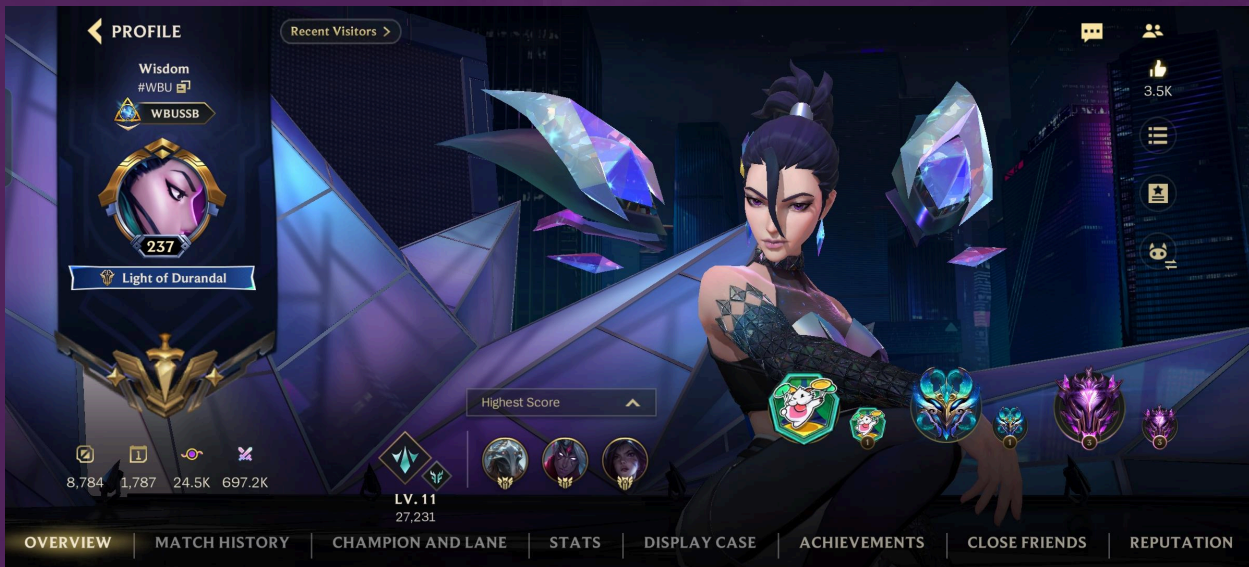


Author's Introduction



Hello, awesome reader. My online persona is **TeddyTendon**, but I'm currently tagged as **Wisdom#WBU** in Wild Rift and other Riot games. I began playing the game in season 0, and began making it to Master tier starting from Season 15, with Mid Lane and Dragon Lane as my main roles. Kai'Sa is my most played champion with over a thousand games played as her.



I'm also currently a college senior studying Secondary Education. Teaching and gaming are among my biggest passions, and this guide you are reading now has been a project I've been planning and working on for several years. I aim to help players get started on their journey with my favorite champion with my extensive knowledge and experience on her.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is primarily aimed at **intermediate level** players who already have a grasp on the game's core mechanics and fundamentals, and seek to learn and master Kai'Sa. I **personally** do not recommend Kai'Sa to players new to the game, as she has several fundamental hurdles that need to be overcome in order for her to become useful.

That being said, you are free to try and learn any champ you wish to regardless of your skill level. But do note that I will be focusing on champion specifics and mastery and will not be going over specifics in gameplay fundamentals such as how to execute proper wave management and proper positioning as a marksman.





Champion Introduction

Adaptive, relentless, and punishing. Kai'Sa is a skirmishing beast. In the right hands, she can take on any battle on her terms. Ready to learn how? Welcome to the Art of Kai'Sa.

Champion Identity:

Kai'Sa is best defined as an assassin marksman. Aside from dealing sustained damage with her basic attacks, her unique niche amongst her botlane peers is her ability to dive deep into the enemy backline and eliminate their carries.

While she starts the game relatively weak, she can evolve her abilities and grow incredibly strong with every item she purchases. She scales very well throughout the game, and her kit wields incredible flexibility, boasting hybrid scaling and different playstyle options to lean into, be it on her marksman side of front to back fighting, or on her assassin side of back to front fighting.

However, her damage is purely single target and has short range for someone in her class. These shortcomings can make her susceptible to being outscaled by dedicated late game carries, who can either outrange her and/or deal AoE damages (usually both at the same time). She can circumvent this as she comes online a lot sooner. The mid game is her playground, during which she holds a lot of agency that most other ADC's do not have. She is generally good at helping end the game during this stage, but will be especially crucial when going up against these scaling matchups.

In any case, Kai'Sa prefers fights with lower populations rather than the full on 5v5s that happen more frequently in the late game, as she specializes more in taking picks and isolated targets. It'll be important to play her with an opportunistic mindset and only taking the best opportunities.

Pros and Cons:

+ Pros	- Cons
<div><div>+ High carry potential with enough items.</div><div>+ Incredibly mobile.</div><div>+ Self peel.</div><div>+ Outscales most other ADCs.</div><div>+ Powerful single target damage.</div><div>+ Mixed damage options to account for damage type distribution.</div><div>+ High synergy with supports that can set her up.</div></div>	<div><div>- Very support reliant in the early game.</div><div>- Short basic attack range.</div><div>- Squishy and easy to kill once caught.</div><div>- Gets outvalued by late game hypercarries.</div><div>- Lacks AoE.</div><div>- Has no form of team utility.</div></div>



Ability Fundamentals and Mechanics:

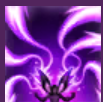
(For details regarding cooldowns, base numbers and scaling power and more, [click here](#) champion as these numbers can change on a new patch)



Passive - Second Skin

Kai'Sa's passive has two components, let's first talk about **Living Weapon**. This lets you evolve one of her basic abilities upon purchasing a Legendary item. This plays into why she's so item reliant, as she is locked out of certain parts of her full kit until she has spent enough gold. While the fastest option to get to her first evolution would be to rush a Legendary item, it is actually better to buy upgraded boots first, since they are so gold efficient and outvalue the pre-completion components of your legendary that they are always worth delaying her first evolution. Doing this can be especially helpful for her weak early game as they can give her a fighting chance right away. However, rushing your first Legendary can be a good idea if and *only if* you manage to get a lead before your first recall, since you'll be ahead enough anyway that you're likely to have better items than the opponent once you both return to the lane.

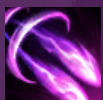
Her second passive is **Caustic Wounds**. Basic attacks on-hit inflict a stack of Plasma, each dealing bonus magic damage once applied. The fifth stack detonates them all to deal damage based on the target's missing health. Allies nearby (and even those slightly distant) can apply stacks when their crowd control abilities hit enemies, but do not deal bonus damage with them and cannot apply a fifth stack. This effect is useful against tanky enemies and squishies alike. Repeated detonations will whittle down enemies in the frontline that soak up hits, and the missing health makes it even more effective against enemies that had low health to begin with. Your allies being able to help apply stacks from a distance will become more relevant as we get into her Ultimate later.



First Ability - Icathian Rain

Casting this ability will have it target all nearby enemies in range (which is just about your basic attack range) to which it will send out 6 missiles that will be evenly distributed to all targets to deal physical damage. This is Kai'Sa's bread and butter. This is her waveclearing tool as it deals bonus damage on low health minions, which is crucial as she needs to farm up to her item spikes.

This is also her biggest source of damage in the early to mid game if you can activate it on an isolated target in range. Positional awareness is key to mastering this ability. When going all in on the enemy, it can be worth holding off on casting it until they're isolated in your range as the total damage dealt with all missiles is around double the amount you would have otherwise dealt. Optimizing this ability is also crucial to her overall damage as **Caustic Wounds** deals missing health damage, meaning it'll only be more effective the more damage has already been dealt prior. You should always put points into and evolve this ability first in every game, since its **Living Weapon** bonus is doubling the amount of missiles that it shoots, making the waveclear and burst damage so much more effective.



Second Ability - Void Seeker

This is a long range skillshot that inflicts two stacks of Plasma. This is an important tool for trading in lane as it will help you quickly apply Plasma stacks before you've built up enough attack speed. Keep in mind that this has an incredibly long cooldown before it evolves. It is not recommended to use this for poking in lane and should instead be used if a detonation is guaranteed. Better to use when your support locks down your target with crowd control. You may also use **Flash** immediately right after casting this ability to have it shoot faster and from



your new location. This combo can often be the difference from getting a kill in the early game, so learn it in the practice tool to be able to do it well.

Once it has been evolved with **Living Weapon**, it will apply three stacks of Plasma instead, and will refund most of its cooldown upon hitting an enemy champion. With the right build, you may use it to constantly harass enemies with its lower cooldown. Hitting it on an enemy also grants you true sight of them, negating their stealth effects. Applying Plasma with this ability also works in tandem with her Ultimate, which we'll get into later.

If you're playing an ability centric build, put points into and evolve this ability second. This ability's cast time is also reduced based on your bonus attack speed, so make sure to use it between basic attacks when playing a basic attack oriented build.

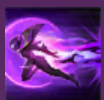


Third Ability - Supercharge

Pressing this ability puts you in a charging state, during which you gain a burst of movement speed but cannot use basic attacks or other abilities. Once the charge is complete, you gain bonus attack speed. You will mainly be using this to dodge key abilities, or to get in range when your support locks someone down for you.

During the early game, you have to respect the charge time as you could potentially lose out on some attacks you would have otherwise dished out. However, this ability scales with bonus attack speed, decreasing the charge time and increasing the movement speed burst. Using basic attacks also reduces its cooldown. With an attack oriented build, this can make Kai'Sa hypermobile in the later stages of the game.

As if the self peel wasn't already good enough, its **Living Weapon** bonus makes it grant invisibility upon activation, which comes with so many benefits of its own. Not only will you be able to run away better with all of its outplay potential, but you may even use it from out of vision to catch targets off guard when attempting to assassinate them. If you're playing a basic attack oriented playstyle, put points into and evolve this ability second. Even in an ability based build, this ability is still very handy for its **Living Weapon** bonus.



Ultimate - Killer Instinct

This is where Kai'Sa gets her reputation as the assassin marksman. If an enemy within range (and the effect range is very long) has been affected by Plasma within the last 4 seconds, a ring forms around them. This can be Plasma applied in close range by your basic attacks, or Plasma applied from afar by either your **Void Seeker** or your allies' crowd control effects. You may cast it to dash into anywhere within these rings, granting a short lasting shield afterwards.

There are many ways to use this ability, the obvious one being to chase down enemies that are running away to finish them off. Using it from close range can also be worth it to help you dodge abilities or to reposition faster than with just your **Supercharge**. Casting this ability also resets your basic attack cooldown, which can be handy in the early game where you have not accumulated much attack speed yet. Just casting it for the shield is also worth the cooldown.

Where this really shines is for its assassination plays. As mentioned, because the Plasma can be applied from afar by your allies' crowd control effect or by your **Void Seeker**, you get to dive into unsuspecting targets from long distances.




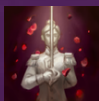

Remember, however, to be careful using this ability to dive, as you might put yourself far too deep with no one to peel for you. Be very mindful of everyone's positioning in a fight, and I do mean everyone. Yourself, your allies, and your enemies. Use her ability to dive as a way to punish enemies, but make sure that you won't yourself won't get punished back.




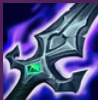
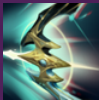

Build Options

DPS // ADC



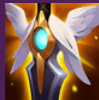
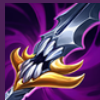
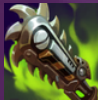
Kai'Sa can deal sustained damage to the enemy frontline by kiting around them with her basic attacks. Her main damage source for this playstyle will be the repeated detonations of **Caustic Wounds**, which can be accomplished by stacking lots of attack speed. This setup is better for extended trades. This build can be opted for in most games as it is the main responsibility of the marksman role.

Runes				
 Lethal Tempo	✦ Precision			🛡️ Resolve
	 Brutal	 Giant Slayer	 Legend: Bloodline	 Bone Plating

With this setup completely revolving around hitting as many basic attacks as possible, **Lethal Tempo** has the best synergy out of all the Keystones for this purpose with all the attack speed it gives. The additional range it gives is also very valuable as it helps with her short base range. Using **Precision** as your primary tree lets you combine **Brutal** and **Giant Slayer**. **Legend: Bloodline** is there to keep yourself alive while kiting. I recommend having **Resolve** in the secondary slot as she's outranged in most lane matchups and needs to survive, and **Bone Plating** is the best one out of them.

Core Items			
 Berserker's Greaves	 Blade of the Ruined King	 Terminus	 Runaan's Hurricane

Kai'Sa already hits hard and just needs to hit more. So you will want to invest in as much attack speed as possible from the jump. She has great synergy with the On-hit package, not only because of the attack speed stat but also due to **Runaan's Hurricane's** passive applying an extra Plasma stack every three basic attacks, making detonations happen even more frequently.

Situational Items				
 Amaranth's Twinguard	 Bloodthirster	 Guardian Angel	 Maw of Malmortius	 Chempunk Chainsword

After your core items, you will be primarily looking to build defensively in order to stay safe while kiting. **Amaranth's Twinguard** provides tons of resistances that'll keep you alive in extended fights, while **Bloodthirster** can protect you from burst damage if necessary. Buy **Guardian Angel** last for even more protection, or **Maw of Malmortius** if you need MR. If purchasing anti-heal yourself is *absolutely* necessary, you can pick up an **Executioner's Calling** after your core items, which you can later upgrade into **Chempunk Chainsword** as your last item (since Mortal Reminder cannot be built alongside **Terminus**).







Burst // Assassin

When facing team compositions with low peel and frontline, Kai'Sa can opt for a hard dive approach that focuses on capitalizing on opportunities given by your allies' lockdown and mispositioning enemies. Your aim is to deal as much frontloaded damage with her abilities and topping it off with a **Caustic Wounds** detonation that will execute targets from low health in as short an amount of time as possible. Shorter trades are more preferable to set up an all-in.

This can be best described as the assassin playstyle and is recommended when going up against squishy teams. Avoid using this against teams that have at least one tank or multiple bruisers as you will be completely lacking in terms of sustained damage.

Runes				
 Hail of Blades	✦ Precision			🏰 Resolve
	 Psychic Wave	 Empowered Attack	 Eyeball Collection	 Bone Plating

Despite being an ability centric build, you absolutely still need to land some basic attacks, and **Hail of Blades** will make it easier without having to buy attack speed items. Using **Domination** gives you access to both **Psychic Wave** and **Empowered Attack** at the same time, letting you dish out damage in short trades even without having to use that many basic attacks. **Bone Plating** is also recommended to stay healthy as you trade, especially because you'll be slightly more on the aggressive side with this rune page.

Core Items			
 Boots of Mana	 Nashor's Tooth	 Infinity Orb	 Rabadon's Deathcap

This playstyle specializes in unloading all your damage in the close range. So while you're still relying on ability damage, you will still throw in your basic attacks to help make **Caustic Wounds** hit as hard as possible, making **Nashor's Tooth** the perfect first item. **Infinity Orb** is a great addition to stack even more magic penetration with **Boots of Mana**, while also having great synergy with the detonation effect.




Situational Items				
 Crown of the Shattered Queen	 Crystalline Reflector	 Morellonomicon	 Oceanid's Trident	 Awakened Soulstealer

Crown of the Shattered Queen is a great pickup to be able to brute force through attempts to peel you off your targets, and is just a good defensive item in general if you face the threat of being locked down. **Crystalline Reflector** is a good alternative if you face basic attacking threats instead. Take **Morellonomicon** against burst healers, or **Oceanid's Trident** if you see 3+ shield sources. If you don't need more than any one more of these past the fourth item, you can purchase **Awakened Soulstealer** for the extra magic penetration to push your damage even further.



Enchantments

Prioritize finishing at least two of your core items before considering enchantments. As for your choices, you will mainly be looking into defensive options that will keep you safe since you'll become a threat that the enemy will look to dispose of.

 Quicksilver	Used to dispel crowd control effects, and/or to prevent incoming crowd control. Practically mandatory when going up against long lasting or hard to avoid crowd control. Finds use in a lot of games since crowd control is essential to most teams.
 Repulsor	A “get off me” tool for enemies that are great threats from up close, particularly melee basic attackers. Can also cancel some high value channels, notably Samira and Katarina’s Ultimate abilities.
 Stasis	Halts your momentum when used, but is vital to survive threats that cannot be solved by the other options, notable abilities like Zed and Fizz’ Ultimate abilities.































Summoner Spells

 Flash	As is the case with almost every champion in the game, there is not really a reason not to run Flash with all of the value it can provide which is especially important to a marksman for self peel. Not to mention the combo with Void Seeker . <i>Always</i> have this as one of your spells.
 Barrier	Due to her short range, staying alive during the early game will be crucial to make it to your powerspikes. This can be crucial against hard lane bullies who aim to shut you down as early as possible.
 Heal	Typically, this is what your support should be taking. Assuming they use a more aggressive option like Ignite , however, this may be necessary to keep both of you healthy in lane.
 Exhaust	This is a good counter to champions that aim to go all-in. You may also take enemies outside of your lane into consideration, if they also have lots of champions that rely on rushing targets down.
 Cleanse	The spell version of Quicksilver Enchant , which may be necessary in cases where the lane matchup is heavy on crowd control that is hard to avoid and/or extremely punishing.
 Ghost	A hypercarry’s dream. If you don’t need the more defensive options, this is a great option for attack centric builds that will enhance your kiting ability by a great degree.























Matchups

Support Synergies

Best Pairs	 										
High Synergy											
Playable											
Bad Pairs											

Enemy Matchups

Hard Counters	 										
Difficult											
Skill Checks											
Favorable	