

A Short Character Guide (for BG)

This guide on char-building in BG addresses two groups of people:

- 1) Experienced BG-gamers who want to enjoy BG one more time and are looking for some hints on how to create a very powerful char either for soloing or group play
- 2) Newcomers to BG who just trust me and want to enjoy the game with a powerful char

It's a very short guide, but full of experience and valuable pieces of information concerning BG. Go along and enjoy.

Abbreviations

BG: BGee and BGee2, the whole Baldur's Gate Enhanced Edition series

MMORG: Massive Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Game (f. e. World of Warcraft)

DD: Damage Dealer; a char who does massive damage

DR: Damage Reduction

AC: Armor Class

HP: Hit points

IWDee: Icewind Dale Enhanced Edition

Berserker/Mage (Dual): Fighter/Mage (Dual)

Kensai/Thief (Dual): Fighter/Thief (Dual)

Swashbuckler/Mage (Dual): Thief/Mage (Dual)

Knight: Paladin

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Typology

In MMORGs (BG is not one) you need Damage Dealers (DDs), tanks and healers to form a sufficient group. I'm going to use this typology on BG because most gamers will know and understand.

A BG-inherent typology (AD&D 2nd edition also used in IWDee) would be Fighter, Thief, Mage, Cleric, Druid. However, these categories are insufficient when it comes to describing efficient char-building in BG. Therefore I go with the MMORG typology modified and enriched by personal empirical long-time BG-studies.

DDs use to deal a lot of damage. Tanks can bear a lot of damage, they are like a fortress. Healers usually heal and buff.

In BG you don't need healers, though they might soften gameplay in a group. It is quite possible to get along with healing potions and items that grant regeneration such as Ring of Gaxx, Ring of Regeneration (2x), Pearly White Ioun Stone, Dragon Slayer, Blackrazor, Foebane +5 (Larlochs Minor Drain), Axe of Unyielding, Wong Fei's Ioun Stone, CON 20+, Cernd's Staff and Hexxat's vampiric ability to regenerate. It is possible to build a group of 6 chars where every char regenerates. Since healers are not substantially needed the only two types left to discuss are DDs and tanks.

DDs and tanks

Every efficient char-build in BG is either a DD or a tank or both of it.

DDs deal damage in various ways: melee, missile, magic and traps. Traps are very powerful, but if you like smooth gameplay you will need a char that can deal a lot of melee and/or magical damage. Thus, all DDs can be split into two groups:

- 1) The Killers
- 2) The Mages

1) The Killers

The Killers combine various ways of damage-dealing in order to rush through the game. Some of them deal damage in every possible way, that means melee, missile, magic and traps. All of them can focus on melee damage, if needed.

2) The Mages

The Mages primarily use magic to deal damage.

Furthermore, there are the tanks. A good criteria for an efficient tank is „Can it stand in front of a hasted dragon for more than a minute (with healing potions and/or buffs)?“

Certain char-builds are both killers and tanks (f.e. the Berserker/Mage). In this case the char is added to „the killers“-category since it's the more powerful category.

To sum up, we have three types now to describe efficient char-building in BG.

- 1) The Killers
- 2) The Mages
- 3) The Tanks

There are just a few chars that don't fit in any of these categories, f.e. the druid. Every character that can be soloed, however, fits in one of these categories. When soloing you have to take a char that includes a fighter, thief or mage class. Pure druids and clerics can't solo. The Youtube-Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFH12kJFI20> is not up to date, because in the actual BG the pain spell has to overcome magic resistance.

Discussing the types

1) The Killers

The most powerful category I would call the killers. They are most versatile, well-rounded and very flexibel.

Among the killers are:

Berserker/Mage (Dual), Fighter/Mage/Thief (Multi), Thief/Mage (Multi), Fighter/Mage (Multi), Fighter/Thief (Multi), Kensai/Thief (Dual), Swashbuckler, Blade, Fighter/Mage/Cleric (Multi), Swashbuckler/Mage (Dual), Mage/Fighter (Dual).

Whenever I mention a dual class char-build like „Berserker/Mage (Dual)“ every Fighter/Mage (Dual) class is included. I choose this usage of language to point out the strongest char-build among the respective dual class. Furthermore, I don't discuss pure fighters with exception to some outstanding tanks. Of course, fighters are good DDs and almost every fighter can also be a sufficient tank, but pure fighters are not really versatile and can't compete with any of the classes listed above. With exception to the swashbuckler all pure thieves are bad in melee and can't compete with dual and multi-class thieves.

2) The Mages

Pure mage classes can't compete with their dual and multi combinations (with exception to the Dragon Disciple and the Sorcerer and, vice versa, the Cleric/Mage (Multi) being less powerful). Thus, there are only four classes in this type worth being mentioned here:

- 1) Dragon Disciple
- 2) Sorcerer
- 3) Cleric/Mage (Dual)
- 4) Cleric/Mage (Multi)

The Cleric/Mage (Dual) is better than a pure mage class, but can't compete with the Dragon Disciple and the Sorcerer. Considering gameplay, it's the defensive version of the Swashbuckler/Mage (Dual), whereas the Berserker/Mage (Dual) combines both offensive and defensive capabilities.

The Cleric/Mage (Multi) class seems less powerful than a pure mage class due to its lesser amount of high lvl mage spells. However, it has got a big amount of spells and if you like to combine fast spell casting with cleric spells this might be a good choice.

3) Tanks

The best tanks are Dwarven Defender, Fighter/Cleric (Multi) and Cleric/Ranger (Multi). Further options are Knight, Ranger and Barbarian. If you like a funky char-build you might consider the Cleric/Thief (Multi). It can get the highest AC among the tanks, use every item and set traps. It lacks sufficient melee damage, though.

All tanks should use Defender of Easthaven, Ronarchs Horn and Belt of Inertial Barrier for massive damage reduction. Furthermore, clerics, paladins and rangers should use the Lvl 1 Spell Armor of Faith and every fighter class should use Hardiness as a high Lvl ability.

The Dwarven Defender IS the legendary fortress he's supposed to be. Also enjoyable in IWDee. Fighter/Cleric (Multi), Cleric/Ranger (Multi) and Cleric/Thief (Multi) can get AC - 24 and massive damage reduction with the right equipment and buffs though I would

recommend to trade in AC for some spell and elemental resistances gained by items like Shield of Harmony, Ring of Fire Control, Batalista's Passport and Cloak of Reflection.

If you want to solo don't take the Fighter/Cleric (Dual), because he can't overcome some bosses in the end game and won't succeed in the final fight. About soloing the Ranger/Cleric (Dual) I don't know. It will be very difficult if not impossible to win the final fight.

Further points

These categories are my result for BG. To my mind they are the best categories for BG, but they are not perfectly exact.

For example, every X/Mage (Dual) class is the best short-time tank in the game due to the overwhelmingly powerful defensive magic of the mage class. A swashbuckler is both a DD and a tank due to its high AC (can get AC -24 if you like to). A Dwarven Defender or a Fighter/Cleric (Multi) can also deal a lot of damage if it likes to (by using whirlwind attack) thus being a short-time damage-dealer. A druid, as mentioned earlier, does not fit in any of these categories because it's too weak for any high-power BG gameplay. It can be a likable group char though. If you like summoners go along with Cernd and the elemental lords in the end game.

Equipment and high lvl combat tactics

First of all, all chars should use the most valuable ring in the game: Ring of Gaxx.

Furthermore:

DDs need to use equipment that helps them to deal a lot of damage in a short period of time. Tanks need equipment that provides them with DR.

1) Killers do damage with melee/missile weapons, with magic/scrolls and with traps.

There are four weapons in BG that grant you +1 extra attack/round: Scimitar Belm +2, Ninjato Scarlet Brotherhood +3 (can't backstab), Boomerang Dagger +2, Fire Tooth Dagger +3.

A Kensai Lvl7/Thief f.e. should go with Fire Tooth Dagger +3 and Belm +2 in Off-Hand, so it gets 5 attacks/round, and 10 attacks/round with Improved Haste. For this no whirlwind attacks are needed. By combining these 10 attacks/round with Time Trap and Assassination one can kill 5 (Elite) Fire Giants within a few seconds.

Furthermore most of the killers should use Vhailors Helmet plus Time Stop scrolls, Black Blade of Disaster scrolls and Improved Haste scrolls to create a powerful Similaricum that acts as a killer out of time. With this combination one can overcome easily any enemy that is not immune to time stop. For the few enemies that are immune to time stop any thief and bard class can use Spike Traps. Learn Use Any Item first, then Assassination (if possible) and then Spike Trap and Time Trap many times.

2) Mages need Vecnas Robe and the Amulett of Power for fast Spell Casting. Combine this with Time Stop, Improved Acceleration, Skull Trap and Horrid Wilting and you will kill any enemy including the final boss within a short period of time. In some cases you first need to

overcome the enemy's magic resistance with the respective Lvl5, Lvl6 or Lvl8 decrease magic resistance spells. To work with this combination many times use Projected Image which then casts Time Stop, Improved Acceleration and there you go. It's a mage that acts out of time many times a day. To further increase your „mana pool“ learn Wish and let your Projected Image cast Wish spells at the end of each casting series. With every Wish spell there's the possibility to get the option „party has rested whole night“ which means you regenerate all spells. You need Wisdom 18+ for the Wish spell to work properly. It is due to all of this that the dragon disciple and the sorcerer are the most powerful mages since they don't need to memorize spells thus your Projected Image has a much bigger amount of actual spells available than any memorizer can have. To my mind only the Berserker/Mage is more powerful since it also rushes easily through any combat being able to fully protect itself, acting out of time with 10 attacks/round and being able to get 500+ HP with Tenser and Foebane +5 (Larloch's Minor Drain when hitting).

In the whole BG series there's only one creature that is absolutely immune to all magic and this is the demi lich. A mage can kill it with Mordenkainen's Swords in the middle game and/or the Black Blade of Disaster combined with Improved Haste, Time Stop and Tenser in the end game. Even as a mage you can use Fire Tooth Dagger +3 and some other Dagger in Off-Hand for 6 attacks/round with Improved Haste. Combine this with Time Stop and Tenser and a mage kills every pure fighter in melee (except the powerful tanks discussed in this guide, perhaps).

Both killers and mages (all DDs) should use the Staff of the Magi. Killers will kill any enemy mage that uses defensive magic within a few seconds with exception to enemies that are protected by „Protection from Magical Weapons“.

The bomb: „The bomb“ is a powerful combat tactic. Combine Spell Sequencer with 3 Skull Traps to devastate and kill most enemy groups and even some powerful bosses within a second.

3) Tanks should always use Defender of Easthaven and Ronarch's Horn, so they get 70% DR versus crushing and 20% DR vs. all other melee weapons. In addition to this, the Belt of Inertial Barrier grants you 25% DR vs. missile and 50% DR vs. magical damage. The Cloak of Mirrowing totally protects from magical damage, but as far as I know it does not protect from dragon breaths and elemental damage other than magical. Therefore, I would recommend to use the Belt of Inertial Barrier, the Ring of Fire Control plus the Cloak of Reflection since this combination provides you with sufficient protection from most of the elemental and magical damage.

For combat tactics use Armor of Faith and Hardiness if available for your char-build.

The dwarven defender can easily stand in front of any enemy including the most powerful bosses for almost as long as you wish. It can get 90% DR against slashing and piercing, 95% against missile, 100% against crushing and 50% against magic damage. By using Ring of Fire Control, Shuruppak's Plate, the Darksteel Shield and the Cloak of Reflection one also gets 100% DR against Fire and 100% against electricity. 100% vs poison + regeneration by Ring of Gaxx. With this combination the only thing that's a real threat to a dwarven defender is being imprisoned by elder orbs.

The most powerful characters

This is a list of the most powerful char builds:

- 1) Berserker/Mage (Dual)
- 2) Dragon Disciple
- 3) Sorcerer
- 4) Fighter/Mage/Thief (Multi)
- 5) Thief/Mage (Multi)
- 6) Fighter/Mage (Multi)
- 7) Fighter/Thief (Multi)
- 8) Kensai/Thief (Dual)
- 9) Swashbuckler
- 10) Blade
- 11) Fighter/Mage/Cleric (Multi)

Less powerful options one might fancy:

- 12) Swashbuckler/Mage (Dual)
- 13) Cleric/Mage (Dual)
- 14) Mage/Fighter (Dual)
- 15) Cleric/Mage (Multi)

If you want to solo don't take cleric or druid single or main class because they will fail.

For relaxed group play go along with 1 tank (or 1 killer capable of short-time tanking) + missile damage dealers (all NPCs can learn missile weapons thus in combat you only need to concentrate on your tank which can be very relaxing and quite efficient). In this case use standard attack as a script and buffs + offensive magic only against powerful enemies.

Goodbye

With these pieces of information I leave you with best wishes.

Farewell, dear BG-gamer.