

Los Mapaches (Mapachi)

Mapachi Overview

Mapachi are small, raccoon-like humanoids with expressive faces, clever eyes, and ringed tails. Covered in soft fur ranging from gray to dark brown, they often sport markings that resemble natural masks, giving them a perpetually mischievous appearance. Their hands are highly dexterous, enabling them to manipulate tools, trinkets, and locks with ease.

Culturally, Mapachi value freedom, exploration, and the joy of discovery over material wealth or rigid societal rules. While many societies view them as tricksters or petty thieves, those who take the time to understand Mapachi realize that their “borrowed” items are usually returned eventually and that their inquisitiveness often leads to unexpected solutions and discoveries.

Mapachi have an uncanny talent for survival, adaptation, and getting into (and out of) trouble. They often travel alone or in loose-knit bands, scavenging, exploring, and documenting oddities they encounter.



Mapachi History

The origins of the Mapachi to themselves are shrouded in legend and obscured by their own ever-changing oral traditions. There is no single creation myth; instead, countless tales circulate among Mapachi clans and burrows, each with a different spin, depending on who's telling it.

In reality Mapachi are Raccoons that suffered rapid and painful evolution that started before the end. Animal experimentation in a lab trying to cure rabies. Raccoons are extremely prone to rabies and in the 20th century almost 40% of wild Raccoons tested positive for the virus. Not all were affected but they all were carriers. Lab experiments to eradicate the virus were not successful so they started to focus on genetic treatment to see if immunity or resistance could be created in the animals to reduce the number of hosts and the spread of the disease. Such experiments were common on other animals and insects for population control and disease

control and new advances in gene therapy and genetic manipulation gave the team of researchers new hope they could find a solution to at least minimize the spread. Years of experiments led to a midwestern laboratory being created that encompassed 1000 acres of wilderness to contain and test the effectiveness of the treatments by giving the animals a natural habitat and being able to expose them to other wild animals in a controlled manner. In 2011 a large research grant was given to the lab if they were to try more advanced experimentation and guidance from DARPA. From this point on the lab no longer published review articles in major publications and had the research under wraps due to the secrecy laws and agreements that came with the funding.

Many of the Veterinarians and scientists had the goal of eradication of the disease or at least increasing resistance so that the animal hosts could fight the infection off themselves, they never questioned the processes they were applying to these animals. Testing went well for the first two years and they made great strides. The third generation of the test subjects were incredibly resistant to Rabies but still had a high fatality rate along with an increase in hiding symptoms until too late and spreading it to others. They had a tragedy and lost 90% of the raccoon population and even other animals were wiped out with contracting Rabies. They felt they had a huge setback but tested the surviving subjects. They all were immune but had a form of cognitive degeneration. Their behaviors changed, one researcher's report noted, "it's almost as if they are contemplating, thinking about their next move. They don't just scurry for the food at the mere sight of it. They wait. Strangely it almost seems like they are waiting for us to leave." The colony of remaining Raccoons survived and actually started to breed but differently. They were forming pair bond behavior that was never seen before. More research was to continue until the world burst into madness. The reports of the meteor that was to hit, the wars, the unrest, most of the staff left to be with families, funding dried up and the facility closed. Everyone forgot about the Raccoons that lived in the 1000 acre of woods.

Time went on and every generation changed. Intelligence increased every generation, they started making and using basic tools, the squeaks and growls became less random and organized into patterns. The protected woods surrounded by the fences had enough natural resources to keep them fed and it kept natural predators out. The 12 meter high concrete walls that had all trees cut back 50 meters did not allow for any animals to go in or out of the area, only birds could come in and leave freely. They lived in peace all alone. Decades came and went, the skies darkened and they hid. The snows came and did not leave for a generation. And they changed. Being forced to live close quarters created more of a community sense in them, the generations born during this time accepted being around a lot of others as normal life. When the sun came back and the warm rains returned the forest came back to life and flourished. They were very different now and explored the forest, and found danger.

One of the walls fell. During the long cold night something strange knocked down a wall. It was large and made of metal nobody had ever seen before. What was more troubling was the strange smell. It stirred a primal fear even though nobody knew what it was. Loud chittering came from one of them pointing at a huge paw print in the mud. They ran home as fast as they possibly could with the fear growing fast they never noticed the wolf that leapt from the treeline and grabbed one of them. It was huge, larger than 10 of them together. The cries of the one in

the jaws of the beast only caused the fear to increase and they scattered. Up the trees , into the brush.. Just get away... get away from the monster. That's when the howling started, it cut through the air like a sharpened stick. More of them! Must warn the others!

Generations of them never had to deal with a predator, the wolves killed a very large number of the population that survived. The ones that evaded the wolves did so by hiding in the underground burrows.

After the Exodus

After they escaped the 1000 acres, Mapachi lived in dense forests, ruins, and abandoned cities anywhere rich with hidden nooks and forgotten treasures. They never established formal societies, preferring mobile, family-based groups called **burrows**, which operate much like traveling gypsies or communal scavenger clans. Each burrow has a unique set of traditions, often centered around storytelling, craftsmanship, or some strange obsession (like collecting buttons, bolts, screws, broken items, or mirrors).

Over time, some Mapachi investigated human villages and towns, lured by the smells and what seems to be never ending fascinating things these humans have. Their talents with simple locks and latches, spotting traps, and being able to travel or even cross unseen and unnoticed made them natural smugglers, fixers, and thieves. Though often thought of as creatures of the night or monsters, their abilities are undeniable and some humans noticed this and attempt to employ them to do their dirty work under the cover of night.

Despite their scattered and somewhat chaotic presence in the world, the Mapachi are bound by a strong sense of identity. They celebrate cleverness, honor cunning over brute strength, and pass down oral histories through “memory hoards” personal collections of strange objects that hold stories only their owners understand. Every item, no matter how small, has meaning to a Mapachi.

Today, they can be found in many corners of the country, often mistaken for common wildlife until their quirks reveal otherwise. Whether you're rifling through ruins, navigating from town to town, or trying to figure out where something you just had went, chances are a Mapachi is nearby... probably proud of themselves and smiling.

Mapachi Traits

Abilities

At their Base Mapachi are Smarter than expected, extremely Agile and fast. Assume smart as an average 8 year old child. But they can be taught and learn repeatable tasks quickly.

Age.

Mapachi mature quickly and live only 15-25 years. They reach adulthood by the age of 2. Assume they mature at the rate of 1 human year per month until adulthood. In those 2 years their brains are like sponges sucking up all knowledge and are curious about everything to an extreme level.

Most Mapachi lean chaotic in nature due to their curiosity and disregard for social rules. They aren't inherently evil, just mischievous and extremely curious about everything. They are motivated by emotion and even their memory operates that way. They remember things based on the emotion it evokes and will be coupled to objects for memories and emotion.

Size.

Mapachi stand 0.7 to 1.2 meters tall and weigh around 10-22 kilograms. Baby Mapachi are the size of a kitten but grow rapidly. Their claws and teeth are extremely needle sharp and they chew on absolutely everything for the first 2 months of their life including friendly people.

Speed.

They can travel 5 meters per turn walking and 15 meters per turn running. They find humans to be slow and lumbering. They can climb at 75% of their ground speed while carrying gear. If they put the gear down they have no speed penalties for climbing.

Features

Nimble Scavenger.

They can move through the space of any creature rapidly. In addition, they have a +15 advantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks made to "find" (or liberate) small unattended objects or to place an object.

Shiny Instinct.

They have proficiency in either Investigation or Perception at +15. In addition, when they make an Awareness(AWA)or Focus(FOC) check to locate hidden or interesting objects, They have a talent that can double that once per rest. Must roll at least a success to successfully activate this talent. It is a low level so they take no ill effects but can not use it again until they have rested well.

Night Forager.

Mapachi have the equivalent of Gen2 Night vision and have a +20 to see at night. They are accustomed to the nighttime world and can see in dim light as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. They have only Black and White vision in darkness. They can not see in total darkness, some light is required. Being hit in the face with a flashlight beam at night will blind them for 10-15 seconds.(3-5 combat turns) just like a human would suffer from.

Sticky Fingers.

+10 to all dexterity checks and concealing that they are stealing an item

Optional Quirk Table (d6)

Mapachi are delightfully odd. If you want some flavor, roll or choose:

1. It keeps everything that shines, no matter how useless.
2. It will talk to inanimate objects, especially tools or shiny items.
3. It believes anyone who sees their "collection" will try to steal it.
4. It will eat with both hands and never use utensils.
5. It has a fascination with the morrow project symbol.
6. IT will "borrow" one small item from each new friend it makes (to remember them by, of course).

Mapachi Cultural Guide

"What's life without a little mess, mystery, and a map you drew yourself?"

Burrow Life and Social Structure

Mapachi gather in **burrows**, small communal groups of extended family, close friends, and adopted oddballs. A burrow may range from a half-dozen to a few dozen individuals, often centered around a shared home base like abandoned buildings, a hidden cave, or the attic of an unsuspecting human.

Key aspects of burrow life:

- **The Nestkeeper:** Not a leader in the traditional sense, the Nestkeeper is the Mapachi who knows where *everything* is. They maintain the group's hoard and often act as a storyteller, arbitrator, and occasional parent figure.
- **Burrow Names:** Each burrow takes a name that reflects their character or origin, such as *Burrow of the Moon-Nibblers*, *Burrow Beneath the Rusted Bell*, or *The Soggy Quilt Society*.
- **No True Hierarchy:** Roles in a burrow are fluid. Someone might be the trapfinder one week and the cook the next, depending on need and whim.

Burrows are usually fiercely loyal but rarely possessive. Individuals come and go, wander off for years, then return as if no time has passed at all.

Values and Beliefs

Mapachi value **curiosity**, **cleverness**, and **empathy**, though the latter is often expressed in... chaotic ways.

Core Values:

- **"Humans are dangerous"**
Most have had nothing but negative experiences with humans. Being killed, trapped, exterminated as vermin by humans they do what they can to avoid being detected by a human. They do understand humans have interesting things to take and are a source of food, humans are very wasteful, just don't let them catch you.
- **"If it glitters, it matters."**
They believe everything has a story even buttons, bones, and bottlecaps. Objects are

not owned, merely cared for, and occasionally *re-cared for* by someone else.

- **"Better sorry than boring."**
Taking risks, sneaking into places they are not supposed to be, Learning by accident is just as noble as studying.
- **"Never forget where you left your story."**
Every Mapachi keeps a **memory hoard** a private (or semi-private) collection of objects, each with a personal story attached. These hoards are not meant for profit, but remembrance. A Mapachi sharing their hoard is a gesture of deep trust.

Mapachi Language Guide

"Why use one word when you can use three, a squeak, a tail twitch, and a dramatic pause?"

Spoken Language

Sounds like a series of squeaks, growls, chirps, and clicks. Can learn very basic broken english or spanish with extended exposure to humans and training. Some Mapachi that have learned to trade with humans have learned vocabularies of 20 to 40 words and can carry on simple conversations.

Humans can try to learn Mapachi language but will find it extremely difficult as their understanding of concepts is strange. Conversations are almost songlike with a blend of rapid-fire phrases, alliteration, made-up words, and the occasional chittering laugh or onomatopoeia. They love wordplay, rhyming insults, and puns (even bad ones).

Spoken Traits

- Fast-paced, full of tangents and analogies.
 - Frequent use of human sound words ("clicky," "twang," "clink").
 - Use of nicknames or object references in place of people's names.
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Gesture Language

Mapachi naturally use **gestures**, **tail movements**, and **ear twitches** as part of their communication especially when stealth or silence is needed. These gestures are as nuanced as speech and are often used in combination with facial expressions or soft vocal cues. They know that making sounds is dangerous so silence is safety.

Common Gestures




| Gesture | Meaning |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Tail curl clockwise | All clear, proceed. |
| Tail flick to the left | Something suspicious is nearby. |
| Rapid finger tapping (3x) | Look at this! |
| Ears flat back | I'm nervous or hiding something. |
| Quick chitter followed by silence | Play along, I'm making this up. |
| Open paw over heart | I trust you. (Also used in romantic gestures.) |

These gestures can be used across distances if both Mapachi know each other well, often forming the basis of **silent conversations** during heists, pranks, or negotiations.

Burrow Code

Mapachi also use **glyphs**, **markings**, and **pictographic symbols** to communicate in secret. These are drawn with charcoal, sharp objects, claw-marks, or colored thread and are typically left near doorways, hidden caches, trees, rocks, walls, basically nearly any surface. They are rarely left high up unless they have to climb to access what they are marking. The markings typically are at ground level to a half meter up and are small. Most humans never notice them..

Common Symbols

| Symbol | Meaning |
|---|--|
|  (spiral) | Entrance nearby or tunnel access. |
|  (circle with dot) | Safe place to sleep or stash items. |
|  (triangle) | Danger close traps, guards, or cursed objects. |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| ☘ (stylized leaf) | Friendly territory or Mapachi welcome. |
| ✚ (crossed lines) | Mapachi passed through here recently. |
| ◉ (eye with a tail) | You are seen here / use caution. |
| ⇒ (arrows in circle) | Trade spot |
| ⌘ (interlinked circles) | Food here. |

DMs can use these symbols as clues in dungeons or cities where Mapachi have left signs behind. Players trained in Mapachi culture can interpret them reliably..

Sounds and Singing

Mapachi use **singsong phrases**, especially when traveling or working together:

- Whispered rhymes for navigation:
*“Left at the lantern, right by the rat,
Down through the tunnel with the squeaky mat.”*
- Call-and-response games to identify each other:
 - “What’s the jingle?”
 - “The one in my pouch!”

They often hum quietly when alone and feeling safe, especially when sneaking or focusing usually short, looping melodies based on old burrow songs.

Mapachi Technology Guide

Tech Philosophy: Patchwork Ingenuity

They do not have forges but they know how to use found items. They can carve wood with a knife, drill holes with a stick, they know about and can use fire. Some of the smarter and more curious tinkering types are fascinated with humans and watch them intently from the shadows trying to mimic what they do, sometimes learning a new skill. They do learn how things work from taking them apart. A multitool would be a holy grail item to a Mapachi tinkerer.

They understand security and at one time came up with their own Dakota hole for a fire pit and know how to make fire with a friction stick and bow. They do not like sleeping in the rain and if they can not find shelter will make it with what they can find or use a tarp they are carrying to make a simple tent. They also understand that carrying water and food is important on a journey. Assume they have basic nomadic tribe capabilities for living outside. They will set alarm traps around their campsite. Ever run into a old rusty can that a piece of twine was tied to that you kicked in the woods that had a rock or two in it? That was probably a Mapachi alarm.

Assume they have the maximum mental capacity of a 10 year old child.

They value:

- **Mobility** – useful things that can fold, roll, or hang from belts.
- **Utility** – Items with more than one purpose.
- **Surprise** – Mechanisms that can confuse or distract enemies.

Their work often resembles steampunk-lite crossed with backyard engineering. They can make cordage and understand simple things like a sling or even a bow and can make them. Many Mapachi will carry a small string bow for starting a fire.

Burrow Tech

- **Hidden passageways and hidden storage** that hide memory hoards, food, stolen items, or escape tunnels.
- **Silent alarm systems** using random items to make noise to alert others
- **Rope elevators** to lower treasures into underground caches via ropes and pulleys.
- **Scent lockers** to hide food from predators (or each other) by using strong smelling local weeds or other materials. Foul smelling bog mud to seal the edges so air movement is contained and masks the smell.

Written by To Morrows end at www.tomorrowsend.org

Burrow tech prioritizes secrecy and security over durability or appearance.