** Unstable stalactites. Delicate, sharp stalactites hang from the ceiling. Some have recently broken off and impaled the tunnel ground. A creature moving through this area must

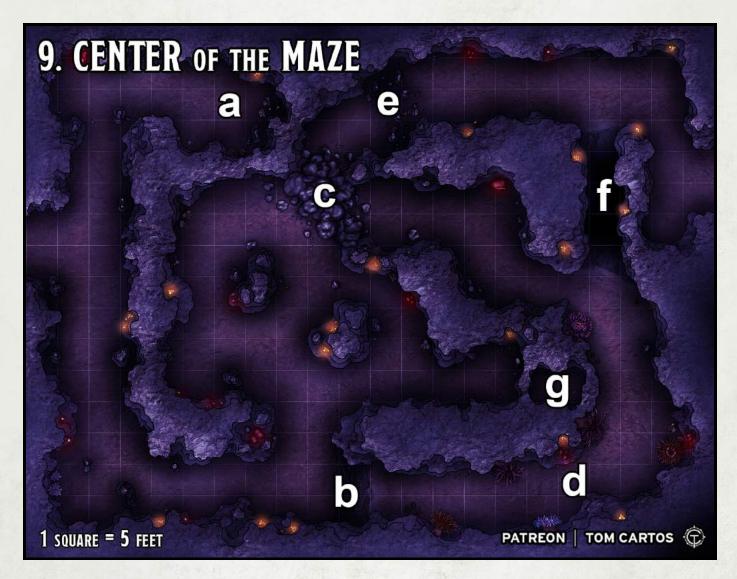
succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or become impaled by a falling stalactite, taking 3 (1d6) piercing damage and getting pinned to the ground. A creature can use its action to make a DC 14 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. The stalactite has AC 17, 5 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

*9f. Dark chasm.* This dark chasm drops 40 feet down into a pool of slimy water. The walls are rough enough to climb without needing to make a check.

At the GM's discretion, this may lead deeper into the Low or contain ruins the party may be interested in.

*9g. False wall.* A creature that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots scuff marks on the western side of the false wall. A creature that succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices that a large slab of stone creates a hidden door. This stone can be moved with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to reveal Zarat's Treasure Hoard. In this version, Zarat's hoard consists of 750 gp, a +1 shield, and pipes of haunting.

**Encounter:** The Boss. Zarat (minotaur) craves battle and has no interest in talking to the party. He and his two adolescent minotaur guards (use the orc stat block, but they are monstrosities and only speak Abyssal).



# AFTERMATH

Once the characters have dealt with Zarat, they must escape the maze again. If they were keeping track of their way in, following the same route out again is simple. If they were not, or they are looking for a different exit, they will need to once more navigate through the maze as indicated above. However, their Wisdom (Survival) checks to navigate are made at advantage now, and random encounters only occur on a roll of 6 on the d6.

The patron pays the rewards as promised as long as the characters fulfill their mission, and the party may increase its renown with an involved faction.

The maze itself still holds passages the characters did not find, and in time, it may serve as the lair of a different guardian, or the characters may travel through it to access other parts of the low. Zarat Greathorn, however, will not be able to trouble anyone anymore.  $\Omega$ 

# **CREDITS**

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# APPENDIX: NEW CREATURE



# INAK

The inaks (EE-noks) are an intelligent undead species that haunt the tunnels below the northern portion of the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. Superficially, they appear to be skeletons bound together by thick, boiled leather. However, their skeletal structures consist of more than just humanoid bones. Inaks build themselves out of any parts they have available. One inak may have the head of a ram with six long appendages while another may crawl like a scorpion and have a six-foot-long neck terminating in an infant human's skull.

No one knows how long the inaks have been in The Low. The elves of Vaskil Valley believe that they've been around at least as long as the Anorian empire and perhaps even predate the elves themselves. "So long as there have been bones there have been inaks," as the Vaskilish saying goes.

*Dragon Trainers*. Inaks have a close relationship with the subterranean drakes of The Low, dubbing them zogo-ba-inak, or "our dragons". For whatever reason, it's considered sacrilege for the inaks to utilize zogo-ba-inak bones to create new inaks. Instead, the inaks use the reckless zogo-ba-inak as guard dogs and weapons of war. In many ways, zogo-ba-inak are the inaks' first line of defense. There's no question that the drakes are the reason the aboveground humanoid races have yet to discover Kwa-ba-inak.

*Kwa-ba-inak*. The inaks live in a massive vertical shaft pocked with thousands of labyrinthine tunnels and alcoves named Kwa-ba-inak ("our city"). Creatures who lack sufficient means to climb quickly find themselves at an disadvantage within the inaki city. Not that it matters, of course. No humanoid who has ever set eyes on the city has lived to tell the tale.

*Undead Nature*. The inak does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

# INAK

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor) Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6) Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA

10 (+0) 10 (+0) 16 (+3) 16 (+3) 13 (+1) 9 (-1)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Inak
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

**Spider Climb.** The inak can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

### **Actions**

**Multiattack**. The inak can use its whistle. Then, the inak makes two attacks with its dagger.

**Dagger.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage. And if the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the poisoned effect with a success.

Chill Touch (Cantrip). Ranged Spell Attack: +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d8) necrotic damage and the target can't regain hit points until the start of the inak's next turn. Until then, the hand clings to the target. If the inak hits an undead target, the target also has disadvantage on attack rolls against the inak until the end of the inak's next turn.

Whistle (Recharge 6). The inak emits a high-pitch warble. Each creature within 60 feet of the inak that can hear it must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures immune or resistant to thunder damage automatically pass their saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is incapacitated until the start of the inak's next turn. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw or the effect ends for it is immune to the whistle of all inaks for 24 hours.

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