

## *Alchemy in Tamriel*

(Alchemy in Elder Scrolls is equivalent to Herb Lore in GURPS. Alchemy in GURPS has no ES equivalent. Thus, for details of Alchemy in the rulebooks, look under "H".)

All plants and animals in the world, being living beings, accumulate mana in some form. In many cases, the mana is incorporated into the lifeform as part of its essence.

Alchemy is the study of these essences, and specifically, how to extract them to create magical potions.

It is commonly held by knowledgeable alchemists that a specific essence can hold up to four distinct magical properties, although they are not all equally easy to identify and manipulate. Trivial properties are the easiest, followed by common, rare, and esoteric properties. Trivial properties are often known by good cooks with no training in alchemy, who may have inadvertently discovered them during their trade; trying to extract esoteric knowledge from master alchemists is like trying to extract blood from a stone (and indeed, some alchemists claim to be able to do just that).

The Alchemy skill has three main uses:

Method 1: Determine properties of an ingredient

Make a roll to determine the properties of an ingredient.

Success means you know a TRIVIAL properties. Success by 5 also provides a COMMON property, success by 10 also provides the RARE property, and success by 15 provides the ESOTERIC property.

Take a -2 penalty if the ingredient is not present, but you know the name, and a -4 penalty if you only have a description (in which case success also provides you with the name).

Method 2: Determine ingredients that can provide a specific property

Make a roll. Success provides you with the names of up to three ingredients for which that property is trivial.

Success by 5 provides you with the names of up to six ingredients for which that property is common.

Success by 10 provides you with the names of up to nine ingredients for which that property is rare.

Success by 10 provides you with the names of up to nine ingredients for which that property is esoteric.

Methods 1 and 2 initially describe what knowledge you've managed to pick up. Note down an ingredient (for method 1) or a property (for method 2) the first time you make a roll for it; that's your prior knowledge. Any further information must be gleaned from chewing the ingredient, which provides no bonus - just an extra try, and may release dangerous effects. Five samples are required, any fewer isn't enough to detect the magical effects.

Method 3: Create the potion

You need a mortar and pestle. Make a roll to determine whether you succeed. This potion will have all appropriate effects, whether you know about them or not.

With a calcinator, you may attempt to FORTIFY the potion. Make a roll; if you succeed, every effect is doubled in some way (duration, magnitude, or some other way that the GM feels appropriate).

With an alembic, you may attempt to DISTIL the potion, reducing certain effects - but only those effects you specify! You can't reduce effects you don't know about. Make a roll; if you succeed, the specified effect is effectively removed (it becomes "trace" in the nut-allergy sense of the word), unless you successfully used a calcinator, in which case the effect is reduced to its original level. Make separate attempts for each effect, trying the commonest effect first.

With a retort, you may attempt to CONDENSE the potion, enhancing certain effects - but only those effects you specify! You can't enhance effects you don't know about. Make a roll; if you succeed, each effect is doubled in some way. For any effect already enhanced with a calcinator, the original magnitude is tripled (rather than doubled). Again, make separate attempts for each effect, trying the commonest effect first.

The above order MUST be followed; trying to use an alembic after trying to use a retort (even if you failed) will ruin the potion.

Apprentice level apparatus allows you to attempt each stage in the process (brewing, fortification, distillation and condensing).

Each successive roll is harder than the previous one; creating the potion is a standard roll, but if you then decide to fortify the potion you're at -1. If you then try to condense two effects, you'll be at -2 and -3. There's no reason anybody would want to create a potion in more than six stages.

Journeyman, Master, and Grandmaster quality apparatus give a +1, +2 and +3 bonus to your skill at the appropriate stage.

Some comments to the aspiring alchemist:

A standard potion can be made by any novice with a mortar and pestle.

Said novice can also attempt to brew an enhanced potion if they have the apparatus; good glassware fits together, and is more or less idiot-proof.

However, beware creating potions beyond your skill to understand! You may have concocted an exceptionally long-lasting Potion of Waterbreathing, but in doing so, have you magnified the esoteric poison to a lethal dose?

Hubris has been the downfall of many an aspiring alchemist, though few of lasting fame.