

Monster ENCyclopedia: Barghest

This is a series of articles about specific monsters from D&D's history. Each entry takes a look at the origin of one D&D creature, and tracks its appearances and evolution across different editions. This was originally the second entry in the series, following the [aarakocra](#). Although the creature immediately following the aarakocra in a hypothetical *Utterly Complete Monster Manual* would be the aartuk, the second installment in the series jumped to the letter B, for a look at the barghest.

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Origins

The barghest is a creature originating in the folklore of Northern England, where it is a mythical monstrous black dog with large teeth and claws. There does not appear to be consensus on the meaning of the word “barghest”, except that the “ghest” part refers to a ghost or spirit. In folklore, the barghest has fiery eyes and the ability to become invisible. It serves as an omen of death and is associated with the sound of rattling chains. Like the vampire, the barghest cannot cross moving water.

The first mention of a barghest in D&D appears to be in a preview of several near-completed pages of the original *Dungeon Masters Guide* in *The Dragon* #22. The barghest is included in a footnote to the cleric's turn undead table which refers to “evil creatures from lower planes such as barghests, minor demons, lesser devils, mezzodaemons, night hags [...]”.

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Preview, *The Dragon* #22 (February 1979)

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Final version, *Dungeon Masters Guide* (August 1979)

Curiously, this footnote was edited after the preview in *The Dragon*, as the printed *Dungeon Masters Guide* does not include the barghest in the list. Possibly there were plans to include the barghest in one of the early AD&D modules, much like the mezzodaemon and nycadaemon first appeared in *D3: Vault of the Drow*. If so, these plans changed during the course of 1979, freeing up the barghest to appear in the pages of *The Dragon* #26.

1st Edition

The barghest gets a stat block and a full page description in the *Dragon's Bestiary* column in *The Dragon* #26. Unfortunately, this first appearance lacks an illustration, so D&D players would have only a written description of the barghest to start with. There is also no credit for the column, but in response to a letter in *The Dragon* #30, the editor confirms that Gary Gygax was the creator of the barghest.

A barghest looks exactly like a large goblin, or occasionally a large dog, which it can change into at will. So like goblins do barghests look in their natural form, that non-goblinoids are unable to tell them apart. This is apparently despite the fact that their goblin skin color changes from yellow to red to blue as they grow in power. The eyes of a barghest also glow orange when it is excited, so adventurers encountering a group of goblins led by a blue-skinned leader with orange eyes might want to exercise extra caution! The barghests' shape-changing ability has led to them being called "devil-dogs" in the common tongue, which is misleading, since they are not related to devils.

Although not diabolical in nature, barghests are native to the outer planes, and the specimens most often encountered by adventurers are actually young barghests sent to the Prime Material Plane to feast on human lives, which they need to grow. The game mechanics for the barghest support this process of gradual growth, providing seven levels of barghest development. At its weakest, a barghest has 6d8+6 hit points, but this can grow to as much as 12d8+12 if the creature consumes enough human lives. Its strength, intelligence, armor class, and magic resistance also increase as it grows.

In *The Dragon* #26, barghests are said to be the most common and one of the worst of the "various members of the deodands" inhabiting Gehenna. Plane-dwelling barghests live apart from one another, each ruling over its own stronghold and servants. From time to time, a barghest spawns a litter of six whelps, and these whelps are sent to the Prime Material Plane to feed on humans and grow stronger, before eventually gaining the ability to *plane shift*, at which point they are able to return to their native Gehenna.

As well as the ability to shapechange between goblin and canine forms, a barghest gets a range of other magic abilities, including *change self*, *levitation*, *misdirection*, *projected image*, *charm*, *dimension door* and *emotion*. They are also sneaky and fast, able to *pass without trace* and become nearly invisible when motionless.

Adventurers considering taking on a barghest will need magical weapons (+1 or better is needed to damage them), but they should also take note of the creature's peculiar weakness. Barghests are generally immune to damage from fire; however, if they are targeted by a fire attack when in canine form, and fail a saving throw, they are immediately banished back to Gehenna. This spells almost certain doom for underdeveloped barghests, since they lack the ability to return to the Prime Material Plane to continue their feeding and growth cycle. Barghests returning to their home plane prematurely are usually killed or enslaved by stronger members of their kind.

There is a note at the end of the *Dragon's Bestiary* column stating that "by gracious arrangement with the author of AD&D, Gary Gygax, monsters appearing in this column are to be considered OFFICIAL AD&D MONSTERS. As such, they are as official and authentic as any included in the AD&D MONSTER

MANUAL, or any other book beating the imprimatur AD&D.” Despite this note, not all of the creatures born in *Dragon* went on to become fixtures in the D&D multiverse. Some early *Dragon* creatures never escaped the pages of the magazine (looking at you prowler and horast). The barghest, however, did.

The *Monster Manual II* was published six years after the *Monster Manual*, and many of the creatures it contains were copied from early adventure modules or *Dragon* articles, including the barghest. There are some minor editing changes (barghests are no longer “members of the deodands”), but the text in the *Monster Manual II* is nearly identical to that in *Dragon* #26. There is however, still no picture, even though the banderlog, which shares a page with the barghest, gets two illustrations.

Barghests get a little bit more attention during the 1st Edition period. The helpful *Ay pronunseeAYshun gyd* in *Dragon* #93 confirms that the “h” in barghest is silent, and the correct way to say it is bar-GEST. The *Sage Advice* column in *Dragon* #138 answers a few rules questions about the creatures; weaker barghests can be turned by clerics, holy water does standard damage against them, and their size depends on their hit dice.

Dragon #113 lists the barghest on the encounter tables for Hades and *Dragon* #91 notes that the boatmasters of the Styx are happy to transport barghests, provided they have paid the appropriate fee. The *Manual of the Planes* mentions that barghests are “the only true natives of Gehenna” (what happened to the other deodands?) and confirms what we already know about their life-cycle of growing up on the Prime Material Plane, before returning to a desolate rift in Gehenna to build small empires and settle into a life of continuous conflict with other barghests. Despite them being the dominant inhabitants of an entire outer plane, we still don’t get a picture of a barghest in the *Manual of the Planes*.

The compilation *GDQ1-7: Queen of the Spiders* has an appendix on further adventures. One of the encounters in this section is a city of white goblins, cut off from the surface for so long that they have white skin and eyes grown over with skin. They are ruled over by a barghest who also has four tunnel worms at his command.

In *Dungeon* #16, the barghest Nameless has a number of goblins working for him in the pirate city of Scrape. Nameless is masquerading as a goblin, and has plans to usurp control of the entire city. Nameless has accumulated a fair pile of treasure, but has little interest in it, and keeps it only in order to keep the other commanders from becoming suspicious.

2nd Edition

The barghest did not appear in any of the core monster books for 2nd Edition, so we have to jump to the Planescape setting for a look at the 2nd Edition version. The barghest gets a two-page spread in the *Monstrous Supplement* booklet in the initial *Planescape Campaign Setting* boxed set, and finally, we get some pictures. There is a large illustration of a blue-skinned goblin (presumably a barghest) accompanied by two canines (presumably but not necessarily also barghests).



Planescape Campaign Setting (1994)

We also get a smaller picture showing the differences between a goblin and a barghest, which could be a useful reference for adventurers struggling to tell the two apart. The text of the entry is a rearranged and edited version of the original *Dragon* article. The abilities, life-cycle and statistics of the barghest remain completely unchanged from 1st Edition, but we do find out that their diet is “carnivore” (was there ever any doubt?), and that they have an activity cycle of “any”, indicating that unlike goblins, they are not nocturnal.



Planescape Campaign Setting (1994)

3rd Edition

In D&D 3.0, the barghest received a promotion, appearing in the initial *Monster Manual*. Although the basics are similar, there are a number of changes to this version of the barghest. They now take the form of large wolves, instead of dogs, and based on the picture the barghest version is much more feral and evil-looking than a typical wolf. They are now identified as “fiends”, and they speak the Goblin, Worg, and Infernal languages.



Monster Manual (2000) and original concept art

We get more information about their combat tactics than previously. Barghests are described as loving killing but having little appetite for direct combat, and favoring ambushes if possible. They have the same suite of magical powers they had previously, but we get more of an explanation of how they use them. *Project image* is used to conceal their locations and the number of allies they have, and *emotion* and *charm person* are used to keep opponents off balance. They also prefer to rely on their high speed to get to isolated foes, and to steer clear of riskier enemies. Notably, 3rd Edition barghests have lost their special vulnerability; there is no mention in the *Monster Manual* of barghests being sent back to Gehenna when targeted with fire spells.

Barghests still gain hit dice for devouring humanoids (not just humans), but there is no longer an upper limit specified for this ability, and no changes to other abilities as they grow. There is, however, a separate stat block for a greater barghest, which is a large 9HD version. It isn't clear from the text that normal barghests become greater barghests when they reach 9HD, but that seems as if it would be a safe assumption based on their game history. In combat, greater barghests are said to sometimes use a magic two-handed weapon instead of relying on their claws. We also learn that it is much harder to raise or resurrect someone slain by a barghest, with even a *true resurrection* spell having a 50% chance of failure. According to *Complete Divine*, this is also the case if a barghest eats the corpse of a recently slain character; the barghest consumes part of the soul, so that half of the time, it is too damaged to ever be restored to life.

Since they were core D&D creatures in 3rd Edition, barghests featured more often in adventures than they had previously. There are two pairs of barghests living in the town of Brindinford in *The Speaker in Dreams*, and a great barghest named Riu Lotaas serves as henchman to the duergar commander of the Crater Ridge Mines in *Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil*. *The Ministry of Winds*, a short adventure released on the Wizards of the Coast website, has a quartet of villains: a human sorcerer, an elven cleric, a minotaur and a barghest. All four are actually possessed by the lingering memory-spirits of a group of powerful spellcasters who built the Obelisk of Winds centuries earlier.

As the Planescape setting did in 2nd Edition, the 3rd Edition *Manual of the Planes* emphasizes the yugoloths as the dominant residence of Gehenna, and doesn't mention barghests at all in the description of that plane. They do appear on the encounters tables though, and greater barghests are also mentioned in the "devil" monster entry as occasional steeds of narzugons.

Dragon #293 contained an article titled *Monsters with Class* which could be described as a playtest article for *Savage Species*, released the following year. The article provides an Effective Character Level (ECL) for a wide variety of creatures. The ECL for a barghest is listed as 25, which means that a 2nd level barghest cleric would be considered balanced in a group of 27th level adventurers. The greater barghest, in comparison, is given an ECL of 30.

By the time it was released, *Savage Species* had adjusted these ECLs down to 12 and 16 respectively. This book presented detailed rules for playing a number of new creatures, through a combination of ECLs and abilities adjusted for balance. For PCs, the barghest's feeding ability is toned down (it gives a constitution bonus instead of an increase in HD), and the barghest also gets fewer overall hit dice, topping out at 6d8 at 12th level. Other than these changes, this version of the barghest has similar abilities to the *Monster Manual* incarnation.



Miniatures Handbook (2003)

The 3.5 revision of the *Monster Manual* keeps the barghest much the same, but makes some changes to the spell-like abilities it can use. Instead of *project image*, a barghest can now cast *blink* and *rage* at will. It loses *charm person* and *emotion*, but gains *crushing despair* instead. A greater barghest adds *invisibility sphere* to its at-will abilities, and *mass bull's strength* and *mass enlarge* to its daily powers. There are also some minor adjustments to the stats (the greater barghest gains a point each of strength and constitution, and both barghests gain the Track feat). The climate/terrain line now reflects the Bleak Eternity of Gehenna instead of "any land and underground".

The revised text clarifies the relationship between ordinary and greater barghests. It is spelled out that a barghest consuming sufficient souls to reach 9HD immediately becomes a greater barghest, which has an upper limit of 18HD from further feeding. Slightly confusingly, the text says that it describes a fully grown barghest. This doesn't quite match the idea of 6HD whelp gradually eating souls to grow, and no stats are provided for younger barghest, so this may simply have been a minor editing oversight in the barghest's description.

Complete Warrior notes that barghest characters can take the warshaper prestige class. It also notes their value as troops in fantasy warfare, because of their tracking skills and ability to *dimension door* once per day.



Dungeon #103 (2003)

The adventure *The Sinkhole* in *Dungeon #103* begins with the heroes staying in the Sleepy Sphinx Inn. During the night, a sinkhole opens up below the inn, plunging everyone inside into the Plane of Shadow, which has bled into the cave system below the village of Burek. (Yelp review: “Entire family transformed into shadow monsters. Not recommended.”) As they explore the strange realm into which they have fallen, the adventurers are likely to be ambushed by the barghest Huzuraal and his band of goblins. As natives (or long-term residents) of the Plane of Shadow, they all gain the benefit of the shadow creature template. Huzuraal is a cunning tactician and makes the most of his abilities, his allies, and the unusual nature of his home.

March of the Sane, a free adventure from the Wizards of the Coast website, has the greater barghest Thaerraad attempting to manipulate an already insane cult into becoming an insane cult that sacrifices people. The barghest doesn’t have a particularly good motivation for this plan, he just wants to make the cult leader even more evil than he already is.

Another free website adventure, *Bad Light*, partners a barghest with a green hag in a scheme to take over a lighthouse, and wreck ships using a false beacon in another location. In *Dungeon #115*, the barghest Vortwug and his goblin tribe have injured a white horse and stuck a fake horn on it, to make it seem like a wounded unicorn. They use this poor beast to try to lure their enemies into an ambush.

Hellspike Prison has a group of barghests calling themselves the Hellstrike Legion working for a barbed devil. A pair of greater barghests lair in a magic laboratory in *The Fall of Graymalkin Academy* in *Dungeon #140*.



Dungeon #140 (2006)

4th Edition

Barghests received a slight demotion between D&D 3.5 and D&D 4, only appearing in the *Monster Manual 2*. This version of the creature is no longer an extra-planar inhabitant that happens to look exactly like a goblin. Instead, they are described as members of the goblin race, who are born at random among goblins. This is apparently viewed as a blessing from the god Bane. They also no longer have tell-tale blue skin, but do have unusual features such as a shock of white hair or a discolored eye to hint at their special nature.



Monster Manual 2 (2009)

In 4th Edition, there are no longer ordinary and greater barghests. Instead stat blocks are provided for a barghest savager and a barghest battle lord. The barghest savager lives for battle and will incite other goblinoids to violence. Unlike previous barghests, the savager takes the form of either a wolf or a bugbear. Other than this shape changing ability, this barghest has none of the special powers of its ancestors. Instead it gains a jump strike attack that deals 3d8+5 points of damage and a psychic ability to mimic powers that it has seen opponents use in battle. It has 63 hit points, and is medium in size. In bugbear form, it favors a battleaxe.



Monster Manual 2 (2009)

The barghest battle lord is similar to previous barghests, although it takes on the form of a hobgoblin rather than a goblin. In hobgoblin form, it usually wields a greatsword. The battle lord likes to control the flow of combat from a distance, but will allow opponents to get close so that it can use its *life feed* power. This is analogous to earlier barghests' feeding ability, draining health from opponents to boost the barghest, but is now a magical blast affecting all creatures in range, instead of a bite attack. In addition, it has a *psychic howl* that damages and dazes one opponent. The *get some distance* ability provides a way for the barghest battle lord to retreat from combat. It has 82 hit points, and is medium sized. Both barghests know the Common and Goblin languages.

One of the *Chaos Scar* series of adventures, *The Pillar of Eyes*, published in *Dungeon #180*, features Foosteth the Fat, an overweight barghest who is so lazy that he seldom leaves his throne room, preferring his underlings to do his villainous business for him. Some weeks ago, Foosteth ate a priest of Vecna who was in the process of turning the petrified creature now known as the Pillar of Eyes back into a gibbering mouter. Somehow, the priest's memories and consciousness have taken root in Foosteth's mind, and he is now driven to complete the priest's ritual. Foosteth is a barghest savager with additional hit points and an aura of madness.

5th Edition

Barghests are mentioned in passing in the *Bestiary* of the first D&D Next playtest packet (May 2012). The entry for goblins refers to them as "shapechanging goblins known as barghests", possibly supporting the 4th Edition approach of making them part of the goblin family, rather than being independent planar creatures.

The playtest adventure *Dead in Thay* includes a full barghest stat block, and here it is clear that they revert to fiendish wolf form when slain. This version gives them similar abilities to their 1st, 2nd and 3rd Edition brethren, although a barghest can only cast spells (*levitate*, *misdirection*, and *dimension door*) while in goblin form. *Dead in Thay* was later reprinted in *Tales from the Yawning Portal*; the barghest stats there are the same as in *Volo's Guide to Monsters*.

The mechanics of the feeding ability — now delightfully called *devour body and soul* — have changed slightly. It takes 24 hours for a barghest to fully consume a devoured soul, and killing the creature before it has finished digesting frees up the deceased's soul so that the departed can be raised from the dead. On the other hand, once that soul has been fully consumed, that creature cannot be raised or resurrected by any means. This small change creates an excellent narrative hook, with the possibility of a race against time to track and kill a barghest who has consumed a fellow adventurer, or an important NPC.



Volo's Guide to Monsters (2016)

The version of the barghest that eventually made it into *Volo's Guide to Monsters* maintains the 24-hour window during which a devoured soul is trapped inside the creature but can still be freed, although the ability has been renamed to the less evocative *soul feeding*. Some additional mechanical details are added: the barghest can only feed on a corpse that has been dead for less than ten minutes, it takes at least one minute to eat the body, and while the soul is trapped inside the barghest, there is still a 50% chance for revival attempts to work. Once digested, however, the soul is outside the reach of mortal magic.

The backstory and lore of the 5th Edition barghest is quite different. Instead of being an extraplanar creature with a tendency to ally with goblins, this barghest is the creation of the General of Gehenna, master of the yugoloth race, and has been sent to *devour* goblin souls. The goblin god Maglubiyet, so the story goes, reneged on a bargain he struck with the General, breaking seventeen oaths. As an act of vengeance, the General of Gehenna created barghests to hunt down goblins and consume their souls, thus preventing them from serving as Maglubiyet's troops in the afterlife.

As they were in 4th Edition, barghests are born to goblin parents as goblins, and only thereafter do they develop the ability to assume their true form of a large fiendish canine. Every barghest is programmed to consume the souls of seventeen goblins, one for each of the oaths Maglubiyet broke. Only once they have completed this task can they return to Gehenna to serve with the General's yugoloth legions. However, barghests don't simply eat the first dozen or so goblins they come across; they target the souls of powerful goblin leaders so that they can gain elevated status in the afterlife. One consequence of this is that when goblins eventually realize they have a barghest in their tribe, they resort to groveling obeisance, each trying to demonstrate that it is the least worthy of being devoured.

The 5th Edition barghest is more powerful than most of its ancestors, with 90 hit points, matching the 12 Hit Dice of the most powerful 1st Edition specimen. It is resistant to cold, fire and lightning, as well as to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing and slashing attacks. It is immune to acid and poison. A barghest speaks Abyssal, Common, Goblin and Infernal as well as having telepathy. It has a keen sense of smell, blindsight and darkvision. Supplementing its bite (2d8 + 4 hp) and claw (1d8 + 4 hp) attacks, a barghest gains *levitate*, *minor illusion*, and *pass without trace* as at will abilities and can use *charm person*, *dimension door* and *suggestion* once per day.

In a throwback to 1st Edition, barghests can once again be banished using fire. If a barghest comes into contact with a blaze larger than its body, it is banished to Gehenna, likely to be slain by the yugoloths for its failure.

For 2022's *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*, the barghest was substantially overhauled, and ends up significantly weaker than the *Volo's* version. Its alignment is now typically neutral evil instead of neutral evil. The barghest's hit points have been slashed from 90 (12d10 + 24) to 60 (8d10 + 16). It is no longer resistant to fire damage. It still has *fire banishment*, but the wording has been simplified slightly. Replacing the *shapechanger* ability is *change shape*. This has exactly the same wording except that the process is no longer referred to as polymorphing. Importantly, however, this is now a bonus action, and not an action. The shapechanger subtype has also been removed from the barghest's type. The barghest's attacks and spells are the same, but it gains multiattack, allowing it to make both a bite and a claw attack on its turn. The background lore in *Monsters of the Multiverse* is similar to that in *Volo's*, but a few details (such as needing to kill exactly seventeen goblins before returning to Gehenna) have been amended.

Barghests and other monsters

Given their appearance, barghests on the Prime Material Plane are frequently found with goblins. *Dragon #26* notes that goblins tend to worship barghests, and will fear and serve a barghest which chooses to live with them. This can be a symbiotic relationship, with the goblins providing regular human sacrifices for their barghest ruler, and the barghest protecting the goblins from more powerful enemies in return.

Paragons of War: The Ecology of the Hobgoblin in *Dragon #309* notes that barghests blend seamlessly into hobgoblin society, generally assuming a leadership position and not bothering to disguise their true nature from the tribe. The tribe adjusts its combat tactics to make the best use of the creature's abilities, and the barghest tends to push the tribe toward more evil behavior. Over time, the presence of a barghest tends to increase the chance of a blackguard champion rising from the hobgoblin ranks. The blackguard will generally serve as the tribe's high priest, and may take over as leader if something happens to the barghest. For hobgoblins, the main disadvantage of a barghest is that it eats an outsized share of the tribe's rations.

Although (as initially described), barghests in canine form were indistinguishable from dogs, real dogs can immediately identify an impostor, and will attack the barghest if given the opportunity. Later incarnations of the barghest had a less canine appearance, likely making it easier to tell them apart from typical dogs.

As mentioned above, both the 3rd Edition *Manual of the Planes* and the *Fiendish Codex II* note that narzugon devils sometimes use greater barghests as steeds. The flying, ray-like slasraths from *Planes of Conflict* are said to occasionally prey on barghests.

Although they have no particular relationship with gnomes or goliaths, barghests are associated with two lesser known gods of those races, according to *Races of Stone*. The Glutton is a gnomish god generally relegated to bedtime stories told to naughty gnomish children, but does count a few mad gnomes as his cultists. The Glutton may send greater barghests if these cultists call for a planar ally. The neutral goliath god Manethak will also send barghests or greater barghests if his followers call for help.

Races of Destiny contains an example of an illumian cabal which watches over the barghest-led Hellmaw tribe of goblinoids. One of the adventure hooks provided has the PCs trying to rescue two captive illumian scouts from the Hellmaw tribe before they are forced to reveal the extent of the illumians' spying activity.

In *Libris Mortis* a variant lich known as a lichfiend is described. Evil outsiders, including barghests, may construct a phylactery and transform themselves into a lichfiend.

The *Monster Manual IV* suggests that a barghest might team up with a plague walker, using its abilities to hamper the walker's opponents and moving in for a kill if the plague walker detonates.

Dragon #355, suggests that as an alternative origin for a devourer, it might be created when a barghest becomes infected by a ghastr's ghoul fever. Consequently, the devourer inherits the supernatural hunger of both progenitor species.

The 4th Edition *Monster Manual 2* suggests barghest savagers as appropriate allies for beholders.

Barghests and magic

The [Dead Life](#) article on the Wizards of the Coast website has a new cursed magic item known as *final shrouds*. These garments look the same as *shrouds of the holy*, but instead of returning the body to life, instead teleports the body to another plane and summons a barghest to eat it, thus preventing the deceased from being resurrected (at least by spells requiring a body part).

The spell *barghest's feast* from the 3rd Edition *Planar Handbook* recreates the barghest's ability to consume the soul. It is a little pricey, with a 5,000 gp diamond as the material component, but once cast on a corpse (or any remains of the dead), there is a 50% chance (determined when *barghest's feast* is cast) that the creature can no longer be brought back to life by mortal magic.

Dragonlance

Outsiders in general tend not to be too much of a focus in the Dragonlance setting, but the Dragonlance *Dungeon Master's Screen* for D&D 3.5 notes that Krynnish barghests, along with achaierai and hellhounds, serve Sargonnas, the god of wrath, vengeance, and retribution. *Legends of the Twins* mentions that barghests roam the Red Arena, a site in the Abyss controlled by Sargonnas.

Occasional barghests find their way from the Abyss to Ansalon, and integrate into goblin tribes for mutual benefit, according to *Races of Ansalon*. *Spectre of Sorrows* notes that packs of barghests might be encountered in the area known as Desolation (formerly the Goodlund region), following the death of Malystryx.

Eberron

In the Eberron setting, which doesn't use D&D's default planar structure, barghests originate in Mabar, the plane of Endless Night, according to the *Eberron Campaign Setting*. The adventure *Temple of the Scorpion God* in *Dungeon #124* is set in a lost temple on the continent of Xen'drik. It pairs a drider sorcerer with his barghest servant. According to *Secrets of Sarlona*, barghests are also found in the Shajueed Jungle on the continent of Sarlona.

Forgotten Realms

At least in the early Drizzt novels, R. A. Salvatore had a habit of using some of the less mainstream D&D creatures, including dire corbies and hook horrors. In *Sojourn*, one of the sub-plots deals with the machinations of a pair of barghests named Ulgulu and Kempfana. Ulgulu is the dominant of the pair, and is close to absorbing enough human souls to be able to return to Gehenna. However, his plans begin to unravel when he causes Drizzt to be falsely accused of murdering a farming family. Both Ulgulu and Kempfana are ultimately slain by the drow.



A Reader's Guide to R. A. Salvatore's Legend of Drizzt (2008)

The 3rd Edition *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* mentions that packs of worgs led by barghest chieftains live in the Graypeak Mountains. *Unapproachable East* includes barghests in the encounter tables for Ashanath and the North Country, the Rawlinswood and the Yuirwood. *Shining South* lists them as occurring in Halruaa, the Shaar, Veldorn, and the Walls. The 4th Edition article *Realmslore: Vaasa* in *Dungeon #177* states that the goblin settlement of Modurt has a larger-than-average population of barghests. *Dead in Thay* has a family of barghests trapped in the Doomvault by the Red wizards. *The Silverfish*, a short story by Richard Lee Byers in *Dragon #327* is set in the Damaran city of Heliogabalus. It includes a battle with a barghest summoned by an evil wizard to foil a murder mystery investigation.

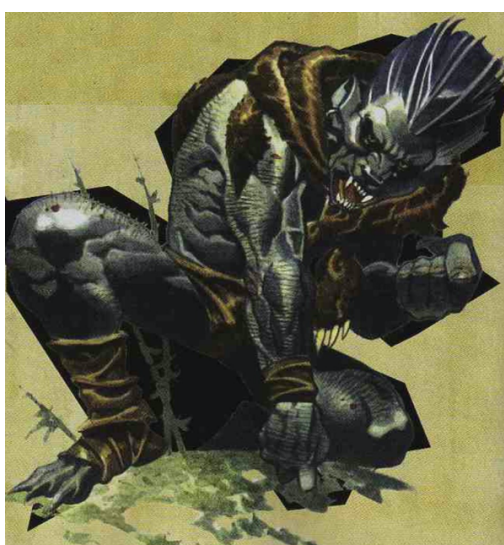
Slightly further afield, *A Player's Guide to Faerûn*, details the unique — at least in 3rd Edition — cosmology of the Realms. Clangor is home to the goblinoid deities Maglubiyet and Hruggek, so it makes sense that barghests are native to that plane.



Dragon #327 (2005)

In the Realms, barghests also spawned an entire sub-species of planetouched. The Mines of Tethyamar in the Desertmouth Mountain region had been the subject of ongoing conflict for some time, but in 1104 DR, orc circle adepts summoned a legion of “bloodthirsty barghests and demons”. These hordes successfully seized control of the area, and the barghests’ offspring have ruled over Tethyamar ever since. *Lost Empires of Faerûn* notes that these offspring are of mixed goblin, orc and barghest blood, and that they are known as worghests.

In the article *Legacies of Ancient Times* in *Dragon #350*, Eric L. Boyd fleshes out the worghests, and includes options for using them as a playable race of planetouched. Worghests don’t have the same range of magical abilities that true barghests do, but they keep the shapechanging and feeding powers of their ancestors.



Worghest, Dragon #350 (2006)

A discussion of warlocks in [Class Chronicles: Warlocks, Part Two](#) on the Wizards of the Coast web site notes that an immense greater barghest known as Tarkomang has moved into the Mines of Tethyamar. He is described as “one of the largest barghests ever to live in Faerûn, a monstrosity of such immense size that his goblin and worghest servants had to hollow out the inside of a small mountain to house him”. The article goes on to link goblin and worghest warlocks to Tarkomang, with this legendary beast able to create warlock pacts.

The *Adventurers League* scenario *CCC-WWC-09: Defenders of Est'ellma* is set on the northern coast of the Moonsea, a few days' travel from Melvaunt. The village of Est'ellma is a sanctuary for monstrous humanoids. A goblin couple who live there have made a terrible bargain with infernal forces, and have been gifted with a child who is secretly a barghest. This barghest (name Grinnel) is responsible for string of recent murders in the village.

Planescape

As noted above, the 2nd Edition barghest debuted in the *Planescape Campaign Setting* boxed set, but its description there was essentially the same as in 1st Edition, and didn't add much new lore. We learn slightly more about the barghest's place in its home plane of Gehenna in *Planes of Conflict*. The *Liber Malevolentiae* booklet notes that someone seeing a single barghest on Gehenna should know that there are likely plenty of others hiding just out of sight. This contradicts the earlier lore about them being solitary creatures, but perhaps the implication is merely that barghests are so numerous in Gehenna that if you spot one, you've likely strayed deep into barghest territory.

Perhaps the more interesting thing we learn from *Plane of Conflict* is that despite being native to Gehenna, and numerous, barghests don't play a major role in the politics of the lower planes. Planescape places far more emphasis on the scheming yugoloths, and presents them as a dominant force in Gehenna. It is carefully noted that the yugoloths are immigrants to Gehenna, and not natives, but they seem far more likely to feature in adventures on that plane than barghests.

According to *In the Cage: A Guide to Sigil*, the Clerk's Ward houses a tavern named *The Tear of the Barghest*. This venue is favored by moneylenders and landlords, but doesn't appear to have any link to barghests other than its name. *The Factol's Manifesto* flags the tavern as a safe haven for members of the Fated. The adventure *Dead Gods* mentions the wind duke Ivth Nanright, who employs four barghest minders.

In *Umbra*, an adventure in *Dungeon* #55, there is an encounter with a wagon pulled by a gorgon and operated by a pair of barghests in goblin form. The barghests, named Kras and Scamang, are employed by the Harmonium and are delivering prisoners. They are quite likely to be provoked into combat, possibly by the actions of one of the prisoners tricking the PCs into freeing her. However, they will flee the encounter if it goes poorly and pop up again at the end of the adventure as the henchmen of the villain. They arrive at the final battle riding kocrachons, a type of beetle devil.

The collectible *Blood Wars* card game recycled the barghest artwork on two cards in the initial set, the barghest lord and the barghest legionnaire.



Blood Wars Dual Deck Card Game (1995)

Miniatures

The first set of Wizards of the Coast's preprinted miniatures, *Harbinger*, included a barghest as miniature 39/80.



D&D Miniatures: Harbinger (2003), image from [MinisGallery](https://www.minisgallery.com)

Four years later, a greater barghest was included as miniature 31/60 in the *Night Below* series. This figure was also released with an albino paint job as player reward figure D&DC56.



D&D Miniatures: Night Below (2007), images from [MinisGallery](https://www.minisgallery.com)

With the release of 4th Edition, a new barghest savager figure was produced as miniature 5/40 in the *Legendary Evils* set.



Monster Manual: Legendary Evils (2009), image from [MinisGallery](#)

Most recently, as part WizKids' licenced *Icons of the Realms* line, the barghest was figure 26/44 in the *Volo's & Mordenkainen's Foes* set.



Icons of the Realms: Volo's & Mordenkainen's Foes (2019), image from [MinisGallery](#)

Computer games

In *Icewind Dale II*, there is an encounter with the barghest whelp Yquog. Yquog needs assistance in recovering an important letter from a goblin whose brother he devoured. If the adventuring party happens to have accumulated a significant collection of dead bodies(!), these can be used to intimidate Yquog and his band.



Yquog and friends, *Icewind Dale II* (2002); Image from [Tactics4IWD2](#)

Barghest names

The Eater of Souls, Erin-kahnor, Foosteth the Fat, Gormulag, Grellak Silverback, Grinnel, Hrugin, Huzuraal, Kempfana, Kras, Lahorak, Malfeshnekor, Nameless, Riu Lotaas, Scamang, Skrom, Tarkomang, Thaerraad, Ulgulu, Vortwug the Conqueror, Yquog.

Comparative statistics

					
Edition	AD&D (1st Edition)	AD&D 2nd Edition	D&D 3.X Edition	D&D 4th Edition	D&D 5th Edition
Source	<i>Monster Manual II</i>	<i>Planescape Campaign Setting</i>	<i>Monster Manual v.3.5</i>	<i>Monster Manual 2</i>	<i>Volo's Guide to Monsters</i>
Size	M to L	M-L (5'-9' tall)	Medium	Medium	Large
Type			Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful, Shapechanger)	Natural humanoid (shapechanger)	Fiend (shapechanger)
Alignment	Evil (lawful)	Lawful evil	Always lawful evil	Evil	Neutral evil
No. Appearing	1-2 (1)	1-2	Solitary or pack (3-6)		
Armor Class	2 to -4	2 to -4	18	16	17
Hit Dice/Points	6+6 to 12+12	6+6 hp to 12+12 hp	6d8+6 (33 hp)	63 hp	90 (12d10+24)
Speed	15"	15	30 ft.	6 (8 in wolf form)	60 ft. (30 ft. in goblin form)
Abilities	Int High to genius	Int High to genius (13-18) Morale Champion (15)	Str 17, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14	Str 18, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 11	Str 19, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14
Senses			Darkvision 60 ft. Scent	Perception +9, Low-light vision	Perception +5, blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., keen smell
Saves			Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7	Fort 17, Ref 15, Will 15	
Attacks	2	2 (THAC0 15 to 9)	Bite +9 melee 2 claws +4 melee	Bite +7 vs. AC, or Battleaxe +7 vs. AC	Bite +6 melee Claws +6 melee
Damage	2-8 + HD as hp	2d4 + HD value	Bite 1d6+3 Claws 1d4+1	Bite 2d8+4 Battleaxe 1d10+6	Bite 2d8+4 piercing Claw 1d8+4 slashing
Special Attacks	Spells Change shape	Spells Change shape	Spell-like abilities Feed Change shape	Jump Strike Power Feed Change Shape	Shapechanger Innate Spellcasting
Special Defense			Damage reduction 5/magic		Damage resistances Damage immunities Condition immunities
XP	From 1275 + 10/hp to 7300 + 18/hp	From 2,000 to 9,000	CR 4	175	Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)
Treasure	None	None	Double standard		

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