

FAERÛN'S VENDORS

A flexible vendor system for magic consumables.



BY MAX UBBEN



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, Player's Handbook, Monster Manual, Dungeon Master's Guide, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

©2016 Wizards of the Coast LLC, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, USA. Manufactured by Hasbro SA, Rue Emile-Boéchat 31, 2800 Delémont, CH. Represented by Hasbro Europe, 4 The Square, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB11 1ET, UK.



INTRODUCTION

"Most magic items are so rare that they aren't available for purchase. [...] Doing so is rarely as simple as walking into a shop and selecting an item from a shelf."

– *Dungeon Master's Guide*, p. 135.

Besides some very spartan rules concerning selling and crafting there definitely is a lack of information about how to handle magic item availability. That means that a DM always runs the risk of making momentous decisions that unbalance the game.

This system is intended to be as flexible and versatile as possible. You can easily adjust any values given to perfectly fit your campaign!

5E's MAGIC ITEM PRICES

First of all: The RAW's price system has a lot of logical issues and in many points, it doesn't make sense at all. For example: *"There is no way that glue is worth 500,000 GP when a Sentinel shield is worth 500 GP."* (Quotation: Sane Magic Item Prices). There are actually a lot of examples like that and they have been discussed in several forum topics before. For this reason, I don't want to go too deep into this. This system refers to **Sane Magic Item Prices** (see link on last page), because it doesn't change the game's price meta in general. It somehow rearranges the prices of magic items in terms of usefulness and power, so you really get what you pay for. Please note: If you don't want to use *Sane Magic Items* – no problem! You can easily adjust all values of this system to fit your own price system. It won't take much time or effort!

ONLY MAGIC CONSUMABLES

Please keep in mind that this whole system only concerns consumables! This is because of two reasons: First, magic items other than consumables can be very game changing. So, the DM might want to hand them with great care to his players. Second, these items are even rarer than consumables because they are more expensive and more difficult to craft. For this reason, finding a specific item is

more than just visiting some shops – it requires a lot of effort to find the owner of such an item. My advice is to make these powerful and game changing items independent on any dice rolls. Because in contrast to not having a potion or a scroll available this could become really disappointing for players or quickly end up in unbalanced situations. All in all, this is definitely not what the 5E's item system intends. Instead, my advice is to find out what your players are looking for and make these items available through quest rewards. As an alternative, you could even give them hints about where they could possibly find a specific item and make a separate quest out of it.

To cut a long story short: You don't want your players to insist on a specific magic item (other than consumables), because a homebrew system or dice roll says so.

AVAILABILITY/NUMBER OF PIECES:

As the starting quotation of this post said *"most magic items are so rare that they aren't available for purchase."* Apart from that I didn't use a specific formula for determining the numbers. My main intention was to balance the availability of magic items – for example – to prevent your cleric from buying 10 *Scrolls of Bless*. Because that would be too powerful. But again: If you think of increasing or decreasing numbers, feel free to do so!

Common items

Keep in mind that whenever a table in this system declares "common items", only *magical* common items are meant. The list of non-magical common items the Player's Handbook states on page 150 is always available.

Healing potions

Finally, because healing is a big thing in D&D and really depends on the group setup, healing potions should always be ruled separately from this system by DM decision! I recommend just handing them to your players, if they need some.

THE CORE SYSTEM

Starting off the explanation, I want to emphasize that this system is very simple and easy to use. It contains three steps, of which the last one is optional:

- Step 1: Determining the total value of trade goods
- Step 2: Checking availability and stock numbers
- Step 3: Determining the buying time (optional)

I will explain these very detailed, so you know my intentions behind it. Please note:

Even if this reads long, these rules can be applied very quickly while running the game!

STEP 1: TOTAL VALUE OF TRADE GOODS

The total value of trade goods that is available at a specific place is represented by a total gold value that can be gathered from the chart below. For example, the total value of a town might be 1100 GP. This is the **maximum amount of gold the players can spend at this place** to buy magic consumables (regardless of rarity). It stays constant for a whole character level. So, if it is exhausted there are only non-magical items available for purchase until the group grants a new character level and the value resets. Please note that this value does *not* count for any individual character or a single vendor. Instead, it counts for *all* characters and *all* vendors of one place together!

Good and bad circumstances that may affect this are also considered by rolling a D4 and multiplying the result with the multiplier shown in the table (e.g. 1D4 x 100 GP). If you want to speed up the game, you can also use fixed values.

Intention: This value should prevent players from buying items unlimitedly. This is not based on any economy (because D&D has none). The priority lies on transparency and balancing the game!

STEP 2: AVAILABILITY OF A SPECIFIC ITEM

This step concerns the chance of a specific item being available at a certain place. It is presumed that not all items are available at all times. Instead, availability is mainly affected by the size of the place and the item's rarity. E.g. some items might be currently out of stock or there is simply no one crafting or trading them. All in all, that means that there is a higher chance to find a rare item in a town or city than in a small village. The chart below recommends chances and stock numbers for the different types of places.

Availability: The DM must check the availability of every specific item only once (e.g. if the players want to buy a *Scroll of Bless*). If an item is not in stock, the players can't buy it. But they could buy something else instead (including a different scroll of the same level). They also could try their luck at a different place or come back after they levelled up.

Chances: First of all, if the table doesn't state a specific percentage, items are available at 100%. In contrast, whenever there is only a chance of an item being available, the DM needs to determine, whether it is offered for purchase or not. To do so, roll a D20. For example: A 50% chance means that the item is available on a rolled 11 or higher. And a 5% chance is represented by a rolled 20.

Pieces in stock: If an item is available, players can buy the number of pieces listed below. It is intended that items are neither available in the same nor in unlimited amount. Instead, common items are easier to buy as well as they are available in higher numbers than uncommon or (very) rare ones. Also, certain circumstances could affect item availability. For example, a specific type of scrolls could be out of stock, because another group of adventurers just bought them some days ago.

Total value: If players buy items, the purchase value must be subtracted from the total value of the place. The residual amount can be spent until the characters reach a new level.

SYSTEM CHART

	Small Village	Large Village	Town	City
Total value (per level)	200 + (1d4 x 50 GP)	400 + (1d4 x 50 GP)	800 + (1d4 x 100 GP)	1000 + (1d4 x 200 GP)
Common	75% chance for 1 piece	1 piece	1d4 pieces	1d4 pieces
Uncommon	10% chance for 1 piece	25% chance for 1 piece	75% chance for 1d4 / 2 pieces (min. = 1)	1d4 - 1 pieces (min. = 1)
Rare	Not available	5% chance for 1 piece	25% chance for 1 piece	50% chance for 1d4 - 2 pieces (min. = 1)
Very Rare	Not available	Not available	10% chance for 1 piece	25% chance for 1 piece

DM Advice: If your players really need a specific number of items, feel free to hand it to them. Also, keep in mind that *Healing Potions* do not fall under these restrictions. Allocate them to your players based on the situation.

STEP 3: BUYING TIME (OPTIONAL)

Buying items takes time – a lot of time. Use this additional rule to make purchases of magic consumables more time dependent and to focus them on downtime activities. Again, magic items are not sold at every corner – not even common ones! The amount of time needed to buy magic items depends on three things:

- the item's rarity,
- the number of pieces the players want to buy
- and the size of the place.

For example: Players need to be extremely lucky to find a rare item in a large village, because there is only a small chance. However, due to the small size of the village little time will be needed to find the right vendor or ask around for an owner of such an item than in a big city. Keep that in mind. I considered the numbers of selling magic items stated in the *Dungeon Masters's Guide* on page 130, although I had to totally adjust them to fit larger quantities.

Intention: As you can see in the chart below, the amount of time needed increases under given circumstances. It is intended that buying magic items is not only a question of gold, but also of time! Characters should trade something for their magic consumables and time is a very expensive issue. That should prevent them from just writing down a list of things they want to buy and paying some gold. Instead, there might be situations, in which they just don't have enough time to get all they want, so they need to set priorities. This restriction is absolutely intended!

ESTIMATED POPULATIONS (OPTIONAL):

The following gives information about the four place categories. It is based on data I found on *Forgotten Realms Wiki*. I know that there is a big range of population in cities (going from 5.000 to 50.000 inhabitants). There are two reasons for that: Firstly, I didn't want to make it too difficult by using too many categories. My intention was to keep this simple. Secondly, I think that at a specific point characters won't be able to take further advantage from a larger place, because visiting any single shop in a metropolis is almost impossible. But feel free to add more categories, if this fits your idea better. Anyway, here is a small overview with examples to show my idea of the given terms. If you are interested in more information, you will find a link on the last page of this elaboration.

Small Village

This settlement has a very low population of up to 400. There is a fair chance of meeting more livestock than people in such a place.

Settlement Type: Small Village

Examples: Thorp, Hamlet

Large Village

This one is bigger. The population lies between 401 and 900 inhabitants. Nevertheless, you would never come up with the idea of calling this place a "town".

Settlement Type: Village

Examples: Red Larch, West Harbor

Town

This is the type of place where people no longer greeting each other on the street. Because of its population of 901 to 5000 life is anonymous.

Settlement Type: Small Town, large Town

Examples: Triboar, Llorkh, Daggerford, Highmoon

City

This category consists of places between 5001 and more than 25000 population. Regardless of what you are looking for –you will find it here!

Settlement Type: Small City, large City, Metropolis

Examples: Yartar, Mirabar, Neverwinter, Waterdeep, Athkatla, Baldur's Gate,

BUYING TIME

	Small Village	Large Village	Town	City
Common	A few hours	A few hours	1/2 day per item bought	1/2 day per item bought
Uncommon	1/2 day	1/2 day	1 day per item bought	1 day per item bought
Rare	Not available	1 day	1d8 days per item bought	1d8 days per item bought
Very Rare	Not available	Not available	1d10 days per item bought	1d10 days per item bought

HAGGLING (OPTIONAL)

If you feel that your players would like to take more advantage of their social skills or simply enjoy some price fluctuation while trading, you can use this optional rule for haggling.

Discount: To determine, if the group can get prices down, the character with the highest Charisma (Deception) or Charisma (Persuasion) score must make an ability check representing the whole group. The table below shows DCs based on item's rarity. On a successful check prices for that rarity are lowered by 5%. Furthermore, if the result exceeds the DC by more than +5/+10/+15, prices are lowered by additional 5% for each step. The amount of discount is capped at 20%. Please note, that haggling is always based on player's decision, but the DM decides, whether he asks for a single check for each transaction or only for one check for the whole purchase and place to maintain the game's speed.

For example: Vany the Bard has the best Charisma (Persuasion) score of her group that results in a total of 18. That means that the whole group gets +10% discount for *common* items and +5% discount for *uncommon* and *rare* items, whereas *very rare* items still cost the same. The intention behind this is that vendors will more likely give discount to common items than rare ones.

Markup: In contrast, failing the haggling check may also have negative consequences – e.g. because vendors are annoyed by the arrogance of the group. Therefore, if the group fails the haggling check by more than -5/-10/-15 prices increase by 5% for each step. This will add a bit more thrill to haggling and make it risky.

HAGGLING DC

Rarity	DC
Common	13
Uncommon	15
Rare	18
Very Rare	20

CONSEQUENCES

Deviation from DC	Discount	Markup
by 1 to 4	5%	0%
by 5 to 9	10%	5%
by 10 to 14	15%	10%
by 15 to 20	20%	15%

SELLING MAGIC ITEMS (OPTIONAL)

Mainly for the sake of completeness, I want to touch this quickly. Actually, the Dungeon Master's Guide (p. 129) offers some consistent rules for selling magic items including non-consumables. However, if you want to speed up gaming, my advice is to always sell magic items for half of their price and use the *Buying Time* chart on page 4 in addition to determine the time needed to find a buyer.

CREDITS & LINKS

GRAPHICS

I want to thank the following persons for supporting this elaboration:

Wouter Florusse alias Woutart: I used his awesome artwork "*Environment study 04 - Town market*" on page two. You can find it on [DeviantArt](#).

David Nguyen Chi alias Nightzoo: He allowed me to use his image "*Vendor of Dreams*". I embedded parts of it on this page. His complete image is actually really cool and I wished I could have used it as a whole. Unfortunately, it contains some items that are too modern to fit into a fantasy world. That's why I decided to use only a fragment of it. This image also can be found on [DeviantArt](#).

David Revoy from the Blender Foundation: He offers his artwork "*Environments-17-Ishtar-door*" and "*Environments-06-Ishtar*" for free usage on [Wikimedia Commons](#). I used these for the cover of this elaboration and on the bottom of page 4.

Mike Barltrop: He offers background textures for free usage. I used his "*Old Paper*" texture as my main background. You will find it on [DM Guild](#).

LINKS

Sane Magic Item Prices: This is the D&D 5E price list I am referring to. It also includes information about rarities. Great job, Saidoro! You can download it from [Giant in the Playground](#).

Estimated Populations: More information about settlements and population in Faerûn can be found on [Forgotten Realms Wiki](#).



APPENDIX A: PERS. ADJUSTMENTS



SYSTEM CHART

	Small Village	Large Village	Town	City
Total value (per level)				
Common				
Uncommon				
Rare				
Very Rare				

BUYING TIME

	Small Village	Large Village	Town	City
Common				
Uncommon				
Rare				
Very Rare				

APPENDIX B: NOTE SHEET



ADVENTURE

GROUP LEVEL

STARTING TIME

LOCATION	
TYPE	
TOTAL VALUE	
RESIDUAL	TIME

LOCATION	
TYPE	
TOTAL VALUE	
RESIDUAL	TIME

LOCATION	
TYPE	
TOTAL VALUE	
RESIDUAL	TIME

LOCATION	
TYPE	
TOTAL VALUE	
RESIDUAL	TIME

LOCATION	
TYPE	
TOTAL VALUE	
RESIDUAL	TIME

LOCATION	
TYPE	
TOTAL VALUE	
RESIDUAL	TIME

LOCATION	
TYPE	
TOTAL VALUE	
RESIDUAL	TIME

LOCATION	
TYPE	
TOTAL VALUE	
RESIDUAL	TIME