

MIKWA INFODOC

Short Description

Mikwa are a species of small intelligent bipeds characterized by their long prehensile ears, bulbous snouts, short fluffy tails, and oversized hands. Mikwa have a warm and welcoming society that does not distinguish between friends and family. They place a large emphasis on individual expression and creative pursuits. Some Mikwa live in small settlements, while others live in nomadic groups.

Physical Description

Mikwa are intelligent humanoids that typically stand 3 feet (0.9 meters) and weigh 35 - 55 lb (15.8 - 30 kg) on average.



Mikwa have a bulbous rounded snout that gives them a soft and jovial look, with long lop ears that hang behind their head. Mikwa ears vary wildly in length, from short ears that hang down to the shoulders to long ears that drag on the ground. Mikwa ears are almost fully prehensile, and can be controlled much like a second set of arms, though

without the ability to grasp or hold items. A mix of slicing and crushing teeth suggest an omnivorous diet. Mikwa eyes come in a wide variety of colors.

Compared to a human, Mikwa have proportionately short legs, and a long torso and arms. Their legs end in plantigrade paws, and their arms end in disproportionately large hands. Mikwa hands have 3 fingers and a thumb ending in thick black claws.

A Mikwa's body is covered in soft fur, and they are capable of growing hair on their heads and faces. Mikwa fur and hair color can be just about any color of the rainbow. It is not unusual for mikwa fur and hair to match.

Mikwa do not show much sexual dimorphism, save for the expression of breasts in some. Mikwa seem to express sex along a spectrum, not a binary.

The average natural lifespan of a mikwa is comparable to a human, and they reach maturity around the age of 18.

Ear Hands (Arpa'riri 'strong hearing')

An extremely rare trait for mikwa is the expression of fully articulate hands on the ends of their ears. In all cases, the ears of these mikwa are extremely long, typically brushing, if not dragging on, the ground. The hand consists of 3 fingers and a thumb that are covered in the same fur as the mikwa's ears, and can look like a large 4-pointed tuft of fur without close scrutiny.

These ear hands can do anything that a mikwa's normal hands can, including wielding weapons and shields, holding equipment, and even hefting the mikwa's entire weight if the mikwa is strong enough.

According to a mikwa chief in possession of this rare trait, mikwa sometimes go out on a lengthy pilgrimage to a sacred site. If their pilgrimage is successful, they return with ear paws. It is possible this trait could also be the result of a very rare mutation.

Society

Mikwa society is something of an anarcho-collectivist commune. Most mikwa settlements have either a single wise individual, or a council of trusted individuals that can be turned to for matters that affect the group as a whole, or when a dispute cannot be settled between private parties. Outside of these instances no mikwa holds any more power than any other mikwa.

Mikwa towns are small, rarely numbering over a couple hundred. Mikwa do not draw a very strong distinction between friend and family, so their small towns are often very tightly knit. Children are raised and taught communally, helping to strengthen their community bond.

Mikwa jobs are not assigned; a young mikwa will often apprentice under several experienced tutors until they find a creative pursuit that speaks to them. Mikwa encourage creativity, and so students are encouraged to explore and experiment in ways even their teacher may not have considered - or to explore entirely new pursuits unmentored if they wish!

Mikwa towns rarely have any sort of economy. They simply help each other out with the expectation that the recipient will return the kindness if and when he can. A cobbler will make shoes for a blacksmith with the expectation that the blacksmith will sharpen the cobbler's knives when they dull. Mikwa chase their passions tirelessly, some to the point of obsession.

All mikwa homes have a communal area outside where friends and family can visit freely, with a private interior area for quiet moments. Mikwa freely share affection, and often greet each other by bumping noses - colloquially known as a 'snoot boop' - which is analogous to a human kiss. Fulgori, human and even robot friends are not excluded from this greeting.

Mikwa typically live in well established settlements near (or in one notable case on) a body of water, and often near precursor installations. These towns are typically fed by large 'farm-gardens' which serve as a place to grow fruits and vegetables, house dairy animals and pets, and for mikwa to socialize and wile away the hours.

Mikwa commonly keep buwcha - large dairy beasts that bear a shocking resemblance to a mikwa - for their milk and wool. To protect their farms from marauding wildlife, mikwa employ the help of tukulqu - large, observant canine creatures with ram-like horns - who chase off any unwanted intruders.

Nomadic Mikwa

Nomadic mikwa live in relatively small hunter-gatherer communities that travel from place to place, never setting down permanent roots. Nomadic mikwa settle down in an area for no more than a few months. They subsist off of local flora and fauna; gathering fruits, vegetables, and berries; milking grazing animals; and hunting small game.

Nomadic mikwa live in portable homes that are easy to set up, pull down, and move. They replant edible foods and clear away hazards in the places they frequent so that

the area will be fruitful when they return. Most nomad groups pass by several precursor installations as part of their rotation, where they perform rituals as their ancestors have uncountable times in the past.

Nomadic mikwa have several established meeting grounds that they convene at as part of their regular rotation to exchange information and supplies. These meeting grounds also serve as an emergency meeting place in the aftermath of large-scale events.

Nomad mikwa are less likely to employ electric conveniences, owing to the hassle of hauling rarana oil generators with them when they move. Still, it is not uncommon for town mikwa to join nomads to share their technological conveniences.

Nomad mikwa tend to be excellent survivalists and pathfinders, thanks to their dependence on the land and frequency of overland travel. Nomad rangers regularly patrol the areas near their settlements for danger, and will often come to the aid of travelers in need of assistance. This has led some nomad mikwa to join settled mikwa to spread their survival skills.

Pets

Mikwa commonly keep uku'chu, small springhaas-like rodents, and abi'chu, small winged rodents, as housepets. Farmers keep tuqulqu, horned dog-like quadrupeds, as pets and watchdogs in their farm gardens. Buwcha, large quadrupeds with a striking resemblance to mikwa, are kept for their milk, their wool, and companionship. Mikwa are known to keep a much wider variety of pets around, even some that would seem like poor or dangerous choices.

Food & Drink

Mikwa have a varied diet consisting mostly of fruits, grains, roots, and vegetables with supplemental meats eaten rarely. The average mikwa palate has a natural inclination towards sweeter flavors. The mikwa diet includes a variety of breads used as both sides and edible wrappers for food. The most common of these breads is called Wasiban, which means "home bread" and actually describes a multitude of different easy-to-bake breads. 'Party bread', is a round, wide, flat bread that is popular for gatherings. Partygoers break off bits of the bread to use as scoops for a rainbow of flavorful dips.

Mikwa drink a wide number of teas made from plants local to their area. A common practice is for mikwa to keep a drinking gourd for use with their favorite teas, so that the flavor is absorbed into the material to enhance later drinks. A popular mikwa tea with distinct floral and chocolate notes, invigorates the body and mind.

In addition to tea, mikwa commonly drink many fruit and vegetable juices and juice blends. The specific juices, blends, and teas enjoyed in any given settlement vary based on what can be easily found or grown in the area.

Adult mikwa enjoy a beverage called leska, which is made from fermented fruit juice. Leska can be aged to mature the flavor and introduce complexity by steeping other ingredients inside. A popular treat enjoyed by adult mikwa is fruit left carefully to ferment until it is soft, sweet, and slightly alcoholic.

Hygiene

Mikwa bathe infrequently, only once every few days or so, or when they get dirty. Between baths, Mikwa rub scented oils into their fur to accentuate or disguise their natural musk.

For oral hygiene, mikwa chew the fibrous root of the mailai plant. The fibers clean food particles from their teeth, and the gooey center of the root contains enzymes that kill harmful mouth bacteria.

Spirituality

Mikwa practice a form of ancestor worship, believing that the spirits of their ancestors watch over, protect, and guide them. Many mikwa keep trinkets belonging to departed loved ones as mementos and tokens of power. Often when a mikwa suddenly understands how to operate a precursor item they've never seen, they will claim their ancestor's spirit is guiding their hand.

Most mikwa settlements have what is called a 'hall of remembrance', which acts as a sort of museum for the dead. A small shrine is created for each departed mikwa containing their greatest creation, while the body is buried and allowed to return to nature.

Young mikwa still trying to find their passion, or old mikwa trying to rediscover their own, can take an item from a shrine to study or take inspiration from. When they've created an item of their own, they can return the item and place their own creation alongside it to honor their ancestor's memory.

While most mikwa towns have their own small hall, There is a large central hall near the mikwa settlement of Qochawasi that contains a record of mikwa going back further than any other. This hall is watched over by a mikwa spirit made manifest that takes the form

of the closest ancestor of a present mikwa. This spirit is quite friendly, and will freely impart any information or advice it can about the mikwa recorded in its halls.

Family

Mikwa do not draw a strong distinction between friends and family, and mikwa family units are difficult to clearly define. Mikwa do not often form exclusive pair bonds; they love freely among their peers, jumping from partner to partner as the mood strikes them. Mikwa copulate for fun as well as reproduction and, as with other activities, are eager to do so in large groups.

Mikwa show physical affection through bumping and nuzzling their large snouts (colloquially referred to as “Snootles” or “Snoots”) and rubbing ears, even with non-mikwa.

It takes a village to raise a child, as they say, and mikwa take this saying to heart. Biological lineage is not particularly important in mikwa society, and their birth parents may not even be the adults they live with most.

Mikwa children are raised communally, freely learning from all of their kin. Young mikwa attend schoolhouses to learn essential knowledge like reading, writing and mathematics. As they grow older, many mikwa will apprentice under older mikwa to learn trades while searching for their calling.

Disabilities

Mikwa do their best to accommodate and care for those with disabilities, providing them with medical equipment to aid the disabled, such as glasses for the visually impaired, wheelchairs for the paraplegic, non-mechanical prosthesis for amputees, etc.

Death

When a mikwa dies, their body is either buried in the ground with no coffin, laid out to be consumed by wild animals, or pushed off the side of the island in a glider.

Once the body has been laid to rest, their entire settlement comes together to celebrate their life and mourn their passing. The crafts of the deceased are put on display for the entire town to appreciate. Close friends and family speak about their experiences with the deceased, sharing their will with those in attendance. Games and activities that the deceased enjoyed in life will be played.

At the end of the day, their greatest creation is brought to the Hall of Remembrance to be enshrined with all of the other cherished ancestors.

Punishment

Crime is extremely rare in mikwa society, and punishment is viewed as a last resort. Most mikwa settlements attempt to determine the reason the crime was committed and correct that. In instances of petty crime such as theft, the elder or council of the settlement will oversee the victim and perpetrator coming to an agreement on punishment, often taking the form of working off the crime.

In extreme cases such as assault the criminal will be detained while the elder or council meet to discuss the nature and severity of the crimes. If the criminal is deemed too dangerous to be allowed to stay in town, they will be exiled with a small amount of supplies. In especially severe cases, the criminal will be exiled with no supplies or equipment, and left to fend for themselves. Most mikwa settlements do not believe in capital punishment.

Rangers

Rangers are an elite guard force that scout around mikwa settlements for danger. These individuals are chosen from the best survivalists and trackers in the village. While rangers may not be the best fighters in open combat, their ability to make use of their environment makes them a dangerous foe in guerilla combat scenarios.

While most of a Ranger's job is keeping watch, when dangerous megafauna threaten their settlement, it falls on their shoulders to repel the threat. Their experience dealing with dangerous giants has given them the skills to be a serious thorn in the side of fulgori military units as well.

Rangers typically make use of mikka rifles for long ranged engagements, bows for silent engagements, and talon knives for close engagements. Wing Cloaks are often employed to glide through trees and quickly reposition. Rangers invented the purunata mask and purun'qara leathers to disguise themselves as wild beasts while they scout.

Technology

The mikwa can seem antiquated or ramshackle compared to the fulgori, but in terms of capability they are on par. Much of mikwa technology is repurposed and refurbished fulgori technology that has been lovingly maintained and tinkered with over the years to get the most use out of it. Much of their technology is analog, requiring hand or foot

power to work. Mikwa put a large emphasis on aesthetics. No two mikwa devices are identical, and most mikwa can't help but decorate or tinker with their equipment until it is as personal as their clothing.

Mikwa homes typically have electric lighting at a minimum, and often running water as well. Oil generators power their homes. Their generators burn rarana oil at a lower temperature than fulgori generators, meaning they produce less power, but last longer and don't foul the oil, causing them to produce a pleasantly sweet smell.

Mikwa mechanics are masters of adaptation, able to marry fulgori, human, and even precursor technology together into new useful inventions. In fact, mikwa sometimes seem to possess an almost instinctual understanding of precursor technology, able to work and dismantle devices they've never seen as if they'd been using them all their lives.

Mikwa sometimes employ motor vehicles for transportation and cargo hauling. These vehicles, though referred to by similar names, are often handmade or spliced together from repurposed fulgori vehicles. Mikwa often employ pedal power in their vehicles, like with the Chap'rappa, a pedal powered flying bicycle.

For defense, Mikwa employ worked leather, wood, and metal armor and weapons, alongside lovingly maintained fulgori friction lock firearms, and unusual custom made weapons. The most unique mikwa weapons are those that attach to their ears, allowing them to quickly strike with dual weights, or slash with ear-blades in a twirling dance.

Repurposed Fulgori Equipment

Several generations ago, when the Fulgori Empire was on good terms with the mikwa of Elisi, it was common practice for mikwa to be given large shipments of imperial equipment. These shipments typically included clothing, weapons, and survival gear to help make the mikwa's lives more convenient.

Much of mikwa technology is borrowed and repurposed from old fulgori gear. Mikka rifles and mikka pistols are old fulgori friction lock firearms given to the mikwa many generations ago. These firearms have been lovingly maintained and customized, sometimes to the point where it is difficult to recognize the weapon's origins.

Chuki are a type of vehicles that are made by cutting apart other vehicles and reassembling them to form something newer and more useful. Chuki is short for "uwyachuki" which is the mikwa term for a chimera. These vehicles were famously first invented when the Fulgori Empire sent a shipment of old imperial automobiles to a mikwa village as a gift. The fulgori were horrified when the mikwa immediately started

cutting these well engineered vehicles apart. The mikwa explained that the vehicles were wonderful, but they weren't fit for purpose, and that they were customizing them. 'Chuki' has become a shorthand way of referring to any object created from two disparate objects.

Notable Holidays

Monster Night (Name WIP)

This holiday occurs during the brief window of time where the island of Elisi drifts lower down into the sea of clouds. A thick, statically charged mist rolls over the island, blanketing it in a fog that grows thicker over the course of a few days. Mikwa make colorful masks and costumes, often using glowing pigments found in the bioluminescent swamps, and engage in a bombastic festival to keep away the frightening monsters that lurk hidden in the mist.

There are stories of mikwa being eaten by the fog on monster night, never to be seen again. While there isn't any proof that there are any more monsters than usual prowling the mists, the colorful glowing pigments of the costumes makes it easier to keep track of mikwa in the foggy conditions. The festivities include a variety of games and activities for all ages, and monster themed foods, drinks, and sweets are devoured excitedly over the course of the holiday.

The Renewal of Tools

Mikwa spend so much time and energy lovingly maintaining their old tools that it can be difficult for them to let go, even after they have long become unusable. During the Renewal of Tools, Mikwa gather together to say one final fond farewell to their beloved, but useless tools.

These tools are then carefully disassembled into their basic parts and sorted into like materials. Metallurgists, woodworkers, and other craftsfolk then take those parts and craft them into new tools so that nothing goes to waste.

The renewal process is all done out in the open, and the mood is very festive, with food and drinks aplenty.

The Cleansing of Self

Mikwa have a tradition of, every so often, re-evaluating themselves. During the Cleansing of Self, mikwa look over their lives, their homes, and their possessions, and ask themselves what has improved their life, and what might be better left behind.

The cast off possessions are disassembled to see if their component parts can be of any use, whether they are the individual mechanisms of a machine, a few good ideas from a failed project, or the reclaimed fabrics of a disused garment.

If the Mikwa can find no use for these parts, they will bring them out during the Sparking of Inspiration in hopes that another mikwa can find inspiration where they couldn't.

The Sparking of Inspiration

This holiday follows closely after the Cleansing of Self. During the Sparking of Inspiration, Mikwa bring any things they can't find a use for out into the commons area of the settlement. These objects or recorded ideas are laid out for other mikwa to peruse. A mikwa may take any of these items if they feel a spark of inspiration from looking at it. Any items that aren't claimed by the end of the day are recycled for raw materials.

This holiday helps to encourage innovation and discourage hoarding of useless items.

The Joygiving

During the spring, Mikwa give gifts to those they love and appreciate most. It is customary for these gifts to either be cherished items that have been passed between friends and family through the generations, or to be something hand crafted. The gift can be a useful tool, or a decorative trinket.

If the gift was created by someone other than the giver, it is expected that the giver will take the time to put their mark on it using their own skills. Not doing so can sometimes be seen as a rude gesture, or imply a lack of confidence in one's own skill or creative ability.

Joyswap

During Joyswap, Mikwa bring out their old things and set them out in the commons area of the settlement. If any other mikwa see something they like, they are permitted to take it as long as they leave something in its place. At the end of the day, the owners come back to collect their things, new and old.

Rumors and Legends

Awaqurku “Meat Weavers”

Rumor has it that an isolated village of mikwa has learned to shape flesh as easily as a sculptor shapes clay. It is said that these meat weavers can add or remove limbs, manipulate the proportions of any creature, and more. If the stories can be believed, meat weavers seem to manipulate flesh in a manner similar to how nanotechnicians manipulate nanoparticles, with intricate hand gestures and arm motions.

It could be postulated that a human, lacking in fur and notable facial features, would make for a wonderful blank canvas for a meat weaver to paint upon. Why, they might even be able to solve a human’s snootlessness, and even give them fur for good measure!

It may sound strange, but mikwa place a high value on unique finecraft, and what is more unique than an individual’s own flesh?

Relations

Voyagers

The mikwa of Qochawasi were the first to enter into the Voyager coalition with the human settlers. Many mikwa count themselves as part of the organization, and their knowledge of the land and its many wonders and dangers serves the organization well. Most mikwa settlements host Voyager pubs that serve as safe meeting places for voyagers, and places for locals to post requests and rumors for the voyagers to handle.

Humans

Mikwa have become very close with humans in the short time they’ve been in contact. The Mikwa of Qochawasi in particular helped the first fallen colonists establish the town of [Town], teaching them what foods are edible, which animals are dangerous, and how to farm the land. In exchange, the human colonists trade in supplies and technology. [Town] and Qochawasi have become like sister cities, and it is not uncommon to find mikwa and humans living amongst each other.

Fulgori

Although the mikwa had a pleasant relationship with the Fulgori Empire only a few decades ago, regularly trading with the empire, the situation has degraded rapidly in recent years. Emperor Fulgor's ever-increasing obsession with precursor technology has led to mikwa being bullied and pushed around by the Empire's powerful military. Mikwa who live close to precursor structures have been pushed from their homes, or had their towns occupied by military forces.

Outside of these conflicts, Mikwa typically find fulgori to be stodgy, uptight and repressed. Their embarrassment about public displays of affection are baffling and their mass produced goods are homogeneous and boring. The mikwa do appreciate fine fulgori cuisine, however, and they wish the fulgori would apply that level of craft and care to other parts of their lives.

Rebels

While most mikwa find fulgori to be too uptight and repressed, they can certainly sympathize with the plight of the rebels. Mikwa are quick to offer aid to rebels in need, instructing them in the basics of farming, construction, and other useful survival skills. It isn't unusual for small groups of rebels to live among mikwa.

Robots

Mikwa do not understand how a robot could simply be a tool when it is so obvious that they think, feel, and speak like any other creature. To that end, Mikwa treat robots exactly as they would any other intelligent creature. Particularly curious mikwa may be fascinated with the nature of a mechanical being and want to take a robot apart to understand how they work. *With the robot's consent, of course.*

Important Mikwa

Field Explorer Yeewa Lonnear

Yeewa Lonnear was one of the first Mikwa to join the ranks of the Voyagers. He has a strong familiarity with the way Human firearms work, and wants to help them discover anything that would help the Humans get back their ship, and help the Mikwa stand up to the Fulgori.

Field Explorer Sahas Sooley

Sahas Sooley is another of the earliest Mikwa to join the Voyagers. He is a quiet sort who was a ranger and hunter before the humans arrived, so he knows how to operate without being seen.

Chief Pookwa

Pookwa is a jolly and jovial leader of the southern village of tribal Mikwa. He is welcoming to all outsiders, and loves to throw parties and celebrations for any old reason. Despite his flippant nature, he is a capable and surprisingly wise leader. Pookwa is one of the few mikwa observed to possess ear hands.

Mechanic Sisseen 'Sissi' Geere

"Sissi" is a bright and bubbly young Mikwa who treats everyone like a brother or sister. She has a frankly uncanny skill with technology. It took her no time at all to learn how to maintain and repair human technology, and she even seems to take to Precursor technology like it's second nature. She is a very dedicated mechanic, and loves to tinker with things in her free time.

