

This is a 'One Way or The Other' build post. The style is reminiscent of Broken Zenith's 'Guide To the Builds' build post format (preamble, a build, a feat progression list, some magic items), but it's a little more loose in format, because why not?

Here's the basic idea: you have a cool idea for a build, but there's a question: one way or the other? There really are two builds worth writing up contained in one cool idea, so here's a cool place to compare the one versus the other. Whether I do more of these depends on whether I ever have or see more two-faced ideas.

Here's the idea for this one: a battle familiar. First question: why on earth do this? a) animal companion, b) eidolon already, just use that! Answer: why not? Anyway, with that ethical quandry out of the way, here are two possible builds to make an awesome familiar. First, an idea from Daxthemonk: take 1 level of beast-bonded witch for the ability to grant your familiar your feats, and take the rest in fighter to get lots of feats. I threw on goodies to make it a mounted character, and off you go. Before the feat Animal Ally existed, this is actually not a bad way of making a good roughrider fighter.

The other build is much simpler: just use spells. The feat Improved Share Spells lets you share buff spells with your familiar, so you and your familiar can both be axe-wielding trolls, for instance. Sure, that might work.

Fidelius J. Quackersnack

Male academician gnome beast-bonded witch 1/roughrider fighter 11

LG Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +4 shield, +1 size) (+4 vs. giants)

hp 118 (1d6+11d10+47)

Fort +10, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4 (+2 vs. illusions)

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +18/+13/+8 (1d6+5/19-20x2) (+1 vs. reptilians and goblinoids)

Ranged javelin +15 (1d4+5/x2, range 30) (+1 vs. reptilians and goblinoids)

Special Attacks mounted mettle (+2), leap from the saddle

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 1st, concentration +2, somatic spell failure 50%)

1st - *command* (2) (DC 12) (*command* isn't somatic)

0 (at will) - *arcane mark*, *light*, *putrefy food and drink*, *spark*

Witch Hexes ward

Witch Patron Animals

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 24

Feats Alertness, Eldritch Heritage (arcane), Evolved Familiar (twice), Greater Shield Focus, Mounted Combat, Mounted Shield, Shield Focus, Skill Focus (Knowledge (nature)), 6 fighter feats given to mount

Skills Knowledge (nature) +20, Perception +18, Ride +15 (ACP -6, Ride excluded), Sense Motive +1, Survival +2

Special Qualities witch's familiar (goat), steadfast mount (+3), armored charger, relentless steed, transfer feats

Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnomish

Gear *equestrian plate* (+2 *banded mail*), mwk longsword, mwk heavy steel shield, 3 javelins, spell component pouch

Witch Spells Known all those listed, plus *enlarge person*, *reduce person*

Traits Reactionary, Seeker

Amalthea, the Greatest Goat Who Ever Lived

Female goat familiar 10

LG Medium magical beast

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 15, flat-footed 30 (+6 natural, +3 dodge, +2 deflection, +8 armor, +4 shield)

hp 59 (118/2)

Fort +13, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

Special Defenses improved evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee gore +17 (1d6+6) and 2 claws +15 (1d4+4) or gore +14 (1d6+12) and 2 claws +12 (1d4+10)

Special Attacks deliver touch spells, pounce

Permanent Spells *enlarge person*

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 11, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +13 (+17 vs. bull rush); **CMD** 28 (30 vs. bull rush, 32 vs. trip)

Feats Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Nimble Moves (cannot use), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (gore), Weapon Specialization (gore), Greater Weapon Focus (gore)

Skills Acrobatics +0 (+4 when jumping), Climb +3, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +14, Ride +11, Survival +0 (+4 to find food) (ACP -5)

Special Qualities share spells, empathic link, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind

Level	Feat
beast-bonded witch 1	Alertness, Skill Focus (Knowledge (nature))
witch 1/roughrider 1	Weapon Focus (gore) (for goat)
witch 1/fighter 2	Mounted Combat, Power Attack (for goat)
witch 1/fighter 4	Evolved Familiar (claws), Weapon Specialization (gore) (for goat)
witch 1/fighter 6	Evolved Familiar (pounce), Improved Bull Rush (for goat)
witch 1/fighter 8	Shield Focus, Greater Weapon Focus (gore) (for goat)
witch 1/fighter 10	Mounted Shield, Greater Bull Rush (for goat)

Some notes:

1. Hmm, I really hope that your familiar counts your class levels in order to have qualifying pre-requisites. Oh well.
2. There is a little debate on whether a familiar can get pounce through the Evolved Familiar feat (because it doesn't have any 'base form', let alone quadruped base form). Oh well.
3. So, the goat has tons of feats. Can you tell I really don't know what sorts of feats would be good? Maybe, just maybe, if you give a goat a barrel of feats...it's still a goat.

On the other hand, if you give a goat a bunch of *spells*, that's a different story.

Huay Chivo

Female sacred tattoo half-orc beast-bonded witch 14

CE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 100 (14d6+42)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11

OFFENSE

Melee mwk greataxe +9/+4 (1d12+1/x3)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +9/+4 (1d8/19-20x2, range 80)

Special Attacks familiar form (14 minutes/day)

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 14th, concentration +19)

7th - *giant form I, summon monster VII*

6th - *greater heroism, mass bull's strength, transformation*

5th - *cure critical wounds (2), righteous might (2)*

4th - *cure serious wounds, dimension door, divine power (2), neutralize poison*

3rd - *dispel magic, greater magic weapon, remove blindness/deafness, remove curse, remove disease*

2nd - *bull's strength, cure moderate wounds (2), false life (2)*

1st - *cure light wounds (2), divine favor, mage armor (2)*

0 (at will) - *detect magic, light, read magic, stabilize*

Witch Hexes flight, healing, swamp hag

Witch Major Hexes ice tomb (DC 22), major healing

Witch Patron Strength

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 21, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

Feats Coordinated Defense, Duck And Cover, Improved Familiar, Improved Share Spells, Lookout, Toughness

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (nature) +22, Knowledge (planes) +22, Perception +18, Spellcraft +22, Survival +17

Special Qualities witch's familiar (goat), transfer feats, enhanced familiar, twin soul

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Orcish

Gear mwk greataxe, 2 Large mwk greataxes, mwk light crossbow, spell component pouch

Traits Fate's Favored, Seeker

Favored Class witch (+14 hit points)

lä! lä! Baphomet! lä! lä! (or something...)

Male fiendish goat valet familiar 15

CE Small magical beast

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +17

Special Defenses improved evasion **Resist** cold 15, fire 15 **DR** 10/good **SR** 20

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+9 natural, +1 Dex, +1 size)

hp 50

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9

OFFENSE

Melee gore +9 (1d4+1)

Ranged --

Special Attacks smite good (-3 atk, +15 dmg vs. one creature, 1/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th, concentration +12) *prestidigitation* 1/hour

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18 (22 vs. trip)

Feats Coordinated Defense, Cooperative Crafting, Duck And Cover, Lookout, Nimble Moves, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greataxe)

Skills Acrobatics +1 (+5 when jumping), Climb +5, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (nature) +15, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +14, Spellcraft +15, Survival +14 (+22 to find food)

Special Qualities able assistant, share spells, empathic link, deliver touch spells, speak with master, deliver aid, aide to all, spell resistance, teammate

Level	Feat
beast-bonded witch 1	Toughness
witch 3	Improved Familiar
witch 5	Lookout
witch 7	Duck And Cover
witch 9	Coordinated Defense
witch 11	Improved Share Spells
witch 13	Martial Weapon Proficiency (greataxe) (for goat)

Some notes on Huay Chivo:

1. The sacred tattoo alternate racial trait is a luck bonus...which means that the Fate's Favored trait boosts it by an additional +1. If this eventually isn't the subject of errata I'd be surprised. The bonus should probably be a racial bonus.
2. All of the feats chosen are either shared or partially shared with the goat. Duck And Cover and Lookout are great 'second chances' feats, and Coordinated Defense is good for avoiding repositioning maneuvers, which would otherwise knock out the goat's buff spells.
3. See below for buff spell hijinks.
4. I set Huay's stats so that setting up the damage and such from your goat familiar would be easy (they have the same physical stats). Her Charisma could take a hit in favor of physical stats, if you like.
5. You can get close to the same level of crazy at a lower level (level 11) if you sub out *giant form I* for *righteous might* as the size booster. You get some nice damage reduction into the bargain, but unfortunately you end up with a powerful Medium goat rather than another Large giant (so no iterative attacks). Actually, that might not be right...if you take Evolved Familiar twice (for tail and tail slap), then you could put on a kobold tail attachment and get iteratives that way.

Huay Chivo buffed into a troll

Spells *divine power, giant form I, greater heroism, mage armor, transformation*

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, -1 size, +4 armor, +4 natural armor)

hp 184 (temporary hit points from different sources stack, right?)

Fort +20, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15

Regenerate 5 (acid or fire) **Immune** fear

OFFENSE

Melee mwk Large greataxe +29/+29/+24/+19 (3d6+14/x3) and bite +23 (1d8+11)

Space 10 ft. x 10 ft. **Reach** 10 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 33

Now here's the fun bit: with Improved Share Spells, your goat is very nearly as powerful as this, as long as it stays adjacent!

Baphomet the goat buffed

Spells *divine power, giant form I, greater heroism, mage armor, transformation*

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, -1 size, +4 armor, +4 natural armor)

hp 108 (the goat doesn't get bonus HP from its own +Con, but does gain the temp HP)

Fort +18, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13 (the goat doesn't get the bonus from the orc's sacred tattoo)

Regenerate 5 (acid or fire) **Immune** fear

OFFENSE

Melee mwk Large greataxe +29/+29/+24/+19 (3d6+13/x3) and bite +23 (1d8+10) (again, the goat doesn't have the fate's favored trait, but does get an extra +1 to attacks from *transformation* and enhanced familiar)

Space 10 ft. x 10 ft **Reach** 10 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 34

Don't ask me how you're going to get all of those buff spells up at once, only *mage armor* and *greater heroism* have a duration longer than 1 minute/level. I think that judicious use of a *quicken metamagic rod* would be really helpful.