

Grol

Land Data

Area: Approx. 3 million sq.mi. (1785 mi. East/West, 1688mi. North/South)

Population: Estimated 2.4 million, colonized humanoid races.

Highest Point: Hellfont Ridge, 17,253 ft. above sea level

Lowest Point: Coastline

History

Grol is a land of many hidden secrets and has been since the time of its discovery by outsiders. The land mass was virtually unknown until early in the 3rd age, when it was discovered by a shipping vessel blown off course after leaving Hollowyn. It is said that the ship tried to circle the landmass to see if there was a place to make port and get their bearings, when it ran into sandbars well off the shore. In the process of trying to get free, they sent a scouting party to shore to see if there was any sign of life, and life there was. When the shore bound party came face to face with the natives, there was nothing that could be done from the main ship; the crew watched on in horror as green skinned men decimated their mates. Needless to say, the moment the ship was loose of the sand bars they got out of there, though this would not be their last journey here. It took them almost two weeks past their scheduled time to make their intended port, where the crew's stories of this unknown savage land they found sparked a surge for those looking to claim uncharted land. Well, as the story goes according to the locals, many ships set out, but very few ever returned. Ask any seasoned soldier, trying to take foreign terrain filled with hostiles is an uphill battle. Not to mention that with few of these land-claimers brought an army with them; but not all of them were just killed off, and in time, a few cities would take root, most of which are still around today.

Grol is nowadays known for its single most impressive land feature, the Hellfont Volcano. While on expedition, I was able to get a meeting with an elder of the Ragemaw Orc clan. Orcs are likely the longest lived race native to the would be island, and their elders pass their history on to new generations. Elder Moss Speaker told me a fascinating story of the Hellfont's creation: He said it dated back to before the age turned, and that the volcano was once not very large. But then the skies and the oceans took form and brought war to the land. With the passing of each moon, the fury of the volcano grew and grew, as though it was angry about the intruders, and soon the fires of the volcano took form. They warred with the ocean and the sky, until almost all of the wilds were destroyed. "Then the day of reckoning came", he said, "that the volcano's fury surged, the ground rumbled and nature's fire came forth." Firerock and smoke poured forth from the mouth for two moons, but the people of the land were protected; once the darkness finally cleared, the volcano stood ten fold in size and the cooled stone that was expelled grew the island in all directions, further blessing the people. While this story of the volcano and the island's size seems rather far stretched, there could be a limit or truth in it, such that much of the land does have layers of volcanic rock deep below the jungle floors.

Indigenous Races

The island is home to a number of populations; though the vast majority of non-natives live inside of just a very few cities. The natives roam the land and seem to keep the wilds very wild and dangerous.

Orcs

They are all over the place and function in tribes; they are advanced in some departments, but not when it comes to interaction outside of their own race. They are very aggressive, and when not fighting with each other or Ogres, over land, they attack caravans that move inland for supplies.

Ogres

Big, dumb, and slow of wit -but man are they strong- they have been at war with the Orcs for as long as time remembered. It is not fully clear if they are at war with the Orcs for a reason, or if it is simply in response to the Orcs' aggression

Goblins

They are found across the entire island, some live in the cities to trade, but most live either in their own isolated tribes or cohabit with the ogres. This is beneficial to the goblins as not many things that are large enough to eat a goblin survive for very long when it is next to an ogre.

Terrain

The island is predominantly covered with a tropical jungle that has an enormous volcano at the center, its tall cone surrounds a crater that is massive by all standards, and it is frequently active with unpredictable eruptions. The island's cities for the most part remain isolated due to the dense jungles, aggressive natives, and dangerous but beautiful flora and fauna. For the most part, current civilization is limited to the large port city on the coast, with a single main road to the inland cities that traders and residents use. The jungles are also home to some rare plants and insects that don't seem to be found anywhere else. To the untrained eye, this island is a veritable paradise, beautiful and majestic. To the tradesmen, crafters, and philanthropists, it is a land of opportunity; to grow, to help, to share their knowledge, or turn a profit; but to the seasoned adventurer, this island is also fraught with peril and untold legends of riches of times past, if one can survive the dangers of the jungles, or what may lie beneath the island.

Hellfont Volcano

One of the largest, if not THE largest volcano in the known world. Its crater is massive, measuring some 100 miles across, and remains unpredictably active. It is located at the center of Grol and keeps the land warm even on the coldest of nights. It periodically erupts with gentle but relentless slow moving lava flows, as well as intermittent tremors throughout the land. It is also the source of several ancient legends and local lore.

Wildebelt Lake

This lake is located in between both Strongbank and Shadehedge. Its waters flux from warm to scalding in relation to the activity of the volcano and the nearby steam fields. When it is at its hottest and steam and vapors rise up from its waters, it is sometimes said that strange shapes can be seen dancing in the mists. Its name is derived from the fact that at night it takes on an even more mysterious and ominous nature, and can sometimes even glow with an eerie light.

Fallwald Spring

A natural spring fed reservoir surrounded by the Fallwald, (tr. The falling forest) It's waters are said to be so pure and sweet that one may survive off of a single drop for several days and feel restored. ("but then again, it is only water, right?") The water, however, is so clear that it is like looking through glass to the bottom to view the colors of even the tiniest pebbles.

The Coast Road

This is the main road that begins in Strongbank the island's one and only port city, and follows the coastline to smaller spur roads that lead to each of the other inland cities and towns. This is also the only known safe route to travel the island; while the journey is slow and takes time, the odds of being killed by the natives or the wildlife is very low.

The Steam Fields

The Fields lay in one of the only clear-ish areas of the jungle near the base of Hellfont Volcano, east of Whitemont. Here the ground is hot to the touch and small jets of steam or hot water shoot from vents periodically. There are even some scattered huts that have been built to act like steam bathhouses that can be reserved in the nearby city.

The Salt Flats

A large area on the north side of the island where large deposits of salt occur in an amazing variety due to ancient depositional processes in the past. So far, these seem to have an endless supply, as well as having the odd characteristic of different color salts having different flavors, and some are said to imbue the foods they are added to with special properties.

Towns

Grasswall

Grasswall is a unique city in that its buildings do not coincide with normal construction techniques. All of its structures were built to be camouflaged with the environment as well as made from an almost magically resistant material in the event of fire. There are tall grasses surrounding the city that are taller than most creatures, and a variety of animals make this place home. This town trades primarily in certain ground crops as well as small exotic pets.

Janhall

This city is the second largest, and one of the older established communities. The main trade and exports are ore, precious gems, and a variety of salts mined from nearby reservoirs carved

from the foothills of Hellfont. Their sources seem to be blessed or relatively always renewing as Hellfont releases unearthed solidified magma chambers during its many eruptions, which the villagers recover and extract the resources from within. The various salts and seasonings that are crafted are gathered from the salt flats, which can be found nearby. However, as with any resource gathering trade, there are constant harassments from the tribes of goblins for the gems, as well as the orcs from Redacre to the Northeast if one gets too close.

Redacre

The only city on Grol ruled and populated by an indigenous race, the orcs. Redacre was originally one of the earlier colonies and is still marked by its more rustic fort-like palisades. It was colonized and cultured quickly compared to the surrounding areas and drew the attention of the local tribes of Orcs. There are old tales that the city may have been built on one of their holy sites, but sadly, we'll never know what caused this to happen. This city was taken by force so suddenly and so violently that rivers of blood streamed from its walls to color the surrounding crop fields. It saturated the land so thoroughly that the soil retained an odor of rust, and a crimson hue that turns brilliant red in the setting sun even to this day.

Shadehedge

A city that is mostly human in population, and deals in the export of jungle fruit. Most of this city is surrounded by tall trees that grow so thickly and close together that they form a wall shielding the community from the harshest elements and casts a perpetual shadow on the inhabitants that live under its canopy. The trunks support a numerous variety of vines and flowers that also support the residents with an almost year-round source of rare fruits. Like many of the cities of Grol, there is only a small handful of people living outside the protective walls, as the surrounding jungle is dangerous. However, unlike the other cities, this one is built predominantly within the canopy itself using the thick hedge as the city and the protective wall all at once. Just a bit of advice though, one should definitely stay away from the Konlobos fruit, or you'll probably regret it in the morning. No matter HOW hard they try to get you to take a free sample, don't. Trust me.

Strongbank

This is the major port city for Grol and has a huge population. The main industry for this city is fishing, while also serving as the central hub for the island to receive trade goods from the rest of the world due to its expansive dock and peaceful coastal harbors. This is also the main access point to travel the Island's coast road to visit the other inland cities. However, locals gossip that in recent days the population of Strongbank has been thinning out at an alarming rate for some unknown reason.

Whitemont

This city is located on a prominent rise in the land near the base of Hellfont. But unlike the rest of the land in this region, the ground and rock is almost a pure white. Legend has it that Whitemont is built on the back of what used to be a giant sea creature. The creature was captured and eaten during the birth of Hellfont, in the depths of the surrounding waters. So as Hellfont grew, the creature was raised out of the water to what is now visible as the Whitemont

plateau and it bows to serve Hellfont for all eternity. It is said that the tremors we feel every day are the creature still struggling to escape. Well at least until the island gets destroyed....who knows? Really I just think it's magic, or the site of an odd mineral deposit, or an intersection of some unknown nexus....or...well., I'll leave it to your imagination.

Important notes for traveling to the region

- Adventure alone at your own risk unless within a safely reinforced city
- When out in the wilds always remember your buddy, two if you need a spare, (well just in case of traps, beasties or what have you...just kidding, but not really, it's dangerous out there!)
- Sailors ALWAYS love to tell stories, and they get better with more drinking or more mysterious and ominous with more money.
- Shifting terrain—Hellfont eruptions can cause the formation of new features or changes to existing ones almost overnight.
- Treacherous waters—Visually it seems that there are more numerous coves that would allow safe landing in their harbors, however, below the waves are hidden numerous dangers, be it the home of a band of mermaids or sirens bent on devouring a crew, large creatures, misleading fae, remnants of ancient shoreline cities or simply jagged rocks and whirlpools. But whatever the reason, Stongbank remains as the only safe harbor that is easy to access for trade, travel or casual recreation.

Additional Notable (colorful) Local Lore/Legends

- Hellfont Volcano is really the home and resultant effects of when a legendary class of fire and earth elementals peacefully joined. This is the reason that all of the eruptions are gentle in nature. If they had been forcefully combined then those eruptions would have been so massively destructive in nature that nothing would have been able to live here....Pray that they stay amiable toward each other.
- In addition to the Orcs, Ogres and Goblins roaming the jungles, there are (“supposedly”) local sightings of fantastical beasts of lore. These creatures seem to be reclusive and extremely adept at evasion No proof yet...so it really leans toward the category of old wives tales and doesn't stop the locals from trying to find evidence. However, many who adventure off to search for these creatures is rarely seen from again, there are only a few still left in town, if you really want you might be able to convince them to spin a tale or two about their experience if you offer them a drink at the tavern.
- Pirates! ...Yarr! There be legends of pirates and legends of adventure and buried treasure, but aren't there always? There are however, myriads of caves under the water that run underneath Grol. These cave systems can sometimes be reached at low tide from the coast or at other surface caves around the island or at the base of Hellfont. Beware, as entrances are always guarded well by unknown creatures, the indigenous races, or by the elements themselves. You might want to do your research before you just go gallivanting off to find treasure from any ole' map.
- There are always more tales, legends and local lore to be discovered as you travel

across Grol. The sources of information are not always clear cut and may be gleaned from anywhere, especially from where you least expect it.