

TORTUGAN

Uncommon / *Humanoid* / *Tortugan*



Tortugans are a long-lived, stoic people with the appearance of humanoid tortoises. Their thick, elephantine limbs, powerful jaws, and hardened shells reflect both physical resilience and the slow, steady pace that defines their lives. Most Tortugans favor solitude, living in coastal caves, swamps, or cliffside retreats where they cultivate wisdom through quiet observation. Though slow to act, they are deliberate and deeply thoughtful, often noticing what others overlook in their haste. A rare few are drawn to cities by curiosity or an unshakable sense of purpose, where they serve as calm anchors in the chaos of the world.

You might...

- Take your time before speaking or acting, trusting that careful thought outweighs rash decisions.
- Act as a voice of reason or a calming presence among more impulsive companions.
- Carry reminders of home or tradition within your gear - or even within your shell.

Others probably...

- Mistake your slow pace for laziness or indecision.
- Assume you're hard to surprise or anger - but difficult to sway once you've made up your mind.
- View you as a symbol of stability and enduring strength, especially in chaotic times.

Physical Description

Tortugans resemble humanoid tortoises, with broad torsos and thick, scaled limbs. A large, domed shell covers their back and torso, naturally growing with them throughout life. Their skin ranges from earthen brown and olive green to dusty slate or even mottled turquoise. Some sport horn-like ridges or mossy growths on their shells, especially elders who live in damp or fertile environments. Their eyes are typically deep-set and calm, often amber, green, or dark brown.

Tortugans move and speak slowly, not due to lack of intelligence but because of their deliberate nature. They often live for two centuries or more, with some reaching well over 250 years.

Society

Most Tortugans live in small, dispersed communities or as solitary dwellers in remote, natural environments - swamps, ocean cliffs, forests, or coastal caves. These enclaves are tight-knit and steeped in tradition, often organized around seasonal rhythms, oral histories, and elder councils.

When Tortugans live among other ancestries, they tend to remain outsiders by choice - observers rather than participants. In adventuring parties or cities, they are valued for their steadiness, wisdom, and endurance, though they may clash with faster-paced cultures that value ambition or spontaneity over contemplation.

Tortugan artisans and alchemists are especially respected, known for crafting tools and remedies that last generations. Some even tend to moss or herb gardens that grow directly on their shells.

Beliefs

Tortugans value patience, tradition, and the slow unfolding of truth. Most follow the "slow path" - a belief that wisdom comes not through haste, but through stillness, observation, and endurance. They are drawn to deities like Thagrim, who teaches the worth of craft and memory; Alserion, who guards safe journeys; and Mirathos, whose tides echo life's cyclical rhythm.

Some Tortugans mark the passage of decades with personal rituals, such as carving sacred patterns into their shells, while others serve as oral historians, passing down long-form tales over generations.

Popular Edicts endure hardship with quiet strength, seek wisdom in stillness, preserve old knowledge

Popular Anathema rush to judgment, destroy natural sanctuaries, break oaths lightly

Names

Tortugan names are heavy and deliberate, often featuring doubled consonants that echo the slow, careful rhythm of their speech. They favor hard sounds - k, r, t, g - and often take inspiration from natural forces, ancestral echoes, or oral traditions passed down over

generations. Surnames are rare, though some Tortugans adopt descriptive epithets linked to shell markings, lifelong habits, or achievements.

Sample Names:

Wendadak, Auppi, Ooghota, Tassik, Tikchinem, Iwoku, Haitta, Dumbuke, Irjigu, Karog, Rukkari, Tokkul, Gorranem, Chikkuro, Thirrig, Kammett, Durukka, Jajkoten

Descriptive Titles:

Stone-Back, Tide-Sleeper, Moss-Eater, Echo-Shell, Wade-Silent, Sun-Basker

TORTUGAN MECHANICS

Hit Points

10

Size

Medium

Speed

20 feet

Ability Boosts

Constitution, Wisdom, Free

Ability Flaw

Dexterity

Languages

Common, Tortugan

Additional languages equal to your Intelligence modifier (if positive): choose from Draconic, Thalassic, Gnomish, Sylvan, and Iruxi.

Special

You have a Shell that can be used as a shield without requiring the use of a hand. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to AC when taking the raise Shield action.

TORTUGAN HERITAGES

Snap-Jaw Tortugan

You descend from a line of aggressive tortugans with massive, snapping jaws. You gain a jaw unarmed attack that deals 1d6 piercing damage, belongs to the brawling group, and has the grapple trait.

Tidekin Tortugan

Your ancestors lived in coastal reefs, mangrove deltas, or undersea caves. You gain a swim Speed of 25 feet, and you can gain the Breath Control general Feat.

Underscale Tortugan

You were raised in dark caves, brackish swamps, or volcanic tunnels. You gain low-light vision. You can see in dim light as though it were bright light, so you ignore the concealed condition due to dim light.

Drakeblood Tortugan

Your blood carries a draconic spark passed down through ancient turtle-like dragons. You gain the dragon trait, in addition to the tortugan and humanoid traits. You gain the Spout cantrip as a primal innate spell, which you can cast at will. A cantrip is automatically heightened to half your level rounded up.

Backgarden Tortugan

Plants, moss, or mushrooms naturally grow in the grooves of your shell. Once per day, you can spend 10 minutes harvesting and brewing a shell-grown tea. Drinking this tea lets you regain Hit Points equal to your level and grants a +1 circumstance bonus to your next Fortitude save against disease or poison within the next hour.

Venomfang Tortugan

Your bite secretes a mild toxin. You gain a jaw unarmed attack that deals 1d4 piercing damage and has the poison trait. Your jaws are in the brawling weapon group.

Once per day, when you hit with this attack, the target becomes enfeebled 1 until the start of your next turn. This is a poison effect.

TORTUGAN FEATS - Level 1

Level 1 Calm Waters

You are an exemplar of the calm nature of your kind. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to saves against emotion effects. If you roll a success on a saving throw against an emotion effect, you get a critical success instead.

Level 1 Carapaced Stride

You've mastered the art of moving deliberately while keeping your defenses up. When you Stride, you may move only up to half your Speed, and gain a +1 circumstance bonus to AC reactions that are triggered by your movement (such as Reactive Strikes).

Level 1 Deep Memory

Your long life has filled your mind with scattered but useful knowledge. You can attempt to Recall Knowledge in any untrained skill as if you were trained, though you still roll as untrained. Once per day, you can reroll a failed Recall Knowledge check as a free action.

Level 1 Elemental Drakesoul

>> *Prerequisite:* [Drakeblood Tortugan](#)

Choose one elemental damage type from cold or electricity. You gain resistance 1 to that damage type. This increases to resistance 2 at 5th level and 3 at 9th level.

Level 1 Lingering Toxin

>> *Prerequisite:* [Venomfang Tortugan](#)

Your venomous bite is both deeper and longer lasting. Your jaws unarmed attack now deals 1d6 piercing damage and has the poison trait.

In addition, when you use your Venomfang heritage ability, the target becomes enfeebled 1 until the end of its next turn instead of until the start of your next turn.

This remains a poison effect and can be used once per day.

Level 1 Powerful Jaws

>> *Prerequisite:* [Snap-Jaw Tortugan](#)

Your powerful bite leaves foes off balance and easier to pin.

When you hit a creature with your jaws unarmed attack, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to your next Athletics check to Grapple that creature, as long as you attempt it before the end of your turn.

Level 1 Rooted Shell

You're used to weathering waves, wind, and upheaval without losing your footing.

You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throws against effects that would knock you prone or force you to move, such as Gust of Wind, Trip or Shove.

Additionally, when such an effect would knock you prone, you may use your Fortitude save in place of Reflex.

Level 1 Shell Tea

>> *Prerequisite:* [Backgarden Tortugan](#)

You've learned to cultivate and refine your shell-grown herbs into more potent remedies.

When you prepare your herbal tea using your Backgarden Tortugan heritage, the tea now restores Hit Points equal to twice your level.

In addition, the circumstance bonus to your next Fortitude save against disease or poison increases to +2

Level 1 Slow Heartbeat

Your slower than usual heartbeat and metabolism protect you against toxins. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to saving throws against poison. If you succeed a saving throw against a poison effect, you get a critical success instead.

Level 1 Stone-Treader

Your heavy limbs and sturdy stance help you move across loose stone or shifting terrain. You ignore difficult terrain caused by rubble, mud, sand, or uneven stone.

Level 1 Tortugan Lore

You've studied the stories of your kind, learning about nature and the world around you. You gain the trained proficiency rank in Nature and Diplomacy. If you would automatically become trained in one of those skills (from your background or class, for example), you instead become trained in a skill of your choice.

You also gain the Additional Lore general feat for Tortugan Lore.

Level 1 Tortugan Weapon Familiarity

You are trained in the hard-hitting, deliberate weapons favored by your kind. You are trained with the earthbreaker, greatclub, khakkhara, and bola. You treat these as simple weapons. You also gain access to these weapons if they are otherwise uncommon.

Level 1 Watchful Observer

You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Sense Motive or to Notice hidden creatures, but only if you have not moved this turn.

TORTUGAN FEATS - Level 5

Level 5 Calm in Chaos

>> *Requires the [Calm Waters](#) feat.*

Your inner peace shields you from mental disruption and fraying emotions. If you would become affected by the confused or frightened conditions, reduce the condition's value by 1.

Level 5 Carapaced Advance

>> *Requires the [Carapaced Stride](#) feat.*

You've practiced moving with purpose and discipline, even under threat. You can now use Carapaced Stride at full Speed instead of half.

Level 5 Drakesoul Storm

Once per day, you can unleash a 15-foot cone of elemental breath (matching your Elemental Drakesoul damage type: cold or electricity).

Deals 2d6 damage (basic Reflex save). This is a primal innate spell.

Level 5 Jaw Lock

>> *Prerequisite: [Snap-Jaw Tortugan](#)*

When you critically hit with your jaws unarmed attack you automatically Grapple the target as a free action as long as the target is no more than one size larger than you.

Level 5 Measured Stride

You've learned to move with steady efficiency, conserving energy without sacrificing progress.

You gain a +5-foot status bonus to your Speed.

Level 5 Shell Apothecary

>> *Requires the [Shell Tea](#) feat.*

Once per day during your daily preparations, you can harvest ingredients from your shell to mix a mossy poultice. Choose one of the following effects:

- Lesser Elixir of Life
- Lesser Antidote
- Lesser Antiplague

The item must be used by the end of the day or it wilts and becomes inert. The poultice must be used by the end of the day or it wilts and becomes inert. This item can only be used by you, and cannot be sold.

Level 5 Shell Slam

You gain a Shell Bash unarmed attack. It deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage, has the shove trait, and belongs to the brawling weapon group.

When you critically hit with your Shell Bash, you can immediately attempt a Shove against that target as a free action, gaining a +1 circumstance bonus to the check.

Level 5 Shell Slide

Frequency: Once per turn

Prerequisites: You are not immobilized

With a push and tilt of your shell, you slide forward with surprising force.

When you Stride in a straight line, you can move 5 additional feet and ignore difficult terrain during this movement.

If you end your Stride adjacent to a creature, that creature becomes off-guard to you until the end of your turn.

Level 5 Still-Eyed Sentinel

>> *Requires the [Watchful Observer](#) feat.*

When you use the Defend or Scout exploration activity, you move at half speed and gain the benefits of both activities.

If combat breaks out while using this combined activity:

- All allies in your party gain a +1 circumstance bonus to their initiative rolls.
- You are considered to have Raised a Shield at the start of combat.

Level 5 Toxic Riposte

>> *Prerequisite: [Venomfang Tortugan](#)*

Once per day, when a creature critically fails a melee Strike against you, you may use your jaws to make a Strike as a reaction. This jaws Strike cannot apply your Venomfang effect unless it has not yet been used today.

Level 5 Unyielding Shell

>> *Requires the [Rooted Shell](#) feat.*

You can dig in and hold your ground like a boulder in the tide.

When an effect would knock you prone or move you and it allows a Reflex save, you may use your Fortitude save instead.

Additionally, when you succeed at such a saving throw, you are not moved or knocked prone, even if the effect would normally still move you on a success.

Level 5 Urban Stalker

You've adapted to the tight corners and winding passages of cities, ruins, and sewer tunnels - moving with silent precision through the places others overlook.

You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks while in narrow tunnels, sewer systems, urban ruins, or tight alleyways.

In these same environments, when you Stride, you treat difficult terrain as normal terrain, and greater difficult terrain as difficult terrain.

Level 5 Withdraw into Shell

Trigger: A creature targets you with a Strike

Frequency: Once per round

You hunker down defensively, tucking into your shell just enough to absorb the blow.

You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering Strike. If the Strike hits you, you also gain resistance 2 to physical damage from that attack.