

# Piho

The Piho are a marsupial race that live in the arid, isolated continent south of Osoa. They are considered one of the intelligence races and have very good diplomatic relations with humans. They tend to be laid back and don't get into conflicts with other races very often.

## Etymology

Piho is a high tongue word which combines the root 'ho', meaning race or species, with the modifier 'Pi'. One of the meanings of Pi is strong feet. Hence, they are the strong feet race.

## Characteristics

Piho are mostly recognized for their large and powerful legs. They are capable of using human instruments with their opposable thumbed hands, but almost exclusively fight using their feet rather than with a held weapon.

Piho are generally quite friendly and rarely come into conflict with other races unless their home is threatened. Because of their continent's isolation this doesn't happen very often. Like the Frosc they were immediately hospitable to humans, due in no small part because humans helped them fight against the bird-people from the West. They are somewhat less friendly towards Koho since Koho like to eat them.

## Behavior

Piho are cheerful and sociable creatures that form bands together. They are far more open in their relationships than most other races. Marriage is an unknown concept to them, as is monogamous relationships. They are the epitome of free love. The father of most Piho children is unknown and uninteresting to them since the entire tribes treats each child like its own and cooperates to raise them.

Unlike Koho and Frosc, there are no lower marsupials left. All of them either died out or evolved into Piho. Therefore Piho never thought their relationship to other animals.

The different bands of Piho are almost all nomadic. Piho are herbivores and they never bothered to learn agriculture so they constantly move about. This makes attempts to subjugate them difficult but also makes communication with other tribes difficult. Most permanent settlements on their continent were built by humans or other races with permission from the Piho.

Piho tend to be docile but inquisitive. They don't like warfare so they are more willing to open talks with other races. Because of their geographic isolation and lack of other sentient races they haven't experienced war nearly as much as other races. If they must fight they fight using their legs which are many times more powerful than their arms. They can use most human weapons and armor, but prefer to stay lightly armored and weaponless.

Piho are a happy-go-lucky race. They like to play and have a good time and don't care much for hard labor. This is a big reason why they never took to agriculture or construction. They make friends easily and are often the life of the party. The most common stereotype of Piho is that they are clumsy, lazy freeloaders. This misses the fact that a Piho is perfectly content just

sleeping outside and eating grass so they often don't exhibit the need to own material goods like humans do. Even "civilized" Piho like to live in almost empty houses, lay around, and eat grass.

Their continent is vast and much of it isn't hospitable to humans, frogs, or koho so there is estimated to be a sizable number of indigenous Piho that have never met outside races. They have lots of local legends and folk tales but nothing like a religion. They never seemed to care much about where they came from or where they are going.

### **Physiology**

Piho are humanoid kangaroos. Like Koho there are different breeds, but there are far fewer than Koho. There are only five or six breeds of Piho and each breed is mostly found in different areas of their continent. Piho have incredibly powerful hind legs and large tails. Their heads are about the size of a human with large ears and long snouts and teeth adapted for grazing. Their arms are comparable size to humans but not as muscular with opposable thumbs.

Piho are bipedal when in motion but can use their arms to balance on all fours for grazing. They move about by hopping. They are capable of hopping great speeds but most Piho choose to meander most of the time. A moderately fast human can easily outrun a Piho. Their hopping is a very efficient type of locomotion so they can go long distances even in high heat. They are second to humans in endurance, especially on cooler days.

Their tails are used for balance and like an extra leg to push off when hopping. The tails also aid them in swimming but aren't otherwise very dexterous. Piho don't worry about their tails like Koho do. Piho tails are longer and have a much larger girth than a Koho's, but less luxurious fur. In fact most Piho use their tails so much that the fur is worn off leaving nothing but exposed muscle. It's quite common for Piho to knock things over with their tails especially in cramped human settlements. Piho fetishize feet and noses but not tails, which is opposite to Koho. A Piho can spend hours cleaning every strand of hair on their feet but not notice their tail is laying in mud. Piho that lose their tails have terrible balance so they do care about them but can make do without. Losing a leg would be devastating and especially in their continent, a death sentence.

Piho hearing and especially smelling are more acute than humans. Piho like to sniff out everything around them and new people, which some humans and koho find to be weird. If a Piho touches noses, that is a sign of close intimacy, equivalent to human kissing.

When a Piho is young they are more active at night but as they age they usually become diurnal. However some bands of Piho stay nocturnal their entire lives. All Piho sleep long hours, sometimes only waking to eat at dawn or dusk. This helps them stay cool and is possible because of their continent's isolation and lack of predators. Some Piho military forces were overwhelmed simply because they sleep so much.

Piho use their feet for a surprising amount of communication. They have a relatively sophisticated language that is composed entirely from stomping on the ground in different patterns and volumes. They have vocal cords capable of speech so a lot of Piho learn common tongue and many humans learn Piho language, although Piho pick up human languages easier than humans learn theirs.

All Piho are pure herbivores. They have complex stomachs capable of digesting any types of grass or shrubs. They don't have to drink as much water either because they get water

from the plants they eat. Piho often chew their cud which revolts other races. Luckily Piho actually like eating outside in the grass instead of inside at a table.

Piho don't wear clothing at all, except choice ceremonial garbs or light armor if necessary. They aren't as attentive to hygiene as Koho so they often have matted, rougher fur which is almost armor in of itself. A Piho that goes through an extensive cleaning is sometimes unrecognizable to people they know well. Human greaves and boots absolutely don't fit them but cuirasses, pauldrons, and gloves are close enough to work. Open-face helmets can fit too but their ears make them uncomfortable so Piho would rather go without a helmet if a specially made Piho size isn't available. Some Piho, particularly younger ones, like wearing capes or robes because of how loose and flowy they are despite no practical purpose.

Piho females give live birth to joeys that reside in their pouches for a few years until they are ready to come out. All Piho are protective of joeys even if it's not their child. Piho are capable of sex with other races but other than occasional flings isn't that common. Usually it's a male piho with a female non-piho since the logistics of intercourse tend to work out better.

### **Professions**

Piho can make excellent soldiers because they can move long distances without tiring and have substantially lower supply needs. A Piho army can subsist on grass and shrubs, instead of needing livestock for food. One time an enemy army completely passed by a grazing, unarmored Piho army because they thought they were cattle. Piho are also great melee combatants not just because they are surprisingly agile, but because their foot-based fighting style is bewildering to enemies that are unfamiliar with it. On the other hand, their perceived laziness and lack of discipline is problematic.

Piho are great entertainers because of their natural friendliness and outgoing nature. No comedy or theatrical troupe is complete without a Piho or two. In fact the largest circus in Osoa is almost entirely made up of Piho performers.

Piho are abysmal chefs because they are herbivores and they have such low standards of food quality that they are just as likely to walk outside and eat the grass growing outside the restaurant. They also don't make great craftsmen or artisans in many cases because they don't like to sit still and focus on minute things. Their tails can get in the way too. However they do make exotic artifacts that sell well in markets. Piho can make enthusiastic cobblers but the amount of work for piho business is limited so they focus on non-piho.

Piho are good couriers and make up the third largest demographic of the Courier's Guild after Koho and Humans. They often work rural and long-distance routes.

Piho are perceived as being clumsy and not dignified so they aren't often seen in diplomatic roles. However they often accompany diplomats as entertainment.

Piho are commonly hired as shepherds or livestock bodyguards. They are great for this type of work because they don't eat meat meaning they are no danger to livestock and are chill enough to hang out with cattle all day and eat grass. Some Piho are exploited by this by wealthy land owners and are tricked into working long hours for almost no pay.

A lot of Piho don't even have jobs. They just roam around eating grass and juggling or doing flips in front of passerby for small change. It's not uncommon for a Piho to run afoul of the law because they trespassed on a plantation or something and ate crops. The frustrating thing for

law enforcement is that they don't ever seem to figure out that what they did is a crime so Piho are often repeat offenders, albeit for minor crimes.

Piho prostitution is rare. Koho are much more erotic and closer to human fetishes. Larger brothels will keep a couple piho workers for any traveling piho though

### **Magic Use**

Piho have the capability to use Aether but almost none of them do so a lot of humans, frosc, and koho thinks they can't. Piho entertainers like to reinforce this conventional wisdom since it makes their acts more exciting. Most Piho that do use Aether focus more on practical things like making water or cooling off in the desert.