Economy

- Currency
- Trade
- Valuable Commodities
- Agriculture and Food Production
- Trade Protocols and Salvage Economics
- Resource Allocation

Currency

The primary currency of Duskara is the Windmark, a universally recognized token crafted from durable, lightweight metals. Each Windmark is engraved with symbols unique to its settlement of origin, enabling easy tracking of trade and transactions. Far more than simple tokens of exchange, Windmarks represent tangible survival resources such as water rights, work quotas, or energy credits, tying individual wealth directly to the lifeblood of civilization.

In smaller settlements and among the cave-dwelling Deepkin, barter remains a common method of exchange. Unique or perishable goods, including psychic services, rare materials, and handcrafted tools, often bypass the Windmark system entirely, preserving a tradition of direct trade in communities where mutual trust is essential.

Trade

Trade networks are the arteries of Duskaran society, facilitating the flow of goods and resources between settlements. Wind caravans—heavily windproofed vehicles or sleds powered by the planet’s unrelenting gales—travel across the twilight belt, linking cities and outposts. In the caves, the ancient Deep Roads serve as a vital underground network, connecting geothermal hubs to the surface and enabling safe transport in regions where the winds are too fierce.

Certain settlements act as trade nexuses, bustling hubs where goods and information converge. These hubs are overseen by Merchant Guilds, which regulate pricing and ensure fair practices, safeguarding the delicate balance of the Duskaran economy. Trade agreements are common, fostering alliances between settlements. Twilight cities exchange processed goods such as clothing, tools, and preserved food for the raw minerals and geothermal energy provided by cave settlements. Water caravans, transporting precious ice or extracted water from the night side, often travel under armed escort to deter theft, highlighting the high stakes of these exchanges.

Valuable Commodities

Water is the most critical resource in Duskaran society, often controlled by local councils or powerful guilds. Ice blocks harvested from the night side command premium prices, underscoring the vital role of water in sustaining life. Geothermal energy, produced by thermal exchangers in cave settlements, is highly sought after by twilight cities, powering homes and machinery in regions where wind energy alone cannot suffice.

Rare materials extracted from the day side, including heat-resistant alloys and rare crystalline formations, fuel the creation of advanced tools and infrastructure. They are retrieved by mining drones command extraordinary prices. Freshly salvaged equipment from failed operations is often more valuable than the raw materials, as manufacturing capacity is limited. The caves, in turn, supply crystals and bioluminescent fungi, prized for their applications in psychic enhancements and practical lighting. Psychic artifacts, such as amplification stones or weatherworking tools imbued with latent energy, are considered priceless, often held in reverence as much as utility. Lastly, hardy plant strains and livestock, adapted to Duskara’s harsh conditions, are essential for sustaining agriculture and trade.

Agriculture and Food Production

Food production on Duskara is among the most carefully managed aspects of the economy. The scarcity of arable land, combined with strict resource conservation principles, has driven settlements to develop specialized agricultural systems.

Twilight Belt Agriculture

Vertical hydroponic farms dominate surface settlements, where water is recirculated through crops in stacked growing beds. This method maximizes yield per unit of water and land—essential given that free water is the planet's scarcest resource. Primary crops include nutrient-dense leafy greens, root vegetables adapted to hydroponic culture, and grain-bearing plants like modified Earth wheat and native drought-resistant varieties. Wind-powered pumps circulate nutrient solutions, making these farms sustainable without fuel consumption.

Secondary agriculture focuses on hardy fungi, legumes that fix nitrogen into nutrient-poor soils, and fast-growing seed crops that produce oil and protein. Greenhouses positioned on the edges of settlements cultivate these crops, with transparent panels allowing the Duskaran twilight to supplement grow lights powered by wind and geothermal energy.

Protein sources are carefully managed. Domesticated small livestock—primarily wind-hardy goats and cold-adapted fowl in high settlements—provide meat and dairy products, though meat consumption is rationed based on settlement population and survival status. Fishing in isolated freshwater reserves provides supplementary protein, though water use for aquaculture is strictly controlled. Insect farming—particularly crickets and other high-protein arthropods—is becoming more common in resource-constrained settlements, offering efficient protein with minimal water needs.

The Deep Roads produce additional resources: blind fish in underground pools, fungi cultivated in geothermal-warmed caverns, and algae that thrive in near-darkness, providing both nutrition and oxygen generation for cave communities.

Cave Settlement Agriculture

Deepkin settlements have distinct advantages and constraints. Geothermal warmth allows year-round cultivation of heat-loving crops, particularly fungi species that produce high nutritional density. Bioluminescent fungi serve dual purposes: they provide light and nutrition simultaneously,

representing one of the Deepkin's greatest innovations.

Underground aquaculture utilizes geothermal-heated water to raise temperature-tolerant fish species in vast cavern pools. These pools require minimal management once established and provide reliable protein supplies. Algae farms in shallow geothermal waters produce food supplements and oxygen.

Deepkin settlements trade these unique resources—particularly fresh fungi and geothermal-processed minerals—to surface settlements in exchange for grains, fresh produce from twilight farms, and other twilight-belt goods.

Staple Foods and Cuisines

Duskaran cuisine reflects environmental constraints and available ingredients. **Bread** remains a staple across all settlements, typically made from locally grown or traded grain. Common varieties include wind-grain loaves (dense and nutritious), algae-flour flatbreads (in cave settlements), and fermented grain breads that preserve longer and provide beneficial digestive compounds.

Preserved foods dominate because fresh produce is limited and seasonal variations are minimal. Drying, salting, and fermentation are the primary preservation methods. Dried fruit, pickled vegetables, fermented vegetable pastes (similar to Earth's miso or kimchi), and salted fish provide essential nutrients while lasting for extended periods. These preserved foods are carefully rationed, with winter reserves (though "winter" is a cultural rather than climatic concept on Duskara) maintained in every household.

Proteins vary by settlement location and access. Twilight communities relying on livestock consume goat meat (typically stewed to tenderize tougher cuts), preserved dried meat, and locally caught fish. Deepkin communities feature fish, fungi, and insects as primary proteins. All settlements supplement with legume-based dishes: lentil stews, bean paste, and seed porridges provide plant-based protein.

Fermented beverages are essential to Duskaran diet and culture. The most common is **wind-wine**, made from preserved fruit and cultivated yeasts, which provides both hydration and a mild psychoactive effect; it's consumed at celebrations and in smaller quantities for medicinal purposes. **Herbal teas** made from foraged mountain plants are consumed hot or cold and are believed to enhance psychic abilities or provide medicinal benefits. **Grain-based ferments** produce beverages with varying alcohol content, from light, barely-fermented versions suitable for children to potent versions saved for ritual use. Fresh water is reserved for drinking and critical bodily functions; beverages replace much of daily fluid intake.

Communal meals in settlement evening gatherings typically feature a grain or bread base, cooked vegetables from preserved stores, a protein component, and fermented accompaniments. A typical substantial meal for an adult might include: hand-sized bread portion, vegetable stew, small portion of preserved meat or legume paste, and a cup of fermented beverage. Portions are calibrated to settlement resources and individual labor contributions.

Dining customs emphasize gratitude and conservation. Before eating, most Duskarans perform a brief water-blessing ritual, acknowledging the precious resource used in food preparation. Waste is virtually non-existent—bones become broth, vegetable scraps feed livestock or are composted, and leftover meals are shared or stored rather than discarded.

Trade Protocols and Salvage Economics

Contract timing often references environmental markers rather than abstract calendars. "Delivery before Gradient Feast" appears frequently in trade agreements, establishing deadlines aligned with optimal travel windows. Partial delivery protocols address the reality that caravans may lose portion of their cargo to weather or predation—most contracts specify minimum acceptable percentages (typically 70-80%) and adjusted payment scales for reduced deliveries.

Salvage rights follow complex hierarchies. Storm-damaged goods abandoned by caravans belong to whoever reaches them first, but "fresh" salvage—items lost within the current wind phase—requires notification to the original owner if known. Communities maintain salvage registries where found goods are logged, and unclaimed items pass to finders after one full wind cycle.

Salvage economics have created specialist scavenger caravans that follow major routes after severe weather, recovering and refurbishing damaged goods for resale. These operations walk ethical lines, as determining whether cargo was "abandoned" or simply temporarily sheltered during storms creates frequent disputes. Some settlements view scavenger caravans as vital recycling operations, while others consider them opportunistic vultures preying on others' misfortune.

Resource Allocation

Resource distribution on Duskara is meticulously managed to prevent waste and ensure survival. Each settlement oversees its own stockpiles through a Resource Allocation Committee, which assigns rations based on individual need, labor contributions, and age-grade status. This localized approach ensures that resources are used efficiently within each community.

At a regional level, the Duskaran Accord enforces resource-sharing mandates, coordinating the flow of vital supplies between settlements. Failure to meet quotas can result in trade sanctions or intervention by the Wind and Water Assembly, ensuring accountability across the network of settlements. Centralized emergency reserves, maintained by Neutral Wayseers, provide a safety net in times of disaster, strategically located to serve multiple communities in need.

Population control is another key aspect of resource management. Settlements enforce strict quotas to avoid overstrain on their limited resources. Family size and reproductive rights are often tied to a household’s demonstrated ability to manage resources effectively, balancing the need for growth with the imperative of sustainability.