



## TIGERS & TEACUPS

One of the big challenges with deciding to write an entire Adventure Path set in Taldor is that Paizo hasn't done a whole lot with Taldor to really flesh it out beyond the land of stereotypical out-of-touch, tea-drinking jerks we describe in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*. Taldor was always a place to be from, not a place to adventure, and fighting that image of all Taldans being out-of-touch nobles who drink sherry with their pinkies out has always been a personal goal of mine.

### TEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT TALDANS

As citizens of one of the oldest nations in Avistan, whose bravery and martial prowess forged an empire and whose canny wit helped them establish trade networks around the globe, Taldans are complex and multifaceted. While the amusing illusion of stuffed-shirted wealthy elites harrumphing as they look down their noses at

downtrodden peasants makes for an easy laugh, a campaign in Taldor means much more frequent contact with a vast array of citizens. To diversify your view of Taldor, here are 10 interesting aspects of the Taldan people.

**10. Taldans Love Wordplay.** As originators of the Taldane language, Taldans understand a considerable breadth and depth of the Common tongue that even their former colonies don't share, and fast-paced banter and clever linguistic choices are proud parts of their heritage. Even the flintiest of farmers love insightful plays on words, and a cleverly timed, crass pun can delight even the stodgiest of nobles.

**9. Taldans Love Board Games.** Every Taldan fancies herself a general, and so board games, strategy games, and war games are popular pastimes for everyone from gong farmers to emperors. While gambling can be fun, it leaves victory in the hands of fate—something few Taldans can stomach—and they prefer diversions that offer at least

the illusion of control. While many board games—the equivalents on Golarion of agon, backgammon, chess, Parcheesi, and rithmomachy—were either invented or adopted by Taldor, just as popular are war games played out with wooden miniatures using elaborate rules.

**8. First Emperor Taldaris Is the Man.** Taldans are a people suffused in patriotism and a love of history, but until we published *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Taldor, The First Empire*, they lacked the sort of founding myth typical of large (and especially old) nations. When we updated their history, we fleshed out their origins as a series of city-states united by a great leader: First Emperor Taldaris, Taldor's own Romulus or George Washington. Like similar figures, he's often invoked and exploited by residents: politicians insist they know what his vision for Taldor *really* was; tutors place him in all sorts of parables for bravery, honesty, and other virtues; and inns and estates advertise that "Taldaris slept here" to impress travelers—even though few, if any, structures in modern Taldor have survived since the First Emperor's day.

**7. Taldan Hair Is a Big Deal.** Even poor households invest in quality brushes, sheers, and oils from the tea tree and argan tree to keep themselves looking and smelling good, and every family has its own secret recipe for shiny, healthy hair. Many outsiders consider this yet another example of Taldan vanity, but the truth is more complex. Taldans' world travels have brought a wide array of parasites home over the centuries; clean hair is a simple comfort that also promotes health.

**6. Taldans Will Eat Anything.** You can't be a refugee or a soldier on the march and still be a picky eater. Since the founding of their nation, Taldans have embraced a philosophy of "whatever doesn't kill me makes me stronger," and that very much extends to their embracing of unusual and exotic foods. For nobles, this translates to eating almost anything that walks, crawls, flies, slithers, or swims, while for commoners it more often means making a meal out of whatever parts the rich won't eat.

**5. Taldans Are Creative.** Shelyn began as a Taldan god, and Taldor still reveres the arts in every form. "Anything worth doing is worth doing with a flourish," the Taldan saying goes, and almost every citizen of the empire pursues an art in her spare time, especially music and dance. Most families have a long tradition associated with a particular skill they may turn into a business—such as painting, weaving, or woodcarving—but just as many are farmers who pluck away at their lyres after work or sing reprises from their favorite operas to make the harvest pass more quickly. Illustrated or illuminated books are especially popular, and many families record their history in books passed down and doodled in over generations.

**4. Taldans Love Dogs.** Taldor claims it domesticated the first dog, but then again, Taldans claim to be the first to do a lot of things. Realistically, while dogs were rare in Azlanti society, they were common among the Kellid and Garundi societies that early Taldans filtered themselves through, and dogs became companions and workers in a culture hard up for extra hands. In those first unstable centuries, Taldor bred a hundred specialty dog breeds to assist with herding, pest control, physical labor, warfare, and even kitchen work, and as the Taldans' fortunes rose, they also bred dogs to serve purely as companions.

**3. Taldans Love Pie.** Since before the first Army of Exploration, Taldans have been sealing their tastiest treasures—and especially leftovers—inside pie shells to help preserve them, and that trend continues to this day. Sweet pies are the traditional breakfast, while farmers and laborers carry a savory hand pie or two with them for a midday snack. Taldans particularly love blending the sweet and the savory into pies, creating treats such as jubilee pie, a rich mix of currants, cherries, and fowl served at almost every major event.

**2. Taldans Are Very Polite—Until They're Not.** Taldans live by their politics and succeed through cooperation. Sometimes that means smiling politely and shaking the hand of the man who tried to kill you last week. Rudeness isn't just unseemly... It's un-Taldan! They instead couch insults in careful language, usually as unhelpful critiques and backhanded compliments, most notably the cold Taldan "Well, aren't you a treasure." Once Taldans decide to stop being polite, they take their outrage and insults up to 11, insulting, scolding, threatening, and yelling in tirades that usually end in duels.

**1. Taldans Never Quit.** While most of Azlant sank, the ancestors of modern Taldor dragged themselves onto a foreign shore and pulled their lives back together. Orcs attacked and they rebuilt. Kellids plundered them and they rebuilt. They founded a kingdom and ran into one natural barrier after another—from rivers to forests to deserts to more orcs—and every time they pushed forward again. Taldor's glories stem from bravery and skill, to be sure, but more than anything they come from the fact that Taldans never look at a challenge and say "maybe not this time."



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SONGBIRD,  
SCION,  
SABOTEUR

Foreword

Part 1:  
Songbird

Part 2:  
Scion

Part 3:  
Saboteur

NPC  
Gallery

County of  
Meratt

Agents of  
Change

Relics of Old  
Taldor

Bestiary