

<h1>Elsport

It isn't described as the gem that Garnet is, but Elsport is Aldis's second largest coastal city. It is the largest city with any proximity to the Scatterstar Archipelago, making it the destination for anyone looking to do business with residents of that Archipelago. Because this is the only place many Islanders come to do business with those on the mainland, there is a wealth of merchant houses—including several of Aldin's major houses.

The city itself is wide, rectangular, and flat. It's made of a local, grey stone, and all the buildings in Elsport are built for strength and their resilience, not their sense of aesthetics. Local industry relies on fishing, and Elsport imports much of its grain products. Farms close to Elsport make use of waste from the fishing to fertilize their soil. And, in return, send their crops to market within the city.

Elsport is built on the ruins of Ellendar, a city three times the size of Elsport. Most of the ruins lay underground, and nearly all of it is inaccessible from the surface. But, every once in a while a sea storm opens up an entrance into Ellendar, and things from the days of the Empire of Thorns come crawling out.

<h2>The Breakwalls

Jutting out of the ocean, like great grey teeth, the break walls are a series of small stone structures that break up the waves and provide some measure of shelter against sea storms. The purpose of these breakwalls is not to stop the tide or waves, but to dissipate and divert it into different directions—thus lowering the destructive power. Local adepts maintain these on a regular basis.

<h2>The Lighthouse

The tallest structure for miles around, the Lighthouse guides in all ships to the Elsport docks regardless of the weather. It also houses a large bell—which counts out the hours for the city. It is made out of the same grey stone as the rest of the city, but the bricks are frequently marked with the initials of lovers. There are a number of romantic superstitions about this location in town.

<h2>Rezean Gulf

Elsport lays at the very end of a peninsula that juts into the Gulf, like the city reaches out to the Scatterstar Archipelago. The Gulf moderates the temperature around Elsport, keeping both the summers and winters mild. It also is the source of most the city's industry, providing fish, seaweed, and other natural resources to the city.

<h2>Notable Locations

Most of Elsport lays above the water level, and on land. But, a small portion lays beneath the waters' surface, including a few temples and other locations dedicated to Gaelenir. The underground ruins of Ellendar are also notable, but rarely accessible.

<h3>The Coast

Home of Elsports' docks, and a constant hive of activity. The docks stretch across both the Northwest and Southwest portions of the city, creating one of the largest sections of the city. Numerous warehouses make this place hard to navigate for everyone except for locals. Also home to a number of merchant houses, large and small.

<h4>Envoys-Hold of Elsport

Part of a larger structure within the costal area. Originally, this structure was planned for the market district. But, with a growing smuggling problem, the Envoys moved closer to cut down on their near daily commute. Composed of a wide two-story building with modest living quarters, storage, and armory. Part of The Barnacles.

<h4>The Barnacles

A local derisive name for the docks' economic record building that houses inspection records, and manifests from every ship that comes to port at Elsport—or at least the legal ones. Government administrators make up the grand bulk of the workers within the building. But, various forms of law enforcement also commonly find themselves here. The name 'Barnacles' comes from the fact

that the buildings are grey, and many merchants and ship crews find the workers there annoying. They also have a reputation for nearly needing to be scraped off of your hull, or your person, if they suspect smuggling or illegal goods.

The Barnacles take up several grey stone buildings on the west side of the docks, including a small cafeteria and rooms for napping administrators. The Envoys-Hold originally ‘moved’ to this location several decades ago—when the Envoys of that time laid claim to several storage rooms for their own naps during a month-long investigation into a smuggling ring. They haven’t moved since, and The Barnacles officially cleared out space for them after the incident.

<h4>The Auction House

Occupied every morning from midnight to four by the big ocean fish auctions. A representative for each restaurant in Elsport visits this auction to secure fish for that day. The auctions are reserved for large fish, such as tuna and swordfish. The same building houses pearl auctions twice yearly.

<h4>The Kelp Forest

The largest temple in the city, dedicated to Gaelenir. There is a water pool where worshipers may float offerings. There is also a submarine section of the temple, which houses a number of statues and tile mosaics. This portion also hosts a small kelp forest, offering seafood worshipers something of a more natural and private setting in which to pray. Many seafolk carve their prayers upon flat stone and sink them to the temple bottom in private here. A particularly personal prayer may even be covered with sand at the bottom, or faced into the sand.

<h3>The Market District

This is the heart of the city, a large arc of shops, restaurants, and other businesses. When the weather is mild, this area is often decorated with seagrass bead curtains and colorful flags. Sometimes taverns and restaurants compete to see who can fly their flag the highest—with the assumption that more visibility means more customers.

<h4>The Gulls Nest

A popular local watering hole and restaurant run by a local hearth family. Frequented by sailors, merchants, and local Envoys for their excellent drinks and hot food. They have a rotating menu designed for Rhy, and often will cook off-menu items in order meet their customers’ specific needs. Named for the near permanent installation of seagulls and other sea birds on the roof of their second story. Yasha, one of the owners and waitstaff, is also an informant for the Sovereign’s Finest.

<h4>Ocean Treasures

A popular local jewelry and accessories store. Run by an elderly trio who specialize in hearth bracelet beads—a seafolk courtship and hearth marriage tradition—and other items for their seafolk customers. All three old jewelers are notorious meddlers in the love life of anyone they can get to stay in the store more than five minutes. They have the gossip on every eligible individual in town, and would be delighted to learn about any out-of-towners who could use a little more love in their lives.

<h4>The Gilded Claw

An accessories and general store for the discerning Rhy customer. They offer delivery services in town, and will custom-make nearly all of their wares to fit their clientele best. The second story is also home to the studio of Indigo, a Rhy-octopus artist in the pursuit of true art for Rhy by Rhy. Most of the shop staff are also happy to recommend the best restaurants, inns, and entertainment spots in town for their customers.

<h4>The Scroll and Pen

A combination of book and stationary store and public library. Hosts twice yearly drives where customers can purchase books and supplies for the library as well as class vouchers for local trade and craft lessons. The owners are twin vata’sha women who espouse lifelong learning, as well as the gift of learning. Their hope is to create more joy and wonder in Aldis by showing others the joy of education. Boasts a large collection of books available for public use in-building as well as for purchase.

<h3>The Eastern Wall

The Easternmost portion of the city, home to magistrates, guildhalls, and the eastern protective wall that faces the rest of Aldis. The gate is open for all occasions, aside from city defense. It hasn't had cause to close in many years.

<h4>The Cerulean Estate

Home to the current Noble in Residence in Elsport, as well as his family. Built of the same grey stone as the rest of the city, but features a rotating collection of statues from local artists in the courtyard. Boasts a unique garden, filled with fruit trees, vegetables, and other edible plants from Lord Ulwen's days as a traveling noble, and as an Envoy. He cultivates his own jams and preserved vegetables as a hobby, and is always looking for someone willing to try his newest culinary creation.

<h4>The Guild Halls

Each major guild of Elsport is entitled to space within the wall structure—which is composed of three-story buildings on one face—and the city's defensive wall on the other. Contains a large common cafeteria, as well as smaller offices for city magistrates and other administrative personnel. The various guilds have built expansions over the years—creating a number of long buildings off the main wall that stretch towards the center of Elsport.

<h4>The Burrow

A section of the Elsport defensive wall reserved for the Rhy council within the city, and their business.

<h2>Important Individuals

The following are individuals of note within Elsport

<h3>The Dry Captain

Noble Title

The traditional title of the senior noble of Elsport, who oversees the city, its economy, junior nobles, and those of the land up to two days' ride out. The Dry Captain can be both an honor and a heavy weight, as the individual with this title is often charged with maintaining good relationships with the islands within the Shatterstar Archipelago—who don't uncommonly resent an Aldin presence.

The current Captain is **Lord Amree Ulwen**, a laevvel Seafolk man with long blue hair. He prefers his clothing in cool colors, often embroidered with sea-related motifs.

<h3>The Dry Fleet

The Dry Fleet is a small council that works with The Dry Captain and advises them on governing Elsport. This council also functions as a balancing force for the Dry Captain. While either the Captain or Dry Fleet can present new laws for Elsport, both a confirming vote from the Captain and a majority vote from the Fleet are required to ratify any into law. The same is required for any changes in the city budget. Several groups within Elsport are guaranteed a number of seats on the Dry Fleet, and their election or promotion from within is handled within those groups.

The Gold Seats: These seats are composed of representatives from the merchant houses, trades guilds, and other economic forces within Elsport.

The Pearl Seats: These seats are composed of representatives of those who gather natural resources from the ocean, such as kelp farmers, fishermen, pearl divers, and one guaranteed seat for a representative from the Shatterstar Archipelago.

The Marble Seats: These seats are composed of government magistrates, administrators, and scholars.

The Oak Seats: These seats are composed of representatives from the local guard, traveling nobles, and others that understand military lore and city defense.

The Lark Seats: These seats are free for notable citizens, artists, or otherwise influential individuals who do not fit into any of the other categories.

<h3>The Crafts Guilds

Like other large cities, Elspport maintains a number of crafting guilds that oversee the education of and trades under their authority. It is possible to request establishment of a new guild through the Dry Fleet, but a new guild has not been established in some time. The only requirement is that a new guild cannot fall under the authority of any of the currently established guilds.

The current guilds are organized by and large by material used in their craft. These are the current guilds: the Woodcraft Guild (Wood), the Stonecraft Guild (Stone), the Weavers Guild (Textiles and Clothing), The Blacksmith Guild (iron and steel), The Shascraft Guild (Arcane items), Goldsmith Guild (precious metals and stones), The Brewers Guild (Alcohol and consumables) and the Illuminators Guild (Calligraphy and Books).

<h2>Story Seeds

It's time for the seasonal sailboat races, and one of the favorites to win finds their sailboat has been sabotaged. They are willing to pay a reward for identification of the responsible parties.

One of the local Guildmasters has received a number of threatening letters—the latest of which has threatened death. The heroes are called in to both protect the Guildmaster and discover the culprit behind the threats.

A misty night passes, and the morning reveals that a local art gallery has been robbed only days before the opening night of a big show. Will the heroes be able to find the missing pieces in time?

<h2>Sidebar Content

<h3>Hearth Bracelet Traditions

Sea Folk have webbed hands, which are not very conducive to wearing rings. Instead, they have a marriage wedding jewelry tradition based on bracelets. Each adult within a hearth marriage is represented by a single bead strung on the bracelet. Thus, each adult will have a bracelet with a bead representing all of the spouses within that marriage. Black lava beads are used as spacers.

The end cap beads are tubular bone or wood, with carvings that represent the story or origin of the hearth. The first bead is the 'parental hearth,' which shows origins. The end bead represents the 'marriage hearth' which represents the owner's current hearth marriage. Coastal communities commonly have more than one mediator to negotiate the carving patterns of tubular hearth beads. Children have 'child bracelets' of an uncarved 'child bead' chosen by the adults in the hearth, lava bead spacers, and their parental hearth tubular bead.

Sea Folk consider leaving their parental hearth to form their own as the rite of passage into adulthood. Before they leave, they must produce or purchase a bead to represent their personal identity—for the purposes of their future bracelet. Pearls of some kind are a common choice. Merchants who sell and carve hearth bracelet beads and provide stringing services do a brisk business on the coasts and within the Shatterstar Archipelago.

It's common to propose marriage to someone else by either giving them a 'blank' bracelet of all lava beads—in the case of people who are not Sea Folk, or by the proposer offering a copy of their identity bead to the intended. Responses are shown by either (refusal) returning the blank bracelet or identity bead or, in the case of acceptance, returning a single blank lava bead or sending their identity bead in response.

In the case of two hearth marriages merging, the bead mediators are often called to negotiate the entire process. It is not difficult to make a living solely within the hearth bracelet economy in coastal or island areas.

Inland Aldins sometimes receive gifts they do not understand the weight of—but it is considered poor form and rude to try to ‘trick’ an inlander into marriage this way. Most coastal dwellers are quick to explain the significance of any hearth bracelets to anyone they suspect of being ignorant of the tradition.

<h3>Local Festivals

<h4>Sailboat Races

During the summer, Elsport hosts a local sailboat race amongst the locals—with some participants traveling from the Shatterstar Archipelago to participate. Because the community relies so much on sailing skill and fishing, this is an ideal time for young people to show off their skills. It isn’t uncommon for multi-year rivalries between racers to surface, and egos can flare dangerously right before the competition. The race takes place in a similar course around the Bay, with different wooden markers changing up the course for variation each year. There is a local superstition that the winner of the race will have excellent luck in love for the next year.

<h4>The Clam Bake and Night Market

In the fall, the city organizes a large community market and festival on the shoreline. Businesses set up stalls on the beach, and artisans from the Shatterstar Archipelago are invited to do the same. In the weeks before the occasion, locals craft paper lanterns to float on the water and sit on shore—so the entire event is in a dazzling array of colors. This market is also famous for the clams and other seafood available. Many restaurants set up temporary stalls at this market, each one offering a seasonal selection that isn’t usually available. It’s often said that anyone from out of town who visits the market becomes hooked, and makes the point to visit every year during this time. This festival is also considered an ideal time to let go of the previous year. One tradition is to make a small, wooden boat for a paper lantern, then write something one wishes to rid themselves of, such as a bad habit, on the lantern then send it out to sea. It has also become common to carve such things on flat rocks, and then throw them out to sea off a pier. Local folklore states that the farther one can throw that rock, the faster your bad habit will leave you.

<h4>The Winter Arts and Pearl Exhibit

Pearls are another natural resource that contributes strongly to the Elsport economy. While the seas are a little more difficult in winter, the community celebrates arts. Many of the guilds have their own contests within their ranks to jockey for within-guild promotion and bragging rights. Pearl divers and jewelers often work on their best items with the purpose of showing them off during this time. It’s also considered the best time to peruse local art, since every gallery in the city is open for the occasion. Many local artists also save some pieces to debut during this time.

<h4>The Spring Flower Festival

This festival is meant to show gratitude via flower gifts. Small bouquets and potted plants are traditional, and various arrangements and individual flower choices have significant meanings. In recent decades, the Brewers Guild made efforts to include liquor tastings and wine popular during this time—creating a number of small-batch brews made from popular flowers. Shortly after, flower-decorated confections appeared on the scene. Not to be outdone, the Weavers Guild has begun encouraging Elsport locals to purchase new clothes during this time—especially ones embroidered with flower motifs or dyed from flowers. Many of these items have become widely accepted as gratitude gifts, and the local Guilds have begun adding additional meanings to various craft gifts they produce to get into the spirit.