

# Swashbucklers of the Spanish Main

*A Player Handbook for GURPS by Pythagoras*

## Introduction

Swashbucklers of the Spanish Main is a pirate scenario that combines swashbuckling with elements of fantasy that are not obvious at the first glance. This document is intended to brief the players and allow them to generate characters.



## The World

The Swashbuckler world is very similar to our Earth of 1717. The War of Spanish Succession has ended several years ago and many privateers and soldiers are suddenly out of work, turning to piracy to make a living. The English Empire starts its rise to global power, while France and Spain are in decline. However, the French and Indian war in North America is currently sowing the seeds that will ultimately lead to American independence.

The major difference to our world is a stronger connection to the spiritual. Behind the scenes, there is a fight between the spirits of Law and those of Chaos. The Lords of Law pretend to be Catholic Saints and grant (subtle) powers to mortals through pacts or through relics. The Lords of Chaos, on the other hand, take the role of pagan spirits and prefer to work through various non-humans. While this battle has been raging for ages, few, including most of the mortal pawns, are unaware of the true nature and goals of these secret factions.

Nevertheless, this war has led to magic being far more common than in our world. While never flashy in its effects, many people have witnessed its use. Magic can change the direction of the wind, provide miracle cures, or curse weapons to break. The results are never obviously supernatural but quite often very *improbable*.

There are not many mages; in fact, about only one in 250 people knows magic

## Famous Pirates (1)

**Preach** is an ordained Catholic priest of Spanish origin, who joined the pirate crew of the "Immolated Maiden" after they raided the ship he was on. A fierce fighter who impressed his captors, Preach is also a very strict about Catholic ritual and enforces a twisted version of the Ten Commandments amongst his fellow pirates.

**Bill Cuttings** is a British whaler, who became a pirate 12 years ago. A gaunt but charismatic man, Cuttings is known for his sharp intellect and love of art as well as his cruelty towards Catholics, whom he detests. His trademark weapon is a harpoon, which he uses as both a melee weapon and a javelin.

**John Hallow**, also called **Blackbeard**, is a tall and brutish man, who allegedly sold his soul to the devil. He has received more than one mortal wound during his career but survived all, leading to the rumour that only a silver bullet can kill him. John is a Scotsman, who is known for his greed and sexual appetites.

(more often referred to as alchemy when practiced as part of a ritual). Famous magic users from history are Pythagoras, Jesus of Nazareth, Merlin, Paracelsus, and Isaac Newton.

## Character Generation

The characters are relatives, friends, or comrades, who have inherited/stolen/fo-und a ship. They are newly arrived in the Caribbean or have not been off their island yet. Before designing characters, take the following steps:

### Define Relationships

Each player can define one relationship between characters. Possible examples are old friendships, relationships, inter-marriage between families, patronship etc. The relationship need not involve one's one PCs but each player must be comfortable with his role in the grand scheme of things.

### Pick Crew Positions

The **captain** is the leader of the group, he is offered the opinion of the others but it is he who ultimately decides which course of action to take. However, mutiny is never far and a pirate captain strives to keep his crew happy. Charismatic or smart pirates fill this role best.

The one responsible for steering the ship is the **navigator**. He knows how to handle a ship, how to read maps, and where to go. The smart pirate (navigator) is the obvious choice here but other pirates can fill this role, too, as long as they buy all the skills in the navigator package. The navigator is also responsible for updating the map.

The **sergeant** leads the boarding teams and is usually the toughest fighter of the crew. A brutish or roguish pirate fits best here.

Finally, the **quartermaster** is responsible for keeping track of supplies and

dividing the treasure. While smart or charismatic pirates can fill this role, the brutish pirate is also quite capable of handling this role, as long as he has some interaction skills (most likely intimidation).

### The Ship

The PCs start with a small ship without guns. They should pick a name for the ship and design a flag that will strike fear into the hearts of their enemies.

### Design PCs

PCs are created from the templates below. Each player has 150 points available, i.e. 40 after choosing one template. These can be spent on fate points, lenses, pacts, starting wealth, good looks, and contacts. Keep in mind though that the PCs are not supposed to know a lot about the Caribbean yet.

## Occupational Templates

These templates describe different types of pirates that the PCs might want to play. While these are only suggestions, they are a good starting point for a unique pirate. Characters in the campaign start at 150 points.

### Fate Point [10/point]

A fate point is a distinctive advantage that represents the favour of god, sheer luck, or sudden bursts of skillfulness. A fate point can be used only once but it is powerful indeed. Essentially, it is a "get out of jail free card". Whenever a character is killed or suffers unacceptable consequences, spending a fate point will get him out safely.

## Roguish Pirate [110]

Rogues are the epitomy of swashbucklers. Fast, witty, and agile, these pirates enjoy their lives thoroughly as long as there is wine, women, and song.



**Attributes:** ST 11 [10], DX 13 [60], IQ 11 [20], HT 11 [10]

**Secondary Characteristics:** Dmg 1d-1/1d+1, BL 24, HP 11 [0], Will 11 [0], Per 11 [0], FP 11 [0], Basic Speed 6.0 [0], Basic Move 6 [0]

**Advantages:** 20 points chosen from Ambidexterity [5], Brachiator (= use ropes, chandeliers for movement w/o fail) [5], Charisma 2 [10], Combat Reflexes [15], Daredevil [15], Enhanced Parry (Rapier) [5], Fashion Sense [5], Fit [5], High Manual Dexterity 1-2 [5-10], High Pain Threshold [10], Luck [15], Perfect Balance [15], Rapid Healing [5], Rapier Wit [5], Reputation [varies], +1 ST [10], +1 DX [20], +2 HP [4], +2 FP [6]

**Disadvantages:** -35 points chosen from Alcoholism [-15], Bad Temper [-10\*], Code of Honour (Pirate's) [5], Compulsive Carousing [-5\*], Greed [-15\*],

### Sneak Attack

#### Hard Technique

**Default:** prerequisite-3

**Prerequisite:** Any melee skill that uses a piercing or impaling weapon.

A rogue is trained in targeting the vital parts of an enemy and can use this technique (which cannot exceed the prerequisite) to do so without penalty.

Gregarious [-10], Impulsiveness [-10\*], Laziness [-10], Lecherousness [-15\*], Overconfidence [-5\*], Secret (Serious Embarrassment) [-5], Sense of Duty (Comrades) [-5], Trademark (simple) [-5]

**Primary Skills:** Acrobatics DX/H [4], Stealth DX/A+1 [4], select 2 skills from: Brawling DX/E+2 [4], Guns (Musket) DX/E+2 [4], Guns (Pistol) DX/E+2 [4], Rapier DX/A+1 [4], Shortsword DX/A+1 [4], Tactics IQ/H [4], Escape DX/H [4]

**Secondary Skills:** Seamanship IQ/E+1 [2], Swimming HT/E+1 [2], select two skills from: Boating DX/A [2], Carousing HT/E+1 [2], Fast-Draw IQ/E+1 [2], Fast-Talk IQ/A [2], Gunner IQ/E+1 [2], Technique: Sneak Attack (Rapier-2) [2], Technique: Feint (Rapier+1) [2]

**Background Skills:** First Aid IQ/E [1], select two skills from Savoir Faire IQ/E [1], Leadership IQ/A-1 [1], Observation Per/A-1 [1], Survival (aquatic) Per/A-1 [1].

## Brutish Pirate [110]

The brutish pirate lacks the elegance of the rogue, relying on brute force instead. When these fierce fighters start to use

### Rage [10]

Some pirates have trained to go into rage. Rage increases strength and health but reduces dexterity. A good way to offset this effect is to make all-out attacks. Rage has the following effects:

- +2 ST [20]
- +2 HT [20]
- +2 HP [4]
- Fearlessness 3 [6]
- Temporary Drawback: -2 DX (-40%)
- Limited Use: once per day, 1 minute (-40%)

their head, it is usually to butt somebody's nose to a pulp.



**Attributes:** ST 13 [30], DX 12 [40], IQ 10 [0], HT 12 [20]

**Secondary Characteristics:** Dmg 1d/2d-1, BL 34, HP 13 [0], Will 11 [5], Per 9 [-5], FP 12 [0], Basic Speed 6.0 [0], Basic Move 6 [0]

**Advantages:** 20 points chosen from Combat Reflexes [15], Fashion Sense [5], Very Fit [15], Hard to Kill 1-2 [2-4], Hard to Subdue 1-2 [2-4], High Pain Threshold [10], Less Sleep 1-2 [2-4], Luck [15], Rage [10], Rapid Healing [5], Reputation [varies], Resistant (+3 HT vs. Poison *or* Sickness) [5], +1 ST [10], +1 DX [20], +2 HP [4], +2 FP [6]

**Disadvantages:** -30 points chosen from Alcoholism [-15], Bad Temper [-10\*], Bloodlust [-10\*], Bully [-10\*], Code of Honour (Pirate's) [5], Compulsive Carousing [-5\*], Greed [-15\*], Gregarious [-10], Ham-Fisted [-5], Impulsiveness [-10\*], Laziness [-10], Lecherousness [-15\*], Overconfidence [-5\*], Sense of Duty (Comrades) [-5], Trademark (simple) [-5]

**Primary Skills:** Brawling DX/E+3 [8], select 2 skills from: Guns (Musket) DX/E+3 [8], Two-Handed Axe/Mace DX/A+2 [8], Axe/Mace DX/A+2 [8]

**Secondary Skills:** Seamanship IQ/E+1 [2], Swimming HT/E+1 [2], select three skills from: Boating DX/A [2], Carousing HT/E+1 [2], Fast-Draw IQ/E+1 [2], Gunner IQ/E+1 [2], Intimidation Will/A [2]

**Background Skills:** select two skills from Hiking HT/A-1 [1], Savoir Faire IQ/E [1], Observation Per/A-1 [1], Survival (aquatic) Per/A-1 [1].

## Charismatic Pirate [110]

The charismatic pirate relies on his charm as opposed to his martial skills. Nevertheless, trouble is never far behind in the form of jealous husbands, dull witted brutes, or other easily insulted creatures and, therefore, even a Charismatic Pirate has to know a thing or two about fighting. This category also includes the more "mundane" priests.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0], DX 11 [20], IQ 11 [20], HT 10 [0]

**Secondary Characteristics:** Dmg 1d-2/1d, BL 20, HP 10 [0], Will 13 [10], Per 11 [0], FP 10 [0], Basic Speed 5.25 [0], Basic Move 6 [5]

**Advantages:** Charisma 5 [25], 20 points chosen from Accute Hearing 2-3 [4-6], Accute Touch and Smell 2-3 [4-6], Animal Empathy [5], Clerical

## Famous Pirates (2)

**P'tit Orléans** is the son of a French planter from Haiti and a female slave. While Orléans is polite and almost effeminate, he has little education and his temper is mercurial, ranging from extreme generosity to homicidal madness.

**Juan Pedro de Santiago** is a self-proclaimed "privateer", using a letter of marque of dubious origin to prey on French and English ships. Hunchbacked and ugly as hell, Juan Pedro is easily offended and therefore tricked. However, his memory is excellent and when calm he is one of the best marksmen in the Carribean.

**Old Man Guiseppe** is a grizzled old Italian with a bald head and a shaggy beard. While he looks frail and old, the Man is a master of the insult both during and outside of combat. He also has the strange habit to always answer with a question.



## Pirate Hunters

**Montgomery Wordful** also called the "British Bloodhound" is a captain of the British Navy given the special duty of hunting pirates. A man of honour and impeccable manners, Commodore Wordful is also known to be quite a sadist towards those he considers to be of lesser morals.

**Alain Depius-Lagère** is a French nobleman hired by powerful merchants to protect their ships. Due to his colourful career as French soldier, privateer, and treasure hunter, the "Golden Fist" as he is called due to his prosthesis, has many connections and quite a bit of experience. Known for his flamboyant weapons and rumoured to have alchemical knowledge, the Fist is feared by most pirates and is rarely forced to fight.

Investment [5], Eidetic Memory [5], Empathy [15], Fashion Sense [5], Honest Face [1], Language Talent [10], Luck [15], Reputation [varies], Smooth Operator 1 [15], Social Chameleon [5], Voice [10], +1 ST [10], +1 DX [20], +2 HP [4], +1 FP [3], +2 FP [6]

**Disadvantages:** -35 points chosen from Alcoholism [-15], Bad Temper [-10\*], Code of Honour (Pirate's) [5], Compulsive Carousing [-5\*], Compulsive Gambling [-5\*], Greed [-15\*], Gregarious [-10], Impulsiveness [-10\*], Laziness [-10], Lecherousness [-15\*], Overconfidence [-5\*], Secret (Serious Embarrassment) [-5], Sense of Duty (Comrades) [-5], Trademark (simple) [-5]

**Primary Skills:** Fast-Talk IQ/A+2 [8], Intimidate IQ/A+2 [8], select 3 skills from: Detect Lies Per/H+1 [8], Diplomacy IQ/H+1 [8], Leadership IQ/A+2 [8], Guns (Pistol) DX/E+3 [8], Axe/Mace DX/A+2 [8], Rapier DX/A+2

[8], Short Sword DX/A+2 [8], Public Speaking IQ/A+2 [8]



**Secondary Skills:** Seamanship IQ/E+1 [2], Swimming HT/E+1 [2], select three skills from: Boating DX/A [2], Carousing HT/E+1 [2], Gambling IQ/A [2], Fast-Draw IQ/E+1 [2], Gunner IQ/E+1 [2], Rapier DX/A [2], Shortsword DA/A [2], Religious Ritual IQ/A [2], Theology IQ/A [2], Savoir-Faire IQ/E+1 [2]

**Background Skills:** select one skill from Hiking HT/A-1 [1], Savoir Faire IQ/E [1], Observation Per/A-1 [1], Survival (aquatic) Per/A-1 [1].

### Smart Pirate [110]

Smart pirates are ship surgeons, navigators, intellectual priests, or explorers who joined the lawless crowd due to some dark secret or simply out of a sense for adventure.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0], DX 10 [0], IQ 14 [80], HT 9 [-10]

**Secondary Characteristics:** Dmg 1d-2/1d, BL 20, HP 10 [0], Will 14 [5], Per 13 [0], FP 9 [0], Basic Speed 5 [5], Basic Move 5 [0]

## Lucrative Targets

The ships of the **Factoria** transport tabacco, coffee, and cocoa from Cuba to Spain, holding a monopoly on both trade and production. These Spanish ships are often old and slow, making easy targets.

**The Black Ships** are little more than a rumour. It is unknown which power they belong to but they are said to dock only in secret harbours and transport alchemical wonders to eager buyers in the New World. Capturing one of these ships would grant untold riches but would also create powerful enemies.

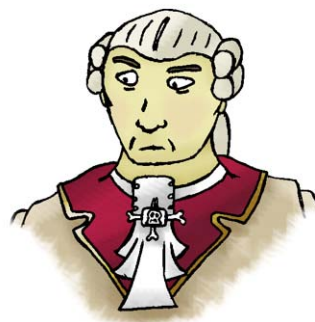
**Advantages:** 20 points chosen from Clerical Investment [5], Common Sense [10], Eidetic Memory [5], Healer 1 [10], High Manual DX 1-2 [5-10], Language Talent [10], Luck [15], Religious Rank 1 [5], Social Regard (Respected) 1 [5], Reputation [varies], True Faith [15], Versatile [5], +1 HT [10], +1 IQ [20], +2 HP [4], +2 FP [6]

**Disadvantages:** -35 points chosen from Alcoholism [-15], Absent-Mindedness [-15], Code of Honour (Pirate's) [5], Combat Paralysis [-15], Cowardice [-10\*], Curious [-5\*], Disciplines of Faith (Ritualism) [-5], Pacifism (Reluctant Killer) [-5], Unfit [-5], Workaholic [-5], Secret (Serious Embarrassment) [-5], Sense of Duty (Comrades) [-5], Trademark (simple) [-5]

**Primary Skills:** Your primary skills depend on your chosen profession. Chose one of the following packages:

- *Surgeon:* Diagnosis IQ/H+1 [8], First Aid IQ/E+3 [8], Pharmacy IQ/H+1 [8], Physician IQ/H+1 [8], Surgery IQ/VH [8]
- *Navigator:* Navigation IQ/A+2 [8], Geography IQ/H+1 [8], Cartography IQ/A+2 [7, due to geography],

Shiphandling IQ/H+1 [8], Tactics IQ/H+1 [8], Heraldry IQ/A-1 [1]



- *Priest:* Religious Ritual IQ/H+1 [8], Theology IQ/H+1 [8], Public Speaking IQ/A+2 [8], Occultism IQ/A+2 [8], Research IQ/A+2 [8]
- *Explorer:* Archaeology IQ/H+1 [8], Survival (jungle) Per/A+2 [8], History IQ/H+1 [8], Connoisseur IQ/A+2 [8], Observation IQ/A+2 [8]

**Secondary Skills:** Seamanship IQ/E+1 [2], Swimming HT/E+1 [2], select three skills from: Boating DX/A [2], Carousing HT/E+1 [2], Gambling IQ/A [2], Gunner IQ/E+1 [2], Rapier DX/A [2], Shortsword DX/A [2], Savoir-Faire IQ/E+1 [2], Guns (Pistol) DX/E+1 [2]

**Background Skills:** select one skill from Hiking HT/A-1 [1], Savoir Faire IQ/E [1], Observation Per/A-1 [1], Survival (aquatic) Per/A-1 [1].



## Lenses

This packages can be applied to any of the templates above. However, carefully check for overlaps that give you points back to spend on more skills or better attributes.

### *Escaped Slave* [10]

You worked on the plantations of the new world until you were freed or escaped. The life on the plantation has made you hard and has given you an undying hatred for the enemies of freedom. Add the following properties:

Will +2 [10], Hard to Kill 2 [4], Hard to Subdue 2 [4], High Pain Threshold [10], Rapid Healing [5], Bloodlust (self-control 12 or less, slave-keepers only) [-7], Hidebound [-5], Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10], Dull [-1]

### *Nobleman* [15]

You are a member of the impoverished nobility, proud but poor. Still, your rank sometimes offers advantages for you, especially with the government of your own country. Also, many people will recognize you, when they see you.

Status 2 [10], Savoir-Faire IQ/E+2 [4], Heraldry IQ/A [1].

### *Two-Weapon Fighter* [35]

You have been trained in the art of fighting with two weapons. Add the following properties:

Ambidexterity [5], Extra Attack [25], Technique: Off-Hand Weapon Training (pick one weapon) at prerequisite level [5]



### *Veteran* [15]

The veteran pirate has seen more than his share of action. Liked by his younger peers for his experience, the veteran suffers from a great number of old injuries that somewhat reduce his effectiveness. Add the following properties:

One Eye *or* One Hand [-15], Unfazeable [15], Social Regard (Venerated) 2 [10], Area Knowledge (Caribbean) IQ/E+1

[2], Specialist Skill (Aquatic Monsters) IQ/H-1 [2], Current Affairs IQ/E [1].

### *Woman* [-5]

Women of the early 18th century are generally seen as the property of their husbands and are thus not taken serious intellectually.

Social Stigma (Valuable Property) [-10], Social Regard (Venerated) 1 [5]

### *Pacts*

PCs may have a pact with a Lord of Law. Catholics will associate the Lord with a catholic saint, protestants and muslims are likely to believe that god himself grants them the supernatural powers. Voodooists are likely to treat the Lords as loas.

#### *Guidance of St. George* [17]

St. George, the dragon slayer, is also patron saint of gunners. Those who are guided by his hand have excellent eyes, allowing them to aim at targets that others barely perceive.

Telescopic Vision 4 (Pact: Code of Honour (Gentleman's) -15%) [17]



#### *Servant of St. Elmo* [14]

Sailors see St. Elmo as their patron and believe he protects them from the dangers of the sea. The saint protects those travelling on the sea by enhancing their relevant skills.

Talent (Sailor) 3 (Pact: Religious Ritual -5%) [14]

#### *Inspiration of St. John Joseph of the Cross* [14]

Protector of navigators, St. John inspires his faithful with almost supernatural

### Talent (Sailor) [5 per level]

The sailor talent grants a +1 per level on the following skills: Knot Tying, Navigation, Meteorology, Seamanship, Shiphandling, Swimming. The talent impresses other sailors and captains (+1 reaction).

*Note: This is supernatural talent that may only be taken and increased as part of the "Servant of St. Elmo" pact.*

ability to discern north and a good intuition for finding land.

Absolute Direction [5], Detect (Land) [19] (both with Pact: Vow (never drink) -5%)

### Blessing of St. Joseph of Nazareth [9]

The patron saint of carpenters protects the ships his followers are on.

Add DR 2 to a ship the character is on (see ship combat rules) (pact: religious rituals -5%) [9]

### Shield of St. Michael [10]

The archangel Michael watches over those warriors who fight valiantly, granting them protection from damage. DR 2 (force field +20%, pact: vow (never run from combat) -20%) [10]

### Protection of St. Peter of Alcántara [14]

The patron saint of guards grants an intuitive danger sense to his faithful but demands them to be honest at all times. Danger Sense (Pact: Vow (never lie) -10%) [14]

## Contacts

These people are more than acquaintances but not absolutely reliable allies. Each player should have some or buy

them during the first sessions. Note that as the PCs are new to the Caribbean, these contacts are distant relatives, friends of friends, etc.

### Merchant [var]

A merchant is a good way to get rid of loot. Pick a port where the merchant resides or can be contacted. The merchant is usually quite good at selling the plunder on the open market and only takes about 10% off for himself.

- Unreliable merchant (skill 19, available quite often 12 or less), unreliable (cheats on failure, betrays on critical failure) [4]
- Expert merchant (skill 21, available rarely 6 or less, somewhat reliable - only cheats on a failure) [2]
- Accessible expert merchant (skill 21, available quite often 12 or less, somewhat reliable - only cheats on a failure) [8]

### Sailor [1]

Pick a nation that the sailor belongs to. He will be a good source of information with regard to anti-pirate action, new loot etc. Whenever the PC is in a port, she can try to call on the sailor. (Skill

### Random Origins (2d6)

While players are free to choose their origins, some might want to roll it up, using this table.

2	Russia
3	Germany
4	Colonies (reroll)
5	Netherlands
6	France
7	England
8	Spain
9	Scotland
10	Ireland
11	Scandinavia
12	Asia



19, available quite rarely 6 or less), unreliable (cheats on failure, betrays on critical failure)

#### Innkeeper [9]

Pick a port where the innkeeper has his tavern. He will be a good source of information with regard to anti-pirate action, new loot etc. However, the innkeeper is not always willing to help the PC for fear of the authorities. (Skill 18, available almost all the time 15 or less), somewhat reliable (cheats on critical failure)).

#### Surgeon [16]

Sometimes the PCs need a discreet surgeon who can patch up them or their friends. Pick a port where the surgeon usually resides. (Skill 21, available quite often 12 or less, usually reliable, i.e. will never betray but asks money for service).

#### Petty Criminal [9]

Pick a port where the criminal resides and chose one of: pickpocket, forger, burglar, and hired killer. He will be a good source of information or can provide services not legally available at normal price, depending on his expertise. (Skill 18, available almost all the time 15 or less), somewhat reliable (cheats on critical failure)).

#### Alchemist [5]

Pick a port where the alchemist has his shop. The alchemist can identify items and sometimes sells supernatural equipment, however, never in large quantities and always for an outrageous price.

#### Priest [9]

A priest will provide inexpensive and non-hazardous services to those in need but will not support illegal activity. Pick a city, where the priest has his church. (Skill 12, completely reliable, constantly available)

## Equipment

To simplify matters, starting equipment is not bought but comes in packages that correspond to certain wealth levels. The players are allowed to add other items at the DM's discretion.

#### Struggling Pirate's Kit [-10]

Cutlass of average, (great) axe of average, or rapier of cheap quality. Grappling hook, rope with hook, a couple of torches, cheap clothing that barely covers the whole body, a single fake third class relic.

#### Average Pirate's Kit [0]

Good cutlass, good (great) axe, or average rapier. An average pistol or a cheap musket. A rope with hook, a lantern, average clothing with one or two spare sets. A single third class relic *or* 20 devil's bullets, *or* 5 doses of oriental medicine.

#### Well-To Do Pirate's Kit [10]

Fine cutlass, (great) axe, or rapier (made of Toledo steel). Two fine pistols and an average musket. A rope with hook, a lantern, fine clothing with several spare sets and dress for formal occasions (including a whig). A single third class relic. Also 20 devil's bullets *or* 5 doses of oriental medicine. Several luxury items such as jewellery, gems etc.

## World Almanach

This information is intended to give the players some insight into the current world situation and allows them to better integrate their characters into the setting.

#### Caribbean

Currently, the borders and interests of the great powers have reached a stable state in the Caribbean. The colonies are not fully established as opposed to the

## World Timeline

Time	Political	Social	Magical
1648	30 Year War ends	Germany lies devastated after 30 years of civil war.	The lawless state of Germany makes it an ideal breeding ground for alchemical experiments of all kinds, not normally tolerated by the churches.
1649-1658	Lord-Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell	Hobbes writes the Leviathan	
1659	After the Pyrenae Peace, France gains the upper hand over Spain.	Diego Velazquez paints the "Infant Magareth".	Spanish alchemists use Jewish Kabbalistic knowledge to forge stronger alloys, soon to be known as "Santiago's Steel".
1667-1688	Louis XIV. conquers parts of the Spanish Netherlands. Turks attack Vienna (1683).	Catholics exempted from all official positions in England (1673). "Habeas Corpus" act grants personal liberties to English citizens (1679). Huguenots flee France after the Edict of Tolerance of Nantes is revoked (1685), weakening the French economy. Their new homes are in Germany, the Netherlands, or England.	Louis XIV funds research into life-extending alchemical potions. The "necromancer" Ludwig von Auenbergen begins reign of terror in the small principality of Auenbergen. Rumours claim that his loyal henchman was built from the parts of dead people.
1688	Glorious Revolution in England. Jacob Stuart's attempt at restoring catholic rights cause the end of his reign. Constitutional monarchy established.		Ludwig von Auenburg killed, his servants scatter all over the world.
1701-1713	Spanish War of Succession: England, Netherlands, and Austria vs. France and Bavaria.	Manufactories established in non-guild trades such as textile and tobacco production. England takes over the slave trade with the Spanish colonies from the French (1713).	Bavarian Alchemists invent the so-called Devil's Bullets, which see limited use in the war but are seen with suspicion by most soldiers.
1717	Prince Eugen conquers Belgrade		Turkish "necromancer" lynched by Austrian mob.

## Supernatural Items

These items are not obtainable everywhere and there is a good chance that a given item will be a fake. In fact, only those with high scores in History, Detect Lies, or Alchemy are somewhat safe against being cheated. Another option is to buy an alchemist contact.

**Devil Bullets** are an alchemical specialty that the church does not look on too fondly. Created with rare alchemical ingredients and rumoured to be enhanced by the devil, these bullets add +1 to damage per die.



**Third Class Relics** are items, usually small amulets or pieces of cloth that have touched a first or second class relic. These small charms emulate the holy power of the original relic and grant +1 to a single non-combat skill related to the domain of the saint.



**Oriental Medicine** comes in the form of various salves, oils etc. made of exotic ingredients. Using a single dose of these grants a bonus of +2 on the HT check to avoid permanent damage from injury.



## The Fall of Port Royal

While most people believe that Port Royal was destroyed by an earthquake, others are not so sure. Rumours abound that strange carving sounds could be heard in the city weeks before the catastrophe in 1692. A few survivors claim to have seen strange fishmen plundering the sunken ruins. The place is currently avoided, especially after the first few plunderers did not return.

small Spanish settlements that dominated before. Many of the non-Iberian colonies were created in the middle of the 17th century.

### Los Cinco Muertes

This group of 5 small islands off the Mexican coast is a well-known rumour but few have been able to find the Muertes. The islands are rumoured to be home to all kinds of monsters. Older sailors also claim that a Spanish galleon sunk nearby and that the crew took its cargo - mostly Aztec gold - to one of the islands to bury it there.

### Hispaniola

This island is divided between the French and the Spanish. The French side is called Saint-Domingue and used to be a base for French buccaneers but is turning more and more towards plantation work. For this reason, the island has a large slave population and thus more than its fair share of voodoo priests and witch doctors. Interestingly, there is also a relatively large contingent of free mulattos, mostly sons of white planters and their black mistresses.

The Spanish colony of Santo Domingo is unremarkable in most respects, focusing on plantation economy.

### Jamaica

The island originally belonged to the Spanish but was conquered under the reign of Oliver Cromwell as part of his *Western Design*. Port Royal, the former capital long served as a haven for English pirates, before it was destroyed under mysterious circumstances in 1692. Today Jamaica is a British colony run from its capital Kingston and is a major port used by pirate hunters.

### Bahamas

The Bahamas are a haven for pirates the most famous of them called Blackbeard, who practically runs the place. Also, many of the smaller islands welcome pirates as long as they do not act too obvious. Another reason to visit the Bahamas is the many treasures rumoured to be buried there.

### Cuba

A Spanish colony since 1511, Cuba is one of the power centers of the Spanish in the Caribbean. Currently, trouble stirs, because several years ago, all luxury crop production and trade was monopolized by the Spanish king and given to the so-called Factoria. Needless to say, smuggling and piracy abound.

### Tortuga

This small island near the coast of Nicaragua used to be a base for French buccaneers, after the rival colony of Englishmen on the island was crushed in 1641. However, about 30 years ago, Tortuga's star declined as many of the buccaneers turned to other careers or joined the modern pirate crews. Today, Tortuga is a second-class harbour for pirates that offers poor service and pays low prices but is relatively safe.

### England

England is currently advancing to be the number one power in the world. After the War of Spanish Succession, which

ended 7 years ago, England was able to expand its power in both Europe and the New World. Also, since 1707, Scotland and England formed a union, leading to the official formation of the kingdom of Great Britain. This act has finally given Scots access to the English colonies, leading to many enterprising Scots to leave their homeland.

Notable possessions of England in the Caribbean are the Bahamas (taken from nominal owner Spain in 1670) and Jamaica.

One reason for the rise of England is the superior skill of its alchemists. A secret society called the *Brotherhood of Mercurium*, led by Sir Isaac Newton, produces superior weapons for the English navy. While most of these items are state secrets, there are many rumours, the most outlandish ones speaking of flying ships. Possible character concepts for the English are:

- Admirer and sycophant of Sir Henry Morgan
- Soldier out of work
- Privateer whose letter of marque was revoked
- Renegade alchemist

### France

While the expansionistic policies of Louis XIV increased French power, it also arrayed the other European powers against the French and ultimately led France into exhausting its economical power (not to speak of the troubles due to the exodus of the Huguenots). The dominance of France declined at the end of the 16th century, marked by the defeat of the French fleet at La Hague. The peace of Utrecht four years ago made England the dominant power and forced France to give up parts of its North American colonies as well as make the Spanish king Phillip V renounce all claims to the French throne to avoid a unification of these two European powers.



## Knights Hospitaller

The knights hospitaller actually owned the island of Saint Croix for some time during the 17th century. While there is currently no presence of the knights in the Caribbean, there are still rumours of mighty treasure that they had to leave behind and are still working in secret to recover...

Since the Sun King died 2 years ago, Louis XV, a 7 year old boy, is the new monarch. Louis XIV gave him the following advice: "My child, you are going to be a great king. Do not imitate me in my liking for buildings and for wars. On the contrary, do try to have peace with your neighbors..." Currently, the country is run by the regent Phillippe d'Orléans, who tries to steer the country to new heights but there are internal conflicts and increasing financial problems.

The decadent courts of France are very open to occultists and magicians. While there is no organized force, there are many French sorcerers, such as the apparent son of Transilvanian noble, the Count of Saint Germaine, and Jaques de Capot-Noire, an alleged werewolf. While most of them have their self-interest at heart, they will also serve their king in return for privileges. Possible PCs are:

- Huguenot exile (age 30+)
- Digruntled soldier/sailor of the war
- Former courtier of Louis XIV.
- Philosophers

## Holland

Originally part of the Hapsburg empire, the Netherlands became part of Spain when the Austrian and Spanish lines split. However, due to its Protestant stance, the country came into conflict with the Spanish and a large part split off during a bloody war of

## Ages of Piracy

### Privateers

The first acts of piracy occurred when Spain was still the only major power in the Caribbean. Daring raiders such as Francis Drake used fast, small ships to attack the Spanish treasure ships. At that time, piracy was totally government-sanctioned and directed only against the Spanish.

### Buccaneers

Buccaneers were recruited mostly from sailors and soldiers but also from landless whites who had been hired to work on the plantations. The height of buccaneer power was during the end of the 17th century. A famous pirate of this day was Henry Morgan, who died wealthy and respected on Jamaica in 1688.

In the late 17th century, most of these pirates were dropped by their employers, having gained too much power and independence. Some fled to North America or to other oceans.

### Golden Age of Piracy

The present. Except for a few bases in the Bahamas or on Madagascar, Pirates live mostly on their ships, selling to unscrupulous merchants in hidden natural ports at night. Pirate crews are truly multinational, often containing escaped slaves and women. All civilized nations work against them.

independence. In 1648 Spain recognized the independence of the Dutch Republic. During the 17th century, the Netherlands became the most prominent center of trade and Amsterdam the financial center of the world.

## La Alma Perdita

The Alma Perdita was a Spanish ship bringing gold back to Europe during the 16th century. According to legend, the captain of the ship vowed not to be stopped by anything, be it manmade or natural. After the ship was sunk by English freebooters, a ghostly version is cruising along the ground of the Caribbean, rising only to ram ships and take their crewmen as new undead sailors.

After many setbacks, the Dutch influence in the Caribbean is limited to the Antilles. Being very pragmatic Protestants, the Dutch have little dealings with the supernatural and focus on the magic of money. Possible characters are:

- Merchant down on his luck
- Mercenary
- Son of huguenot ancestors

## Spain

The extinction of the Hapsburg line in Spain led to the Spanish War of Succession. While the French "won" the war at great cost, Louis XIV was unable to

## The Deep Ones

There are tales among the Indians that there was once a tribe that rejected the gods of the land and started to worship a creature from the sea. As a punishment, they were cast to the very bottom of the Caribbean sea, where they built mighty pyramids for their masters.

Even today, the natives and most sensible sailors fear the deep ones and their half-bred servants on land. More than one ugly person was lynched for having the "looks of a deep one."

unify the two crowns for his successor. The country is currently undergoing great change, because Felipe V is trying to impose the French concept of centralism on the fragmented regions of Spain with the *Decreto de Nueva Planta*.

While the Spanish are not known for their dabbling in the supernatural, certain minorities such as the Sephardic Jews are known for their secret practices. Rumours speak of golems, strange divinatory rituals, and mind control. Also, Spain is rich in Catholic relics of all kinds and possesses the secret of "Santiago Steel" used for only the most expensive blades. Possible characters are:

- Cortes (i.e., courtier) from Aragon, unhappy with the new centralized system of law.
- Spanish sailor whose ship was destroyed during the war
- Basque or Catalan trouble-maker

## Portugal

In the 17th century, it seemed more and more as if Portugal would become a part of Spain and for some time, the two crowns were even held in personal union. However, ultimately, the Portuguese nobles were unwilling to lose their power and achieved independence after the Restoration War.

Today Portugal is a quite and isolated country, its only major colony in the region being Brazil. Possible characters are:

## Betty Big Embrace

Betty is not, as the name might suggest, a woman of any kind but rather a terrible sea monster, a giant squid with barbed arms and a terrible beak. The creature is said to be lured by slave ships, loving the taste of African flesh.

- Adventurer discontent with the current role of Portugal
- Brazilian colonist

### Italy

Italy is deeply divided and many of the small principalities are dominated by foreign powers. The only power of interest for those acting in the Caribbean are the *Stati Pontificii*, the states of the church. Through the Jesuits and Franciscans, the pope wields great influence throughout the world, and few powers can claim more relics and miracles on their side. Possible characters are:

- Adventurer fleeing the chaos at home
- Agent of the pope

### Germany

Germany is almost as fragmented as Italy but is less dominated by external powers. The most important powers are Prussia, under the "Soldier King" Frederick William I, and Austria, the latter of which has just recovered from the predations of the Turks.

The governments in Germany mostly consider themselves to practice "enlightened absolutism" that combines progressive ideas with a clear power hierarchy. Mostly concerned with the European balance of power, German states take little interest in the Caribbean, limiting their presence to the occasional adventurer.

- Deserter from the "Potsdamer Riesengarde" (a.k.a. "Lange Kerls"), most likely recruited by force.
- Mercenary

### Scandinavia

Currently, Russia, Denmark-Norway and Saxony-Poland, as well as some German states are fighting against Sweden. Only Denmark has two colonies in the Caribbean, otherwise these countries are of little importance

in the new world. However, there are rumours about strange *artefacts* the Danish found in Greenland and many pirates are eager to get their hands on one of the rumoured wonder weapons.

### North America

North America is divided between the largely unexplored West, the British colonies and the French territories. The frigid North largely belongs to the Hudson Bay Company but is largely uninhabited. Florida is a Spanish colony. Possible character concepts are:

- Refugee of the Salem Witch Trials (30+)

### Pirate Song

*Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me.  
We pillage, we plunder, we rifle, and loot,  
Drink up, me 'earties, yo ho.  
We kidnap and ravage and don't give a hoot,  
Drink up me 'earties, yo ho.*

*Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me.  
We extort, we pilfer, we filch, and sack,  
Drink up, me 'earties, yo ho.  
Maraud and embezzle, and even high-jack,  
Drink up, me 'earties, yo ho.*

*Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me.  
We kindle and char, inflame and ignite,  
Drink up, me 'earties, yo ho.  
We burn up the city, we're really a fright,  
Drink up, me 'earties, yo ho.*

*We're rascals, scoundrels, villains, and knaves,  
Drink up, me 'earties, yo ho.  
We're devils and black sheep, really bad eggs,  
Drink up, me 'earties, yo ho.*

*Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me.  
We're beggars and blighters, ne'er-do-well  
cads,  
Drink up, me 'earties, yo ho.  
Aye, but we're loved by our mummies and dads,  
Drink up, me 'earties, yo ho.*

## Dawn of the Dead

Baron Samedi, the loa of the dead, is strong on Haiti and supports his servants with his armies of living dead. Of course, the zombies stay in the shadows and will crumble when slain, so there is no scientific proof of their existence. However, more than one sailor whispers about ships crewed by corpses and mysterious deaths are not uncommon among particularly cruel slave drivers.

- Native American looking to make money to fight the white settlers

## Asia

Japan is currently maintaining strict isolation from the rest of the world, allowing only the Dutch and the Chinese to land on a man-made island in Nagasaki. However, the descendents of a few Christian Samurai can be found as mercenaries in the employ of the Spanish or Portuguese.

China is currently ruled by the Manchu, who control the Han Chinese and enforce the Manchu dress code (including the shaved head and pig-tail hairdress). There is little Western influence found here save for the occasional Jesuit. However, China is the main source of esoteric medicine and various wonders of magical origin that are sold at premium prices throughout the world. India is still a large independent power, but European powers are trying to tap its riches. Portugal controls Goa since the early 16th century. Also, the English have started to establish trading posts under the protection of local rulers during the 17th century. Still to most, India is a country of bizarre gods and rituals and is a strong bastion of the Lords of Chaos, some of whom manifest almost openly in the more isolated regions.

## Pirate Lingo

These are some typical pirate sayings (in German for my players).

*Tod und Teufel!*

*Mast- und Schootbruch!*

*Zu den Haien schicken*

*Bei meinem Haken!*

*Beim Klabautermann!*

*Landratte*

*Leichtmatrose (= Beleidigung)*

*Pfeffersack (= Händler)*

*Priese (= Beute)*

*Schillerlocken (=geräucherter Haibauch)*

*kielholen (= ertränken)*





