Kobold

Reptilian tunnel dwellers who stick together to survive

Racial Traits

Average Height: 3’6”-4’0”
Average Weight: 60-75 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Constitution; +2 Dexterity or +2 Charisma
Size: Small
Speed: 6 squares
Vision: Darkvision
Languages: Common, Draconic
Skill Bonuses: +2 Dungeoneering, +2 Thievery

Reptile: You are considered a reptile for the purpose of effects that relate to the reptile keyword.

Trap Sense: You gain a +2 racial bonus to all defenses against attacks from traps.

Shifty Maneuver: You have the shifty maneuver power.

Kobolds overrun dungeons and caverns, relying on vast numbers and wicked traps to make up for their deficiencies in size and strength. Their ability to survive among the bigger and tougher monsters of the world shows just how well their tactics have worked.

Kobolds gather in large tribes, reproducing quickly to replenish their numbers. Group pressure and the dictates of charismatic leaders compel all members in the community to work together toward whatever ends they need to survive. No matter what an individual kobold feels or believes, the community expects obedience, and every kobold in the tribe tries to behave in the expected way. Some kobolds have good hearts, but their chieftains believe only ruthlessness will keep the tribe strong. Thus most kobold tribes commit evil acts, or at least self-serving ones.

Kobolds have few illusions about their place in the world. They are scavengers and thieves. They do not grow their own food and would rather deprive others of their goods than craft anything. They lurk on civilization’s fringes, raiding farmsteads and ambushing caravans. They settle in old ruins and dungeons, choosing places they can readily defend and fortify. Even with their great numbers, kobolds know they cannot hope to protect themselves against a determined attacker. For this reason, most tribes raise monstrous allies for added muscle or give in and become servants of dungeon rulers.

Of all the monstrous allies kobolds can make, dragons are best of all. Dragons are everything kobolds are not: enormous, majestic, and powerful. They are gods to the kobolds, their idealized selves, and thus are worthy of worship and service—should any dragon accept the little creatures. Any sign of a dragon sends the tribe into a flurry of activity. The kobolds track it to its lair and present it with sacrifices, pageants, and anything else they think it would like. Of course, a dragon presented with so many willing victims indulges its appetite and gobbles up as many as it can. But death by dragon is no deterrent to the kobolds’ efforts. They see being eaten by a god as a great honor, and clamor for their chance to climb into the dragon’s maw.

Older dragons see kobolds as nuisances. A quick blast of a breath weapon suffices to eliminate an infestation. The trouble for the dragon is that the kobolds do not give up and might try to serve in secret even if rejected. Younger dragons, however, might see the advantage in a loyal clan of guards and attendants to protect their hoards and warn of adventurers who come calling. Once a kobold tribe installs itself around a dragon, everything they do serves their god.

A kobold’s life is unpleasant to say the least. Very few kobolds live to reach old age. Attrition claims most before they get too far into adulthood. Hunger, thirst, and want are constant companions, and even the dimmest kobolds learn to watch their backs. Kobolds are subject to the same greed as dragons, though far less intense. Most of them keep small stashes of coins or other treasure secret from the tribe, even though they know they’re duty-bound to pool such resources.

Kobolds understand that they are stronger together than they are apart. All grudges are forgotten when the tribe faces an outside threat. Kobolds demonstrate surprising cunning when dealing with intruders, as evident in the traps they design to level the playing field. Kobolds’ skill in trapmaking is amazing. With only minimal supplies—mostly junk—they can fashion crafty snares and clever alarms. Even intrepid explorers know that entering a kobold warren invites disfigurement and death.

The harsh reality of kobold existence demands absolute obedience to the leader’s demands. Kobolds who lack the killer’s instinct, show any weakness, or disobey orders are shunned and driven to the tribe’s periphery. If not devoured by a passing predator or sacrificed to a bloodthirsty god, such exiles might seek their fortunes beyond the tribe. Survival is by no means assured, but such action at least gives them a chance to survive.
Kobolds are survivors first. They are not above prostrating themselves before enemies if it means buying a little time. A lone kobold survivor after a raid, a prisoner, or one otherwise cut off from its fellows must adapt to avoid death. A kobold who was part of an evil tribe might reform its behavior in the presence of others who are willing to guide and support it, and might even find this new “tribe” more comforting than the old one. Such individuals find the adventurer’s life suits them—not because they crave danger or excitement, but because their talents make them useful to other adventurers who protect them in return.

Physical Qualities
Their spare frames and stooped postures don’t inspire fear in others, which suits kobolds just fine. They would rather look nonthreatening but not quite vulnerable. A few brave kobolds emulate their honored dragons. They put on a little muscle, raise their snouts high, and roar with a ferocity no one would expect such weak-looking creatures to muster.

Kobolds’ long muzzles are lined with tiny teeth and lolling tongues similar to those of a dragon or crocodile. Their slitted eyes are usually red, gold, or yellow. Small horns angle backward from a kobold’s brow, and bony barbs stud its forearms to its elbows. Its fingers end in stubby talons, as do its long toes. Fine scales cover a kobold’s body, usually some shade of green. Brown, red, and orange scales appear among particular tribes, as do mottled hides of several colors.

Their reptilian anatomy hides kobolds’ physical expressiveness from other races. Their facial construction lacks the anatomy to display the same range of emotions as other humanoids. Kobolds who need to deal with warmbloods develop broad arm and head gestures to convey how they feel.

Since kobolds have to make do with what they scavenge, clothing is limited and functional. A loincloth serves the least among them, while warriors cobble together armor from scraps they harvest from the dead. Crude weaponry suffices until they can steal something better.

Kobolds grow quickly. They can walk and talk within hours after hatching and reach their full height after about a year. Kobolds can live longer than a century, though very few make it through their first decade.
Attitudes and Beliefs

Kobolds look after the tribe foremost, and they take whatever steps they deem necessary to ensure the community’s survival. The more populous the tribe, the lower the chance any individual will come to harm—even though such large numbers invariably attract attention. Thus, kobolds nurture their eggs in communal nesting grounds to ensure the next generation will preserve their numbers.

Even kobolds who leave their tribes retain the instinct to survive and find comrades. An adventuring kobold regards the party as a small tribe and finds a place to contribute to the group’s success. He or she shows an immediate willingness to work within the team, especially if the kobold can tackle a job nobody else in the group is suited for.

Even good-aligned kobolds see little point in fighting with honor. A fair fight achieves nothing if you die. Instead, kobolds admire trickery and subterfuge as virtues and deride as foolish any notion of fairness. The best fight to a kobold is one in which no kobold blood is spilled.

Kobolds see dragons as living gods and offer sacrifices, prayers, and anything else they find to honor their masters. Their devotion stems from their connection to Tiamat, whom they see as their ultimate goddess and mother to all dragons. Kobolds also worship their ancestors, chief among them being Kurtulmak, a figure thought to be one of Tiamat’s exarchs. Adventuring kobolds never quite escape their devotion to Tiamat and continue to worship her even if doing so is offensive to their new companions. No kobold wants to face the repercussions of angering such a threatening god.

Kobold Communities

Anyone who examines kobolds’ traps can see their ingenuity in construction, yet kobolds do not raise their own towns or strongholds. Instead, they squat in places other peoples have abandoned. A kobold settlement’s location must be defensible, offer shelter, and provide enough water and food to support the tribe.

A typical kobold community includes a large common room where the rank and file gather, cook, and sort through the plunder. Nearby is a temple or shrine dedicated to Tiamat, along with chambers set aside for the high priest, the chieftain, and the most accomplished warriors. These rooms offer privacy for the higher-ups without sacrificing the security of having the rest of the tribe nearby.

The passages leading into the warren look safe enough to an outsider, but hidden throughout are all sorts of nasty traps to discourage intruders from venturing too far. Kobolds favor devices that humiliate as much as harm their victims. An adventurer who
survives a kobold’s trap usually does not do so with pride intact. The tribe might also use rats, scorpions, slimes, or drakes to help guard their warrens.

Kobold tribes not affiliated with dragons freely abandon their lairs if they come under attack. They fight to protect themselves, but should the situation become untenable, they are not above pulling up stakes and settling somewhere else. A dragon’s involvement shores up the tribe’s courage, and kobolds fight with uncommon boldness to protect their god.

Kobold Adventurers

Adventuring might seem an unlikely occupation for kobolds, but they have several talents that make them well-suited to the life. They can see in the dark, anticipate and avoid traps, and stay a step ahead of their enemies. Kobolds can be useful and effective allies in almost any adventuring group.

Very few kobolds become adventurers by choice, however. Some catastrophe must befall them before they traipse off looking for danger. Most take up this life after being captured by adventurers or separated from their tribes.

Rogue Growing up in environments where any misstep can bring death, poisoned darts fly with a stumble, and pits bristling with spikes lurk in every corridor, kobolds learn a healthy respect for traps. Familiarity with such hazards, combined with their furtive natures, make kobolds a natural fit for the rogue class. Kobold rogues are among the best at locating and dismantling traps. This talent, combined with their great mobility, makes kobold rogues particularly dangerous.

Sorcerer Kobolds have strong arcane traditions, and most who follow those traditions become sorcerers. They like to think that dragon’s blood flows through their veins, and they believe that the best of them can tap into this essence and become like the gods they worship. Most kobold sorcerers choose the path of dragon magic.

Warlock A kobold who cannot harness the magic within might seek out other sources of power. Many kobolds make unwise bargains with strange entities, offering their souls to make themselves strong. Most kobold warlocks look to the stars and the beings that reside there for magical power, though they bargain with anything that offers to make them strong.

Assassin Kobolds avoid direct confrontation. They employ poison, traps, and ambushes to deal with enemies, all tactics that make them eminently suited to the assassin’s trade. Kobolds rarely become assassins for profit, though most accept payment for their work. Instead, their techniques are natural outgrowths of how kobolds normally fight.

Roleplaying a Kobold

When creating a kobold adventurer, here are a few points to consider.

You know your way around traps. Even if another character handles the task of disarming traps, you know enough about their construction to help dismantle them when they are discovered and avoid them when they attack. Traps fascinate you, and any new device is an opportunity to add a weapon to your arsenal. Don’t pass up opportunities to tackle a trap and, if possible, try to find ways to turn it to your advantage.

Fair fights are for suckers. Concepts such as honor, nobility, and fairness make little sense to you. Death comes soon enough without inviting it through some foolish belief. You use trickery and planning to defeat your enemies. You lure them into danger, drawing them into positions where your allies can finish them off. You hit enemies when they’re down, dazed, or otherwise incapacitated. Your survival depends on your willingness to do whatever it takes to win.

Dragons are gods. Dragons represent everything kobolds hope to become. Everyone fears them. If dragons are not true gods, they are close enough for you. Encounters with dragons awe you, far beyond the threat they pose. You feel conflicted about fighting dragons and seek a peaceful way out of such an encounter, such as by making an offering or spouting excessive flattery. Should your efforts fail, you still support your allies, but killing the dragon should be the last resort.

You know your place. Every kobold in a tribe knows that for the rest to survive, each member must do his or her duty. As an adventuring kobold, you see your companions as your new tribe and search for a way to contribute outside of combat. You might cook meals, mend clothing, or polish armor in addition to your companions as your new tribe and search for a way to contribute outside of combat. You might cook meals, mend clothing, or polish armor in addition to fulfilling your role during exploration and combat.

You exercise caution. Taking heedless risks can get you killed. Better to be prepared and know what you’re getting yourself into. If you get in over your head, fleeing is an important tactic. An enemy that gives chase enters unfamiliar territory, often protected by traps. As a kobold, you feel no shame in running away and expect your companions to do the same should the situation turn against you.

The world hates you. Being considered vermin by most people you meet is bound to take a toll. No matter what you accomplish, others might be anything from suspicious to hostile. Even most other reptilian humanoids look down on you, though they’re more likely to show you some respect if you prove yourself. When traveling through civilized lands, consider concealing your features to avoid conflicts.
Kobold Characteristics: Ambitious, cooperative, fawning, greedy, loyal, obedient, quick, timid

Kobold Male Names: Bont, Dartak, Deekin, Forgen, Kol, Meepo, Nin, Speelok, Zeem

Kobold Female Names: Capax, Eenith, Foruul, Gumba, Iimen, Lorpe, Rowatak

Kobold Tribal Names: Black Death, Broken Fang, Gouger, Red Moon, Skull Kicker, Torn Ear

Kobold Feats
Each kobold tribe has its own methods and specialties, but all of them have a few things in common. Dungeon travel and dragon worship both hold a prominent place in kobold society. Trapmaking and evasive maneuvers let kobolds get the upper hand in battle, and they take great pains to improve these abilities.

Dragon’s Indomitability You’re not entirely fearless, but you try to follow the example of the great dragons.

Prerequisite: Kobold

Benefit: You can roll two dice and use either result when making saving throws against effects that daze or stun you.

Eldritch Momentum In the kobold tradition, warlocks learn to warp arcane energy with their movement and use it to break through enemies’ defenses. Your attacks zig and zag in an unpredictable fashion that catches enemies off guard.

Prerequisite: Kobold, warlock, Warlock’s Curse class feature

Benefit: If you move at least 3 squares away from where you started your turn, you gain combat advantage until the start of your next turn against creatures subject to your Warlock’s Curse.

Kobold in a Corner Getting trapped in a dead end and surrounded is the worst danger a kobold can face. When enemies surround you, your instincts to escape kick in, and you fight back angrily.

Prerequisite: Kobold

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls against creatures that have combat advantage against you. This bonus increases to +2 at 11th level and +3 at 21st level.

Shiftier Maneuver Carefully skulking around the battlefield is the kobold way to victory, and everyone in the tribe should be good at it. Your expertise is infectious.

Prerequisite: Kobold, shifty maneuver racial power

Benefit: When you use shifty maneuver, one target of the power can shift up to 2 extra squares.

Trapbuster You understand the mechanisms used in all sorts of traps, and your ability to disarm them is second to none.

Prerequisite: Kobold, training in Thievery

Benefit: You can roll two dice and use either result when you make a Perception check to detect a trap. In addition, you never trigger a trap when you fail a Thievery check to disable it.

Kobold Utility Powers
Kobolds don’t like to venture too far out of their comfort zone, so they stick to what they are best at: canny movement, teamwork, and careful exploration. Many kobolds carry strange gadgets created from scrap metal and other refuse. They make these items using formulas handed down by the tribe and their own ingenuity, honed by years of trapmaking.

When your kobold character gains a class utility power after 1st level, you can forgo taking a power granted to you by your class. Instead, you gain a kobold utility power of the same level or lower.

NEW ITEM: HURLER-SNACHER
With some foraged twine, a supple reed, simple pulleys, and a soft cloth bindle, a kobold can piece together a crude device for getting around obstacles. These hurler-snatchers, as kobolds call them, have long been used to fling objects across gaps safely and retrieve small items lost down narrow chasms.

Using a hurler-snatcher (4 lb., 10 gp) requires a move action. When you do so, you either transfer one item you have that weighs 5 pounds or less to an unoccupied space or a willing character within 5 squares of you, or you take one similar item that the character or the space has and transfer it to yourself. If you intend to transfer the item to a character, he or she has to have a free hand and must use a free action to catch it. Otherwise, the item lands in that character’s space.

The 5-pound limit on a hurler-snatcher is enough to carry most simple objects. If items are bundled together in a backpack or a sack, they’re usually too heavy to flick around. Some items are too unwieldy to be transferred in this way; your DM ultimately makes the call.

The hurler-snatcher is constructed to protect what it carries, even glassware, as long as the intended receiver can catch it. Objects break in transit only in a very small number of cases. Kobolds offer no warranties on items sent by way of a hurler-snatcher.
Flee! A kobold knows better than to fight against overwhelming odds. Sometimes the only way to win a fight is to escape and fight another day. When it’s time to retreat, a kobold leads the way to safety.

**Flee!**  
You lead your tribemates in a hasty retreat.  

**Kobold Utility 2**  
**Daily**  
**Move Action**  
**Close burst 2**  
**Effect:** Each ally in the burst gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses against opportunity attacks until the end of your next turn. You then shift up to your speed.

**Load Slingpot**  
Kobolds create special sling ammunition made of various substances stored in tiny clay pots. You have learned how to exercise this art through a bit of draconic magic. The magic is unpredictable, however, so you’re never sure which enchantment you’re going to get.

**Load Slingpot**  
You hurl a hastily enchanted projectile from your sling.  

**Kobold Utility 2**  
**Encounter**  
**Free Action**  
**Personal**  
**Requirement:** You must be wielding a sling.  
**Effect:** You load your sling with a random type of ammunition. The next time you hit with a ranged basic attack with this sling before the end of your next turn, it has one of the following additional effects. Roll a d6 to determine the ammunition type.

1-2 Stinkpot: The target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.
3-4 Firepot (Fire): The target takes ongoing 2 fire damage (save ends).
5-6 Gluepot: The target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

**Tunnel Scuttle**  
Living in the tight tunnels and unpredictable pathways of a dungeon taught you how to move quickly over precarious terrain. You can climb natural chimneys and fit through tiny spaces, and do it all quickly enough to get away from danger.

**Tunnel Scuttle**  
You scramble up walls and through narrow spaces with ease.  

**Kobold Utility 6**  
**Encounter**  
**Move Action**  
**Personal**  
**Effect:** You move up to your speed. During this movement, you have a climb speed equal to your speed, and can move at full speed while squeezing.

**Frantic Shift**  
Cold-blooded kobolds might not look like the quickest creatures, but they can spring about with surprising speed. They prize the ability to move safely and quickly.

**Frantic Shift**  
You hustle in and out of the fray quickly.  

**Kobold Utility 10**  
**Encounter (Special)**  
**Minor Action**  
**Personal**  
**Effect:** You shift 1 square.  
**Special:** The first time you are bloodied in an encounter, you regain the use of this power.

**Trap-Gang Method**  
When kobolds go searching in corridors they believe to be trapped, they work in teams. Working together increases the odds of survival, either because teammates can warn each other or because they can distribute the brunt of a triggered trap’s effects. Most big folk don’t go in for this sort of thing, so adventuring kobolds “recruit” enemies for the job.

**Trap-Gang Method**  
You treat an enemy like a trusted member of a kobold trap-gang team. That is, you shove it in front of the trap.  

**Kobold Utility 10**  
**At-Will**  
**Immediate Interrupt**  
**Special**  
**Trigger:** You are damaged by an attack from a trap or a hazard while a nonminion creature is adjacent to you.  
**Effect:** You take only half damage from the triggering attack, and one nonminion creature adjacent to you takes the other half.