

# CAVACHS GUIDE

The Cavachs are regarded throughout the Known World for being expert crafters and artisans. The dream of almost any Cavachian is to be the greatest at their craft, whether it's blacksmithing or basket weaving, and to produce works that are considered masterpieces. To this end, they value hard work and dedication above all else, and the tie between master and apprentice is often stronger than any form of blood relation. Respect and honor are given to those who excel at their craft, and the concept of inherited class is foreign to many Cavachs. While they focus on their crafts, they apply much of the same hard work and dedication to their social events. Many Cavachs spend the majority of their "free" time partying or preparing to party, and few would dare to call a Cavachs party boring.

## LANDSCAPE & CLIMATE

The region of the Cavachs is a fertile land, well-watered by the Kordiso River. Most of the area is lush and green, with patches of farmland on the banks of the river that feed many of the settlements across the region. To the west, the farms give way to forests, broken up by the occasional larger farmsteads. The northern border expands several miles past the Kordiso, while the western border is marked by long, rocky cliffs that few dare to traverse. In general, the areas closest to the cliffs are the most undisturbed and heavily forested. To the south, the terrain becomes rougher and dotted with hills, stopping where the scattered forests give way to open grasslands.

Summers are warm and somewhat dry, though not so much that it's a problem for farming, especially with the river as a source of water for much of the region. Winters are cold, especially in the northern regions, and large snowfalls are not unheard of. Fall and spring are temperate and rainy, and the river often floods during the spring from the combination of snowmelt and rain.

## NAMING CONVENTIONS

First names tend towards Germanic influence, with hard consonants and attention to meaning. Surnames reference the individual's primary teacher in their professional craft.

Names for social personas, however, are often material-related (such as "Jewel", "Silk", "Iron", etc.)



Children: [First-name] [Village-name]

Apprentice: [First-name] Schu-[Master's first-name]

Master: [First-name] [Former Master's first-name] (suffix or prefix on master name is acceptable/regional)

Unskilled: [First-name] [Profession]

## SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Each settlement in the region of Cavachs is self-governed, though representatives from each town will meet yearly to discuss issues that affect the nation as a whole. Most towns are governed by small councils of experienced master and grandmaster crafters. The task of governing is approached with an attitude that hard work and efficiency will leave the council members the time to work on their craft. Due to this, each town and settlement have slightly different laws and levels of enforcement, though all place a high value on the freedom to work or to practice a trade.

The Cavachs have a unique form of class structure, in which talented masters and grandmasters of skilled professions are well respected and achieve a noble-like position of renown. Traders, less talented crafters, and other service professionals make up the bulk of the middle class and are relied on for economic growth and the production of more daily necessities. Unskilled laborers are considered the common people, focusing on farming, fishing, resource gathering, and other “basic” positions. Unskilled laborers are valued by the Cavachs for building the foundations from which the masters create art, and are treated with respect - so long as they approach their crafts with skill and diligence. While the governing of a town is left primarily to the masters, all Cavachian people are encouraged to bring forth their thoughts and concerns to their leaders for consideration.

A yearly meeting occurs at the annual Cavachs Festival, and the “Grand Council” is composed of the best crafters from each town. The number of representatives from each village varies by population. Having too few representatives can be detrimental, but having too many implies a lack of true talent, that they would send so many of their best crafters to the council. While each comes representing their home, many will group up by trade, often voting together if they have no personal stake in the topic at hand. This causes slow shifts in the political leanings of the council, as certain trades and crafts change in popularity, and older masters and grandmasters lose their positions to younger ones.

## PERSONAS

Cavachians generally separate their time and identity into two separate “Personas”. One is their work persona, which they use for crafting and trade or business dealings. This is their more serious and crafting-focused identity and is most likely to be seen during the day. It’s typically easy to identify working Cavachs, as they’ll be wearing the clothing appropriate to their profession and an apron. While in their work persona, Cavachs will still tell jokes or have some fun banter, but usually in a limited fashion, and not in any way that would distract or interfere with their work.

The social persona is what they embody after they are done working for the day. Easily identifiable due to the lack of an apron and the decorative mask, most Cavachs will make it quite obvious they’re not available to discuss work. The social persona is considered distinct from the work persona, and they will expect to be treated as a different person. While it’s usually quite obvious who is who, even with the masks on, it’s considered taboo to publicly mention or connect the two personas.

Upon securing an apprenticeship, regardless of the profession, each apprentice will spend their spare time working on designing or decorating a mask. Generally, the masks do not cover the entire face, though styles vary wildly. A jeweler might adorn theirs with gems or exotic metals, a blacksmith might add an intricate metal adornment, while others might spend time painting or sewing a complex pattern or set of colors onto their mask. As a person’s skills advance, so too will their mask improve, and many will recreate their mask multiple times. The first mask is the most important, however, as it defines the general style of all future masks they create, to be recognizable as the same person.

The tradition of the two personas reflects the Cavachs belief that what you do in your spare time, so long as it doesn’t affect your work, should have no impact on who is willing to do business with you.

## ATTIRE

- The base for most clothing is a well-tailored shirt with a skirt or straight-legged pants, or a comfortable dress. Their clothing is often well-fitted, though not overly tight that it would restrict movement. Practicality is key, and work clothing typically contains no-frills, loose fabric, or puffy sleeves. Muted and earth tones are common, as well as breathable fabrics that are easy to wash.
- Nearly all Cavachians wear an apron of some kind while working, even those that don't strictly need one. The style and type vary heavily by trade, from a heavy leather apron for smiths or metalworkers, to a cloth apron for cooks and bakers. Most will have pockets of some kind, and comfort and freedom of movement are considered a sign of a "quality" apron.
- Traders are typically hard to identify at first glance, to this end, many traders will wear a simple round pin in the center of the chest of their apron. The material of the pin can sometimes indicate the materials the traders peddle, though this is not universal. Additionally, a trader's apron is often shorter, less practical, and more decorative.
- While socializing or attending feasts, festivals, or parties, clothing styles vary wildly. The constant is the mask, which the Cavachs use to distinguish their work "persona" from their social "persona". The mask is made (or at least decorated) by the wearer, and the decorations and style are typically indicative of their trade.
- Social persona clothing spans a range of styles, some simply take their apron off and put on the mask, others get into full outfits covered in all the "impractical" designs they would never wear during the day. Those getting particularly dressed up for larger social events will often wear clothing such as fitted doublets, full-length gowns and dresses, and other styles with ruffles and impractical or restricting designs.

## COMMON CUSTOMS

- Cavachians place a large distinction between work and play. Talking while working is acceptable, but many will show outright scorn for those who constantly pop in and out of their work area. It's poor form to allow others to work while you relax.
- While many will eat a meal while working, it is considered rude to sit down for a meal while still wearing gloves or an apron.
- It is tradition to only shake an ungloved hand. Many will wait until the other person has removed their gloves before acknowledging or greeting them.
- If work or trade needs to be discussed at a social gathering, those involved are expected to find a side room or go somewhere discreet and take off their masks before continuing.
- Talented crafters often carry around some small item they've, and will typically hold it in hand or display it while greeting others, to show off their craft and their skill.
- Each settlement will have a collection of previous master's "best-work", showing off the most skilled items and crafts to come out of their town.
- For all their focus on work, most Cavachians enjoy a good story, and scribes have found plentiful work supplying the libraries with tales from across the Known World. Some settlements regularly host storytelling competitions, and favor recounting the deeds of local heroes and hauntings of spirits.
- The typical consists largely of fish and vegetables, supplemented with foods and spices from other cultures. Settlements further from the Kordiso are more likely to have some livestock and more diverse produce to supplement their diets.

## COMMON CUSTOMS

Worship amongst the Cavachs is variable and personal. For the most part, religion isn't talked about, especially when in public. Religious discussions and group worship are usually reserved for family or small groups of friends. Some Cavachs will decorate their mask/outfit/apron with a little of one color, but rarely to the extent that it "overpowers" the base colors of the outfit. Religious discussion is more often done from the social persona, though some will say a quick prayer before starting work.

Different professions tend to have different "Patron Gods" that those who practice the craft associate with their work, but many worship Gods entirely unrelated to their work. Silver is often worshipped by jewelers, White by blacksmiths, Brown by furriers, and others who work with animals and raw materials, and Gold by traders. The worship of the Black God is typically very personal.

## HOLIDAYS

### **The Festival** (3rd Week of Springfall)

The Festival is a multi-day celebration and tournament where masters are matched to potential apprentices, apprentices are judged for the potential to be a master, and grandmasters meet to discuss important issues. Each of the larger settlements will take turns hosting. The evenings are renowned for the spectacle as various crafters compete to outdo each other with decorations, food, desserts, and drinks. It's a chance for many who live far away to meet and catch up and is often a chance for many adults who have moved away to speak to family.

**Apprenticing:** Masters of each craft host a variety of games, competitions, and crafting sessions for children. Those seeking apprenticeships limit themselves to one or two crafts that they are the most talented or familiar with to best showcase their work. Masters will seek out potential apprentices from among the participants. The talented may receive multiple offers, and will generally choose based on the master's renown, skill, and personality. If no master is willing to take a child, or they didn't like their offers, they may try again the following year,

though more than 3 attempts are seen as wasteful and shameful. After the masters get their pick, there is an unofficial tradition for lead traders to take in older children who failed to secure an apprenticeship. Their pick is often among those who have the knowledge but lack the skill or dexterity to excel.

**Elevation:** The judging of apprentices is a more serious and intense affair. A panel of 3-4 masters is chosen to judge, and masters see it as a point of pride to pick strict judges or those who don't get along with their apprentice, in order to show that the apprentice passed on skill alone. The panel will spend several hours questioning the apprentice on a variety of topics, make them present work prepared ahead of time, and perform a live demonstration of their skills. Those who pass are announced as full masters in their own right, while those who are found lacking must try again, with both themselves and their master losing reputation.

### **Year Quilt** (Final Week of Winterise)

The Year Quilt is a time for families to work together to create a quilt square (or other large craft) summarizing the major events of their year. When a child leaves the family to settle down, the tradition is for the rest of the family to give them a square to use when starting their own family quilt. Individuals travel to their hometowns in order to spend this week with their family, and it is accepted that no new orders or commissions will be taken by any crafters during this time.