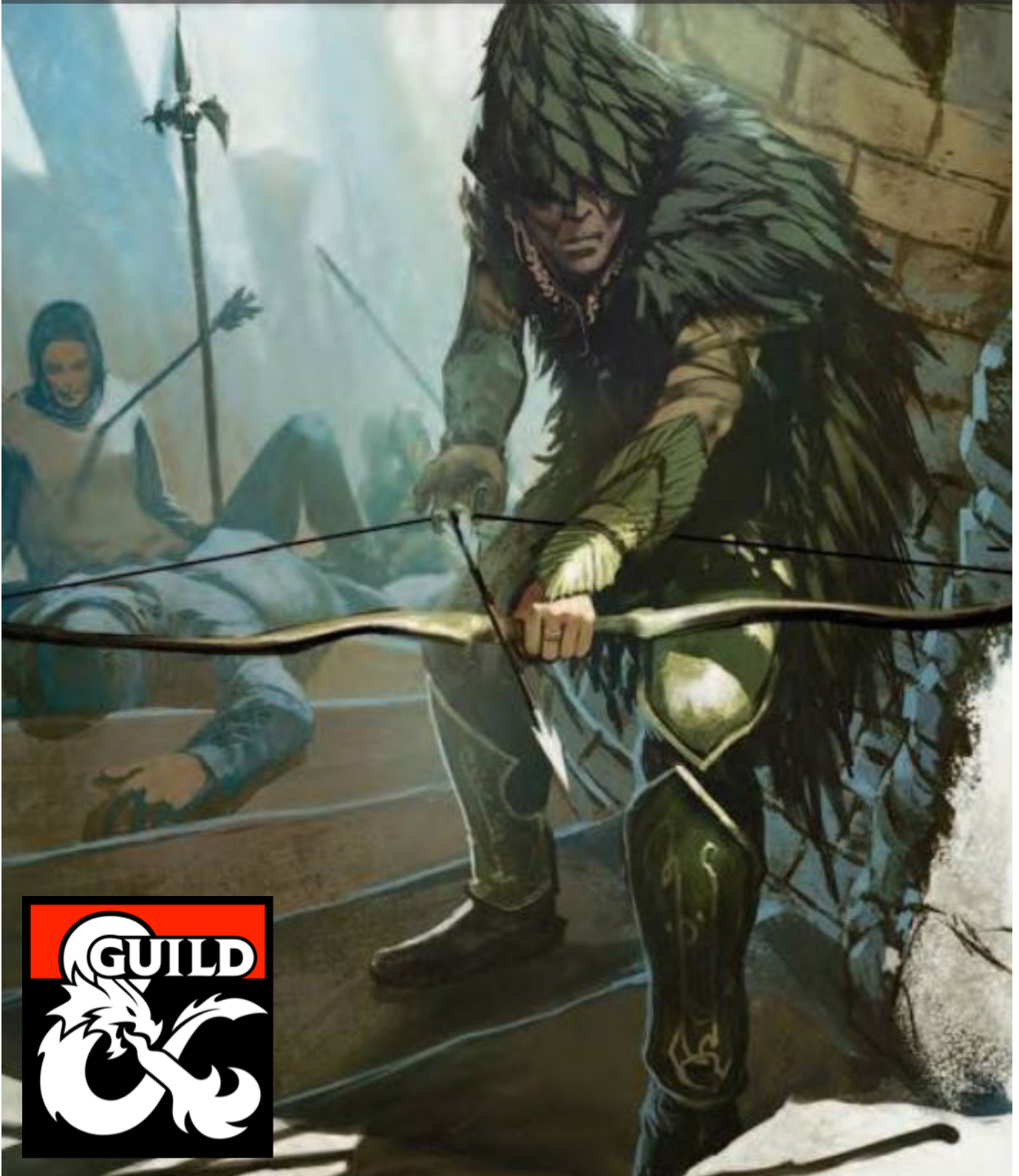


WAY OF THE ZEN ARCHER

ADVENTURERS LEAGUE BUILD GUIDE

A 1st-20th level build guide suitable for Adventurers League play



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ZEN ARCHER

Slay enemies with arrows the legal way with this Adventurers League legal wood elf archer for 5th Edition Dungeons & Dragons. On a whim, the Nerdarchy crew wanted to create a wood elf archer build. It appeared to be something players were searching for online. Instead of going with some of the obvious choices we decided to come up with something a bit more unique.

— Nerdarchy

PHB +1

[Xanathar's Guide to Everything](#)

This is a great choice for your +1 when creating a character for Adventurers League, opening up a whole bunch of subclasses.

Step-by-step character build guide

Each step of the way, this guide will show you the choices made that are significant to this character build. Options that are of particular importance to being an archer are in **bold**.

Step 1 – Race

Wood elf

Race option from the [Player's Handbook](#).

Extra speed, the ability to hide in natural surroundings, Perception skill, weapon proficiencies, and ideal ability score adjustments of +2 to Dexterity and a +1 to Wisdom fit this Zen Archer character build perfectly. Specifically, we want that longbow proficiency.

Proficiencies

Armor: None

Weapons: Longsword, shortsword, shortbow, and longbow

Tools: None

Skills: Perception

Step 2 – Class

1st level

Start with monk. We are looking to go Way of the Kensai from Xanathar's Guide to Everything. This will allow us to make our longbow a monk weapon. We will pick up several other weapons as monk weapons as well, but we are really after the longbow.

Proficiencies

Armor: None

Weapons: Simple weapons, shortsword

Tools: Wood carver's tools

Saving Throws: Strength, Dexterity

Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics

Step 3 – Ability Scores

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Step 4 – Background

Criminal

Skills: Deception, Stealth

Languages: None

Tools: Wood carver's tools

Tools: Thieves' tools, dice set

We went with criminal to work in a fun bit of backstory. The longbow used by this character was stolen in a heist and the character believes it talks to him, guiding his actions, dispensing advice or commenting on situations they find themselves in. The character we created is a little crazy and we ended up assigning him the chaotic neutral alignment.

Step 5 – Class and Level Progression

Level	Class	Gains
1	Monk	Martial Arts
2	Monk	Ki, Unarmored Movement
3	Monk	Monastic Tradition — Way of the Kensai — choose longbow as your ranged weapon, Kensei's Shot , proficiency in a tool set (calligrapher's supplies or painter's supplies), Deflect Missiles
4	Fighter	Fighting Style — Archery Second Wind, Proficiencies: Light armor, medium armor, shields, simple weapons, martial weapons
5	Monk	Ability Score Increase — Dexterity +2 , Slow Fall
6	Monk	Extra Attack , Stunning Strike
7	Fighter	Action Surge
8	Fighter	Martial Archetype — Champion (Improved Critical)
9	Fighter	Feat — Sharpshooter
10	Monk	One with the Blade , Ki-Empowered Strikes, Unarmored Movement Improvement

11	Fighter	
12	Fighter	Ability Score Increase — Dexterity +2
13	Monk	Evasion, Stillness of Mind
14	Monk	Ability Score Increase — Wisdom +2
15	Monk	Unarmored Movement Improvement
16	Monk	Purity of Body
17	Monk	Sharpen the Blade
18	Monk	Ability Score Increase — Wisdom +2
19	Monk	Tongue of Sun and Moon
20	Monk	Diamond Soul, Unarmored Movement Improvement

Alternate Level Progression

Level	Class	Gains
1	Monk	Martial Arts
2	Monk	Ki, Unarmored Movement
3	Monk	Monastic Tradition — Way of the Kensai — choose longbow as your ranged weapon, Kensei's Shot , you also gain proficiency in a tool set (calligrapher's supplies or painter's supplies), Deflect Missiles
4	Fighter	Fighting Style — Archery , Second Wind, Proficiencies: Light armor, medium armor, shields, simple weapons, martial weapons
5	Monk	Ability Score Increase — Dexterity +2 , Slow Fall
6	Monk	Extra Attack , Stunning Strike
7	Fighter	Action Surge
8	Fighter	Martial Archetype — Champion (Improved Critical)
9	Fighter	Feat — Sharpshooter
10	Monk	One with the Blade , Ki-Empowered Strikes, Unarmored Movement Improvement
11	Fighter	
12	Fighter	Ability Score Increase — Dexterity +2
13	Fighter	Remarkable Athlete
14	Fighter	Feat — Alertness
15	Monk	Evasion, Stillness of Mind
16	Monk	Ability Score Improvement — Wisdom +2

17	Monk	Unarmored Movement Improvement
18	Monk	Purity of Body
19	Monk	Sharpen the Blade
20	Monk	Ability Score Improvement — Wisdom +2

Conclusion

Final Ability Scores

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	10 (+1)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)

Proficiencies

Armor: Light armor, medium armor, shields

Weapons: Simple weapons, martial weapons

Tools: Dice set, thieves' tools, wood carver's tools, choice of calligrapher's supplies or painter's supplies

Saving Throws: All

Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Deception, Perception, Stealth

Further Resources

Character creation, build, roleplaying tips and backstory elements are discussed in a video on the Nerdarchy YouTube channel [here](#).

In the video description, you can find links to two versions of this character build on D&D Beyond, the standard and alternate versions.

More Character Guides

- [Mind Breaker Paladin](#)

For Dungeon Masters

We thought it would be fun and useful to take our player character builds and create a version of them as a creature stat block for Dungeon Masters.

This character can be used as an ally, villain, or colorful NPC to engage the adventurers in your own home games.

Zen Archery Master

Medium humanoid, any

Armor Class 19

Hit Points 83 (15d8+15)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	10 (+1)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Strength +6, Dexterity +10, Wisdom +9

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +6, Deception +4, Perception +9, Stealth +10

Senses passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Be the Target. The Zen Archery Master scores a critical hit on a roll of 19-20.

Evasion. If the Zen Archery Master is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

I am the Bow and the Bow is Me. Attacking at long range doesn't impose disadvantage on the Zen Archery Master's ranged weapon attack rolls and its ranged weapon attacks ignore half cover and three-quarters cover.

Ki-Empowered Weapon. The Zen Archery Master's weapon attacks are considered magical.

Unarmored Defense. While the Zen Archery Master is not wearing armor and not using a shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The Zen Archery Master makes three



weapon attacks.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, 150/600 ft., 1 target. Hit: 9 (1d8+5) piercing damage and 12 (2d12) force damage.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +9 to hit, 5 ft., 1 target. Hit: 8 (1d6 +5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until end of the Zen Archery Master's next turn.

Second Wind. Once per short rest, the Zen Archery Master can use a bonus action to regain 12 hit points.

Reactions

Deflect Missile. In response to being hit by a ranged weapon attack, the adept deflects the missile. The damage it takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + 3. If the damage is reduced to 0, the adept catches the missile if it's small enough to hold in one hand and the adept has a hand free.

Slow Fall. You can use your reaction when you fall to reduce any falling damage you take by 45.