

Skyrim

Dawnguard DLC

The Ruins of Arkngthamz

Be aware that you must have installed the Dawnguard DLC in order to find these Dwarven ruins because they are part and parcel of the DLC. If Dawnguard is not active then, when you try to find the ruins, all you see is an empty hillside. Arkngthamz is southeast of Dushnikh Yal, south of Reachwind Eyrie and southwest of Reachcliff Cave. If you have read the book, "The Aetherium Wars", then the game will have placed a quest marker near the ruins.

Past the entrance door, walk down a long, high-ceilinged hallway. A disembodied voice tells you to "Turn back". A fallen stone pillar acts as a bridge across a rushing stream. A broken Dwarven Spider lies at the base of the waterfall east. As you turn west the same voice repeats its warning, "Please, turn back, before it's too late".

Pass by a broken "Dwarven Sphere Guardian". You come to a huge room, where pillars fall as you watch, right in front of you. The entire building is very unstable. Steps, just past the entrance go up north, to a ledge with a broken Dwarven Spider. From here, you get a better view of the room.

The ghost of Katria will appear and speak to you. She tells you a story about a rare Dwemer mineral named "Aetherium". She was looking for this mineral and the forge that the Dwemer used to refine the Aetherium. She died in the attempt and her life is now unfulfilled. In addition, her partner, an elf, betrayed her. After she fails in her attempt to convince you to leave, Katria offers to accompany you on this quest. Accept her offer. She can give you tips, see enemies before you do and even help defend you with her bow, even though she is only a ghost.

Lost to the Ages

Use the fallen stone pillar to cross partway over the chasm. There, find Katria's corpse. She tells you to take her journal. On the ledges below you, find a Dwarven Chest, a broken Spider and a broken Dwarven Sphere Guardian. Finish crossing the chasm west, to a Dwarven steam tunnel. Below the grating, see a Centurion Dynamo Core and two Dwarven Metal Ingots. As you walk the tunnel, Katria warns you about the instability of the structure.

Two active Dwarven Spiders drop from their circular dispensers and attack you. Past them, find a broken Dwarven Sphere. In the flooded room, walk up the sloping steam pipe north, west and north again. Then drop down to the catwalk and resume your journey north. If you are in Sneak mode, then Katria can get stuck on this sloping pipe. Ahead of you, see a machine opening and closing a gate. Katria says that the odd mechanism is a "Kinetic Resonator". The Dwarves used these machines for many applications. This one is malfunctioning, but the next one works. Hit the next resonator with a bolt, arrow or spell and then watch it open the next door.

Past the gate, and up the steps south, Katria warns you of Falmer ahead. Kill two of them. Around the corner and at the top of the steps east, come to another huge room. One Falmer lurks to the south, near his tent. Find a Dwarven Chest at the end of the ledge north. When you go south, more stonework falls. Open a Falmer Chest in the tent. Now you are on the other side of the chasm from where you entered the ruins.

Go south and east. Katria may warn you of a Falmer above your head, on a ledge south of you. As you approach them, two more Falmer drop from holes in the wall. Past that, she notices a chest behind the gate south, but she says that the gate is "sealed tight".

If you want to get past that locked gate, drop down into the stream. If you drop from too high, you will suffer much damage. If you drop too close to the falls, the current will pull you over and downstream. Wade upstream, to the base of the next falls. There, walk up a ramp, past a broken Dwarven Centurion and a broken Dwarven Spider. Beyond that, a live Dwarven Sphere pops down from its dispenser and attacks you. Now in the room behind the locked gate, open the Dwarven Chest and then pull the lever, opening the gate and putting you back on the ledge.

Now go north, across a fallen pillar. Then turn west, along a ledge. Kill one Chaurus Bug and one Falmer. You come to an enormous, vertical circular cavern. You can see the sky above. Note the water falling from the hole in the side of the cavern. Across the bridge north, look for one Falmer.

Here, for a side trip, you could walk down the ledge to the deep circular pool below. Alternatively, you could jump off the ledge into the water. Then dive down and look for a lateral tunnel on the west wall of the vertical cavern. Swim through that flooded tunnel, to a ledge above the water. There, you will find a skeleton with some loose Septims, two Coin Purses and a Wooden Chest.

Back on the ledge above the deep pool, enter the tunnel northeast. Just around the corner, in a very cramped Falmer camp, watch for two hovering "Chaurus Hunters", four Chaurus Bugs and one Falmer. Open the Falmer Chest in his tent.

Now you have two routes to choose from. The ramp southwest goes up to the stream you saw earlier, coming from the hole in the side of the vertical cavern. If you walk to the very edge of the drop-off, Katria will shout "Watch your step!" Look north of here to see a Falmer drop down from his hole in the wall. Kill him and then carefully walk the narrow ledge to open his Falmer Chest.

Back in the small Falmer camp, go up the ramps northeast, to the lip of the chasm where Katria fell. She points out that her bow is where she dropped it, at the very end of the log protruding over the edge of the chasm. If you walk out there to get the "Zephyr", she will tell you to "take good care of it for me". Now go east and north, to the remains of a group of Dwemer buildings.

Zigzag down the ledges to the bottom. Katria will stop you and tell you about the "Tonal Lock" which, when she tried to open it, began the series of earthquakes that continue to this day. She suggests that you look for a clue. The tunnel southwest leads to a drop-off, to where you entered the ruin. The clue you want is on the dead body of the Adventurer. Read his "Scrap of Paper", to see a diagram of three scratches and two numbers. Match this clue with the diagram in Katria's Journal and you will have three of the five keys to the Tonal Lock. Look up to see the five Kinetic Resonators sitting on small ledges along the face of the largest building.

Note the six spider/sphere dispensers distributed along the base of that same building. Note the Centurion behind the middle gate. Note the two large, mounted crossbows to either side of the huge statue of a head. If you do not strike the resonators in the correct sequence, they attack.

Shoot the resonators with an arrow, bolt or spell. If you hit the wrong target, the statue head breathes steam, its eyes light up red, it makes a harsh sound and activates one of the defenses. This will happen over and over, as long as you keep making the wrong choices. If you make the right choices, the statue head breathes a white puff of steam and you hear a pleasant tone. The tone rises in pitch as you keep hitting the resonators in the correct sequence. After the fifth correct choice, the two side gates open.

There is one location where you can stand close enough to hit all the resonators *and* be relatively immune to the defenses, if Katria came along with you. Stand on the stone arch near the building. You will still be vulnerable to ranged damage, but enemies cannot get up to you and the crossbows cannot target you. To get on the arch, trek back up the hill to a point above the arch. Then use Whirlwind Sprint to jump across the gap and land on the arch. This may take a few tries, so save your game first. Then release the defenses. Katria will attack and destroy them for you.

These defenses release in the following order: four Dwarven Spiders after the first error, two Dwarven Spheres after the second error, the two crossbows shoot six explosive bolts after the third error, the Centurion attacks after the fourth error. Every error past that causes six more crossbow bolts to fly. The crossbows reload automatically.

After you have opened the side gates, Katria will run into the small room beyond. Follow her there and then pick up the "Aetherium Shard", marked by the quest arrow. When you take it, Katria says, "So, it *is* real!" Ask her what it is. She says it is part of a key to the Aetherium Forge. You must now find the other three pieces (shards) of the key. Katria says she must leave you now, but will rejoin you later. She disappears, leaving behind a puff of white smoke.

Open two Dwarven Chests and a Dwarven Stone Chest. Find seven Dwarven Metal Ingots on the shelves. A narrow ledge east of the gates has a Dwarven Chest. You must use Whirlwind Sprint from above, in order to land on the ledge.

Now zigzag back up the ramps, all the way to the outside, the reverse of the way you entered. Alternatively, if you are very brave, go through the tunnel southwest of the gates. At the very end of the tunnel is a high ledge where the water drops down to the gorge below. Stand at the *pointed tip* of the ledge and then creep over the edge. You will fall safely into the pool at the bottom. Standing to either the left or right side of the sweet spot will result in a fall that kills you. If you survive, climb up the steam pipes and exit the ruin by way of this shortcut.

Outside again, open your map to see two quest arrows (sometimes one does not appear). One of them, Raldbthar, is northeast of Valtheim Towers, south of Winterhold and west of Windhelm. A second quest arrow should point to Mzulft, southeast of Windhelm and north of Shor's Stone. The third location is near a Dwarven bridge called "Deep Folk Crossing", northeast of Markarth, just north of Bthardamz and northwest of Karthwasten. Whichever site you go to, in whatever order, Katria will either be there already or get there soon after you do.

1. The site northeast of Valtheim Towers is Raldbthar, an extensive Dwemer ruin. If you cleared this ruin during the Dark Brotherhood quest line, you can use the "Raldbthar Deep Market" lift to bypass almost all of the enemies inside the ruin. To find the lift, start at Shearpoint, at the top of the mountain northwest of Valtheim Towers. Sneak past the sleeping dragon, east along the base of the Shearpoint cliff, until you get to the steps. At the top of those steps find the lift. The room at the bottom of the lift has three Dwarven Spiders, a Sphere, Katria and the Aetherium Shard.

However, even if you cleared the entire ruin earlier, all the enemies, traps and *treasure* will have re-spawned. If you want to get that treasure, or you have not been there before, read the rest of section 1. Otherwise, use the elevator to get the shard and then move on to section 2.

If you want to clear the ruin, first dispose of the two or three bandits standing guard outside. Then open the big gold door to "Raldbthar". This is one of several entrances to Blackreach Cavern, which you may have explored during the Main Quest.

Inside, find a bandit who may be sleeping in a corner of the first room. Farther southwest, the bandits have skewered a Skeeever on a spit, roasting it with a Dwarven Flame Trap. You could run through the flames to the main room, but you may want to take the southeast corridor instead. It leads to the bandit living area. There, you will find three bandits and a Dwarven Chest.

From this room, the end of the southwest hallway has a locked (expert) gate. Behind it and up the stairs, is a balcony that overlooks the main room where two or three bandits sit next to a campfire. You could also access the main room by going down the hallway northwest, from the expert gate.

Past that gate, on a balcony, pull the levers on the two Crossbows. If you are in Sneak mode, the bandits below you may not even move. You may not hit anyone, but the effect is worth the effort.

If you can get them to stand up and say, "What was that?", then the crossbow closest to them *can* kill them. Otherwise, in Sneak mode, snipe the bandits. Be aware, however, that a log ramp on the northwest wall gives them access to your balcony. If they see you, they will run up that ramp.

Go down into the room and loot it. Two of the other exits, one locked (adept), out of this room get you back outside the ruin. One of the bandits has the "Irkngthand Consortium Key", but it fits no locks in this ruin. Two ingots lie on a stone shelf. On a similar shelf, find and read "2920, Last Seed, v8", to increase your Sneak Skill. Look on the dark northwest wall to find a Wooden Chest.

The gate southwest takes you to a room with the last bandit. There, open two unlocked Dwarven Chests and one locked (apprentice) Dwarven Chest. Open the locked (master) gate, to find three Coin Purses, some ingots, ore, armor and an unlocked Dwarven Chest.

The door southwest of where the last bandit was patrolling is Falmer territory. On the other side of the southwest door, a dispenser on the wall of this cluttered hallway ejects a Dwarven Sphere. Although, if you are in Sneak mode, it may not detect you. If you retreat to the larger room, the Sphere can follow you up the steepest stairs. After you defeat it, go through the door southwest.

Beyond the door is a room full of Dwarven machinery and one agitated Dwarven Spider. In addition, two Dwarven Spheres will pop out of dispensers in the west and south corners. They will do this when you get close to the dispensers, even if you are in Sneak mode, but may not see you until you move or target them. Open a locked (apprentice) chest. Find a Coin Purse and potion in two corners of the room.

Exit the room southwest, to a corridor with a Dwarven Spider Dispenser on the *floor*. Throughout this ruin, if you move about in Sneak mode, the spiders may not detect you. You can waddle past the dispensers safely, if your skill is high enough. This is a benefit and a curse. You avoid conflict, but you miss the opportunity to mine the shattered machines for their Soul Gems.

Just around the corner, a Rotating Blade Trap will activate. This one has two blades that move to the center of the slope and then back again. Note that, in some places, the blades do not quite reach the walls. Use this feature to pass them safely, by dodging into the safe areas and waiting until the blades pass. Then run up the slope to the top.

In the next room, be ready to fight a Dwarven Sphere that is rolling about. One way to defeat it is to have it chase you back to the Rotating Blade Trap. Stand in one of the safe nooks and watch while the Sphere runs into the blades and disintegrates. Keep this technique in mind for the next enemies you meet. At the southwest end of the small room where the Sphere was patrolling, are some steps going northwest up to a balcony. The next Sphere is patrolling there.

You could use the blades trick again. Flammable liquid covers the floor up there. In addition, a Dwarven Spider hides inside a dispenser on that balcony. You may have to come out of Sneak mode to activate it. When the area is safe, open a locked (master) chest and a locked (novice) chest.

Exit the balcony down the northwest corridor. Halfway along, two more Spiders are hiding in dispensers. At the end of the hallway, find a lift that takes you down to "Raldbthar Deep Market".

At the bottom of the lift, a sloping hallway goes down to a door. A Rotating Blade Trap will pop out of the slot. This one has only one blade, but is deceptively dangerous.

Six to eight Falmer creep around in the large room beyond the door. They have penned two Skeevers inside a gated enclosure. If you run from the Falmer, back up the slope, you must again pass the blade. Make one misstep and the blade will kill you.

Try this instead. Open the door and then go back up to the top of the slope, above the trap. Use Throw Voice or shoot an arrow or two through the open door to encourage two or more of the closest Falmer to run up the slope. The trap will kill them, just as it will do to you if you are not careful. The rest of the Falmer will stay in the room. At least two of them defend the upper level of the high-ceilinged room. Slowly, carefully and systematically exterminate them.

After you have cleared the room, find one Falmer Chest in a tent on the lower level, a locked (apprentice) Dwarven Chest halfway up the stairs and a Falmer Chest in the northeast corner of the upper level. Near that chest, find a button. Push it and then watch a drawbridge fall into place, from the central tower to the south wall. Cross the bridge and walk along a hallway to the west end of the room. In that hallway, be aware of two Dwarven Spider Dispensers on the south wall.

Past the dispensers, stop at the top of the sloping metal bridge. Look north, at the central tower. Between the two Falmer Tents sits a Dwarven Chest. To cross the wide space, activate your Whirlwind Sprint Shout. To get off the ledge safely, use the same Shout, but point it west.

Open a door on the west wall to find a Stone Pressure Plate in the narrow hallway. This activates a Dwarven Crossbow on a platform opposite you south. The crossbow fires three explosive bolts and they will surely kill you if you step on the plate. To release the bolts safely, jump up on the big steam pipe that runs along the east wall. Then stand with your back against the pipe, where it rises up to the ceiling. Shoot the Pressure Plate from here - with an arrow. After the bolts release, a Dwarven Spider drops from the dispenser on the north wall - behind you.

At the bottom of the steps below the Pressure Plate, defeat another Dwarven Spider that drops down from a dispenser on the north wall. Beyond it, watch out for another Stone Pressure Plate on the floor. This one releases a set of Swinging Bars from the ceiling.

Beyond that plate and around the corner north, note the *twelve* dispensers along the walls and on the floor. Hazardous as this looks, I was only able to liberate one Sphere and one Spider, both in the southwest corner, although one more will activate if you have a Falmer chase you back here.

After you have dealt with the two machines, open a Dwarven Chest on the east wall. Near there, climb up the first sloping steam pipe, all the way to the top. From there, use Whirlwind Sprint to cross the gap southeast, to the ledge. There, open another Dwarven Chest.

At the end of the long north-south hallway, turn the corner and go through the door west. Beyond it is a very short hallway with four buttons and a set of bars blocking your way. The second button from the right drops the bars. The button on the left activates a Dwarven Flame Trap. None of the three jets of flame, however, quite targets that button. The other two buttons seem to do nothing. A pair of dispensers on the wall above the buttons appear to be inert - for now. A fifth button, in the corridor beyond the bars, raises or lowers the bars.

Past the bars, open the gold door to find a fenced area with a gate. You can see a Falmer near his tent on the left and a Falmer near his tent on the right. To the south, is a gated enclosure holding two Chaurus bugs. You can see them moving about and, when you get closer, hear them clicking.

Open the gate and kill the Falmer on the left first. The one on the right may be a Gloomlurker. They can heal themselves. If you engage the Falmer and then have them chase you back to the area with the row of four buttons, the pair of dispensers above the buttons activate. These eject a pair of Dwarven Spiders that join in the battle, attacking the Falmer and/or you. Kill a third Falmer at the northwest end of the room, near his tent. Kill a fourth Falmer near the tents on the south wall.

After all four Falmer die, loot the room for two Soul Gems on a rock shelf and two unlocked Falmer Chests. One Falmer tent on the south wall has a locked (expert) gate in front of it. Inside the tent is a chest with good treasure. The odd hole on the wall in the southwest corner of the room has a Falmer inside, but it did not come out for me. Shoot the two Chaurus bugs through the opening of their enclosure. Then unlock the (novice) gate. Inside, open an unlocked chest, a locked (apprentice) chest and a locked (expert) chest. Pick up ingots and some ore from a shelf.

The Falmer have jammed various items into the room's gear-sets, so that the gears will not turn. They *must* turn, because they connect to the button on the bridge. Remove the following items from four sets of gears: a Leg Bone, a Skull, a Human Spine and a piece of Dwarven Scrap. The last item jams a set of gears underwater.

When all the gears turn normally, push the button on the bridge. This drops the raised half of the drawbridge into place. Behind it, a Dwarven Centurion Guardian will come to life. You have lots of room to move around in here, so lure the slow, clanking machine into the larger part of the room and have plenty of time to open the chest it guards.

You could lure the machine back through the gates and doors and then lock him on the other side. The machine appears unable to open gates or doors, although if you give it enough time, it can somehow get past them. Alternatively, destroy the Centurion and take its Soul Gem(s). In either case, go through the door at the end of the bridge northwest.

Beyond the door, walk a short hallway to a set of metal bars. Pull the lever to lower the bars. In the next room, destroy two or three Dwarven Spiders and perhaps a Dwarven Sphere. Katria will help you defeat them. Then take the Aetherium Shard from the altar at the end of the north tunnel. After you have done that, Katria tells you that she will keep looking for the next shard.

After she disappears in a puff of white smoke, open a Dwarven Chest near the altar and a locked (adept) Dwarven Chest on the wall. Find ingots and ore on the rock shelves. If you stand near the "Dwarven Mechanism" in the center of the room and then activate it, that action will cause a set of stairs to appear, but only if you have an Attunement Sphere in your inventory.

Down those stairs and through the door at the bottom, find a locked (expert) gate on the north wall. It opens to an unlocked Dwarven Chest and a locked (master) Dwarven Chest. The door at the end of the hall opens to a ledge above Blackreach Cavern. My [Skyrim Main Quest Walkthrough](#) (pages 26, 27 and 28), describes this vast cavern system.

Now continue the Arkngthamz quest. Retrace your path upstairs to the room where you got the shard. Open the gates on the southwest wall and then pull the lift lever, to arrive at the surface.

2. Outside again, open your map to find the location of the next shard. You may find that the quest arrow has disappeared. You should not need it, however. Look southeast of Windhelm and north of Shor's Stone, to find Mzulft. When you get there, find a large Dwarven ruin with a main entrance at the top of several sets of stone steps. Do not go in that way. Instead, look for a smaller domed entrance to the south - the "Dwarven Storeroom".

Inside, Katria waits for you in front of a locked (expert) golden gate. She says, "There you are. Give me a hand with this door will you?" However, the locked (apprentice) door on the southwest wall is easier to open. Past it, find a hallway with 16 Dwarven Metal Ingots and two Dwarven Chests. The locked (apprentice) exit door on the northeast wall gets you past the expert gate. The shard is sitting on the altar. Katria says she will meet you at the location of the last shard. After she disappears, pick up two more Dwarven Metal Ingots from the altar. The "Dwemer Convector" is part of a different quest, called "Arniel's Endeavor". Then exit the building.

3. Outside again, look on your map for Deep Folk Crossing, which is a Dwarven Bridge north of Bthardamz, northwest of Karthwasten and northeast of Markarth. Look for a stone bridge with domes at both ends. It spans a rushing stream. Cross the bridge north and then go up the hill a short distance. Usually, at the top of the hill, find Katria waiting for you. Pick up the shard from the altar. Katria says that she will meet you at the Aetherium Forge.

The Aetherium Forge

After you have all four shards, look at you map to find the "Ruins of Bthalf", south (and a bit east) of Ivarstead, southeast of Whiterun and west of Treva's Watch. When you get there, defeat three bandits who call the ruins home. Open their locked (adept) Wooden Chest.

Speak with Katria and then walk up the low stone steps to an odd spherical brass monument. When you activate it, the "Dwemer Mechanism" accepts your Aetherium Disc and swivels. When you then remove the disc from the mechanism, Katria shouts, "Get back. Hurry!" The entire platform begins shaking violently. Leave it quickly, because the platform will rise up many feet into the air, revealing an entrance at its base.

Inside the building, activate the lever to drop the lift down to the Aetherium Forge. At the bottom, look for a locked (apprentice) Dwarven Chest hidden around a dark corner. Then Pull another lever to open a gate. Braziers light up automatically as you approach them, showing you the way. Go down three tiers of stone steps to a bridge south and another bridge west. If you walk down the rock ledge next to the first bridge, you can enter the pool at the bottom. There, dive down to find a shiny Soul Gem lying on the bottom, next to the eastern wall of the pool. Look inside a grotto behind the waterfall to find a locked (adept) Dwarven Chest.

Then go up either set of steps to a patio with a tree growing from a stone planter. Open a locked (adept) Dwarven Chest inside a tunnel south. Find another Soul Gem underwater near the top of the falls, on the other side of the north tunnel. Then shoot any projectile at the two Harmonic Resonators. This causes water to flow from the mouths of the two bronze statue heads and opens the door. Past the door, at the bottom of the steps, take a few potions and open the door.

Past the door, an onscreen message tells you to turn off the steam. **Save your game.** To turn off the steam, turn the two large red valves east and west of the entrance. After the second valve closes, get ready to defend yourself against two to four Dwarven Spiders that pop from dispensers. After you have destroyed them, five to seven more spiders and a similar number of Dwarven Spheres will attack you. After you defeat them, a fire-breathing "Forgemaster" centurion will climb out of the lava. It will attack whomever it sees first. You hope that is Katria. While it attacks her, destroy the machine. If you take too long, you may have to turn off the steam valves again.

After you defeat the centurion, Katria will speak with you. She wants you to use the forge. Before you activate it, open the Stone Chest that the quest arrow points to. The chest holds the materials that you will need at the forge. When you activate it, the forge will automatically take the Aetherium Disc. An interactive screen will pop up.

At the screen, click on the word "Misc". See a list of three items:
Aetherial Crown - Aetherial Shield - Aetherial Staff

Read what each one can do and make your choice carefully. You only have enough Aetherium to make one of the items. If you have all of the right materials, then choose one of them.

Katria is very pleased when you show her what you made. This fulfills her life's work and now she thinks that she can rest. Her last words to you are, "Farewell my friend, wherever your travels take you". Then she disappears for the last time.

After she is gone, open a second Stone Chest. Note the ledge high above it. There is another ledge just like it above the other Stone Chest. The only way to get to either one is to swim west or east, through the boiling lava, to unlocked gates that open to passages that lead to those ledges.

Swimming in lava is further complicated by the steam that boils around you while you swim, because it seriously obscures your vision. Even for a character with very good armor and fire-resisting enhancements, this swim is only barely possible.

If you can get to it, find another Stone Chest behind a thick stone pillar on the other side of the lava southeast. Inside the chest, find good treasure.

There being no more Aetherium in all of Skyrim, you have done all you can at the forge. Exit the ruin with your prize.

Chris Barton - 11.18.2012