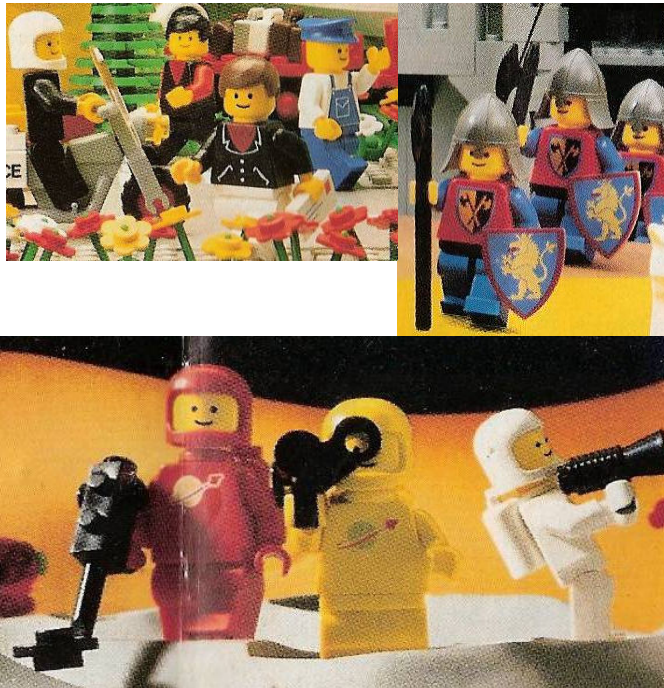


A Guide to the Pirates Minifigures

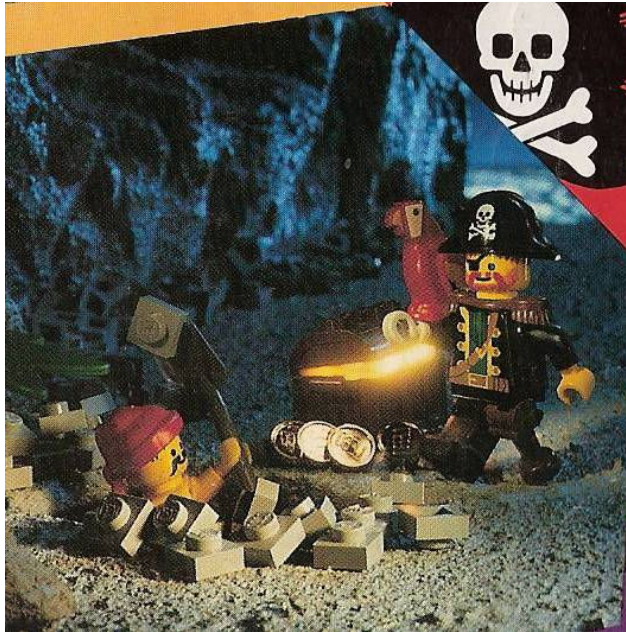
Part I: Yo Ho, Ho Ho, A Pirate Fig For Me!

Prior to 1989, all LEGO minifigures of every walk of life, whether they were train engineers, sports car drivers, astronauts or knights, all had the face. Two little black dots for eyes, and an optimistic little black bend of a line for a mouth. The only indication of gender was their hair pieces, and the usually uniform torsos kept most figures from standing out in a crowd.



Whether exploring the final frontier, mailing a letter, or marching off to wage bloody war, mini-figs were always so darned happy!

Then the LEGOLAND Pirates of the Sea arrived, and nothing was ever the same again.



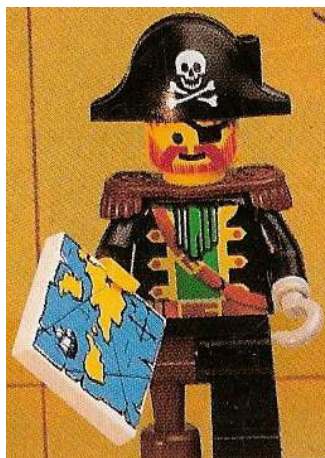
The LEGO Pirates: Exploring a hole new world of minifig possibilities.

Introducing what was arguably the first “bad guy” faction, LEGO broke with tradition and made the Pirates scruffy and villainous as no other minifig had been before, complete with eyepatches, beards, stubble, unkempt hair, and even hooks and peg legs.

In doing so, LEGO brought the concept of specific characters to its minifigures. Character driven themes, such as Adventurers and Knight’s Kingdom, would later come to predominate LEGO. At first, however, most Pirate figures remained generic. The initial minifig group included only four basic types.

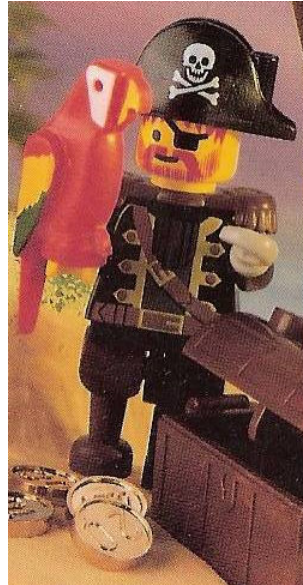
The Early Years: 1989-1991

The Pirate Captain



Captain on deck!

Call him Roger, Red Beard, or whatever you like, this distinctive seafarer was obviously the chief of the plastic buccaneers. He's also seen a lot of action, having only half his limbs and an eyepatch to boot. Take that, Long John Silver and Captain Hook! As if being the only minifig (at the time) with a peg leg, hook, and the obligatory skull-and-crossbone hat weren't enough to make him stand out, the Captain also wears solid black, uncommon among LEGO pirates. His coat is trimmed with yellow, and his shirt is oddly green. To complete this swashbuckling ensemble, he also wears a pair of brown epaulets, unique to this figure.



What's a pirate without a parrot?

Obtaining this pirate king was much easier for young LEGO fans than his snooty opposite on the soldier's side, who appeared only in two high priced sets. The Captain, by contrast, was everywhere: chilling at the Pirate bases, rescuing hapless members of his crew from jails, hunting for treasure in every minifigure pack, and, oh yeah, commanding his ship. As a result, the Pirates perhaps suffer from too many commanders. Still, the extra figures come in handy when the epaulets go missing or the hook breaks. The Captain has since appeared in one promotional Studios set sans epaulets and with his Jolly Roger cap replaced with the rarer solid black variety. It seems that the LEGO movie folks couldn't get all the historical details right.

The Pirate Wench



The money shot.

Female minifigures in every theme are rare, but the Wench was common enough, thanks to the 6251 Pirate Mini Figures set. Casting aside the old superstitions regarding women on board ships, I have enough to supply each pirate vessel in my fleet with one, be it mighty galleon or humble raft. The Pirate Wench has a pretty taste for fashion; her black belt sets off her red blouse quite nicely. Her face is also notable in being the first to deviate completely from the “smiley face” look. Where other Pirate figures used the standard face as a starting point, the Wench has red lipstick instead of a smile to emphasize her femininity, as if that cleavage weren’t enough.



No, I didn’t mean the dreaded *Cross Bone Clipper*...

The Wench, like the Captain, only ever came one to a set. Her look hardly ever changed; she consistently wore white pants and a blue bandanna in most sets, though she added a red bandanna to her wardrobe in 6273 Rock Island Refuge and wore black pants with that outfit for the dreadful 6250 Cross Bone Clipper. A similar figure, in green instead of white and red, appeared in the 6071 Forester’s Crossing Castle set; this

ancestor is worth tracking down to add variety to Pirate scenes. The Islander Girl in later sets shares her face, as does the apparently nude figurehead of the 6285 Black Seas Barracuda.



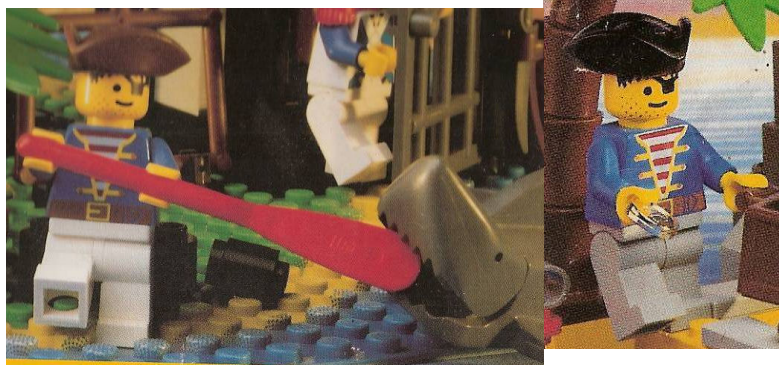
Ye Olde Wench

One-Eyed Jack



Jack with his favorite accessory: the red oar, useful for bucket rowing.

At last we come to one of the two minifigures who formed the backbone of the pirate crews: One-Eyed Jack. The only pirate besides the Captain with an eyepatch, Jack also has a yellow-trimmed jacket, but in blue rather than black. His blue-and-white striped shirt is visible beneath, adding more color.



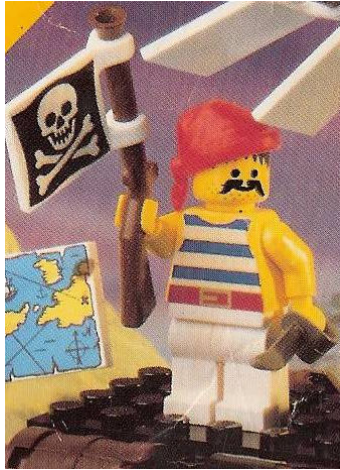
Also useful for fending off sharks.

Being possessed of a generic face and torso, Jack can be found alternating between brown and black hats, and grey, white, and black pants for variety. He never stoops so low as to wear a common bandanna, however. Evidently, Jack's thieving roots go back a few hundred years: his one-eyed forbearers in the castle theme commanded the Wolfpack Renegades.



Ye Olde Wolfe Pack Jack

The Common Striped Pirate AKA “Sergeant Garcia”



Hoist the colors!

So called by yours truly thanks to a resemblance to the character in Disney’s Zorro television show, Garcia is a jolly-looking, colorful pirate with large mustachios. Garcias have either red and white or blue and white striped shirts. His bare arms show that he’s not afraid of getting right to work, and a quick census shows that a large portion of the pirate crews were Garcias. (Black Seas Barracuda: 4, 6285 Skull’s Eye Schooner: 3, 6268 Renegade Runner: 2)



Shh, the Garcia on the right is sleeping. Hope he can breathe.

To counteract his prevalence, Garcia’s look varies quite a bit: red or blue bandannas with either red or blue shirt, and your choice of red, grey, white, blue, or even black pants. Some Garcias in later sets donned black tricorne hats and gained peg legs, but never wore jackets or brown hats. He was spotted aboard the 6271 Imperial Flagship, though whether he was a captive, spy, or legitimate sailor is up to you. He also appeared in the Wolfpack Renegade sets, again taking orders from old Jack. Probably the least sinister looking of the pirates, Garcia eventually left his criminal life behind entirely, becoming Sheriff of the Wild West theme, and even repairing X-Wings for the Rebel

Alliance. One should also note the somewhat rare but easily replicated Will figure from 6267 Lagoon Lock-Up and the 6255 Pirate Comic, who is merely an entirely red Garcia with a smiley face.

New Blood: 1992-1995

In 1992, the Pirate theme got a new look, and the Pirate's ranks were expanded with three additional minifigures. This brought some much needed diversity to the Pirate ships and bases, though the older figures still dominated the theme.

One-Eyed Tom



Isn't he cute?

Little Tom fits right in with the other pirates, looking as though he might be Jack's younger cousin. He too wears an eye patch, but his brownish hair is different from Jack's black locks. He is not as high up in the pirate ranks as his cousin, wearing one of the common sailor's sleeveless striped shirts, but clearly has a snappy sense of style, with red and black strips as opposed to red/blue and white.

Tom wears both red and blue bandannas, and has been known to wear black, red, blue, and even green trousers. He's also been known to sport a black tricorne from time to time.

Ironhook



Bet you can't guess how he got his name...

Often mistaken for the Pirate Captain in a different outfit, Ironhook is the second captain in the pirate theme. His face uses the same print as the Captain, but with a brownish beard and mustache. Like the Captain, Ironhook has a light gray pirate hook, but he managed to keep his leg intact in most sets. The most distinctive thing about Ironhook, however, is his ragged appearance. Whereas most of the LEGO pirates appear to be well dressed, Ironhook wears a torn red shirt that looks as though it's about to fall off. Why is his outfit in tatters? Perhaps it's due to many failed attempts at grabbing that inconveniently placed dagger with his hook.



On the deck of the Red Beard Runner

Ironhook nearly always wears the skull-and-cross bones hat previously seen only on the Pirate Captain, though in the only set in which they appear together, the Red Beard Runner, Ironhook wears a brown tricorn in order to make the command hierarchy clearer. He most often wears black pants, though he lost a leg at one point and was forced to wear a peg. Before this, he could also be seen wearing blue pants. In one set, 1788 Pirate's Chest, Ironhook gained a pair of blue epaulets, presumably taken from a murdered Imperial Guard.

Straight-Laced Steve



The ever-elusive Steve.

Ah, Steve. One of the rarest Pirate minifigures, making appearances only in two of the most expensive, highly sought after sets, Steve *appeared* to be the only civilian in the whole pirate line. Nevertheless, he was quite swashbuckling himself, with a fancy white shirt and tidy brown vest. In his first appearance, 6277 Imperial Trading Post, Steve was master of a tiny little trading vessel—the only example of such a ship in the whole pirate theme. With a re-use of the old Soldier lieutenant head, Steve appeared to be trustworthy and reliable. It came as something of a shock, therefore, to see Steve (or maybe a brother of his) join the crew of the Skull's Eye Schooner, a huge pirate ship that could (and probably did) eat his trading vessel for breakfast.

In his initial appearance, Steve wore a brown tricorn and blue pants. Upon throwing his lot in with the pirates, Steve changed to gray pants and a black tricorn hat, mirroring his gray allegiances and his black, traitorous soul.

A Whole New Crew: 1996-1997

1996 brought a wildly different look to the whole Pirate theme. Where the Pirate ships had once been grand, well thought out constructions, now they looked hastily thrown together and had a battle-worn appearance. It was the beginning of the end for Pirates, but one bright side was the new selection of Pirate minifigures. The Captain alone remained of the original 1989 Pirate figures, although the Wench returned for one last hurrah in the lamentable Cross Bone Clipper in the final year. While it was somewhat sad to see Jack and Garcia go, most of us longtime Pirate collectors had more than enough of them and were eager to get our hands and hooks on the new line.

Stubble Face



Look, just shave, will ya?

This pirate appears to be a replacement for One-Eyed Jack, and is every bit as scruffy and shifty looking as his predecessor, with the advantage of having two good eyes. (Most of the new pirates lacked the handicaps so prevalent among the older pirate crews.) Stubble face has gone even longer without shaving than many pirates, though not as long as some: that grey mess is not yet a beard. Like Jack, Stubble Face has a blue jacket, though his is left unbuttoned to reveal a brown vest.

Stubble Face appeared with a number of different pants: gray, black, green, and even a peg leg. He favored the black tricorn, though he settled for a brown one in the gloriously alliterative 6281 Pirates Perilous Pitfall, and was the only member of the new crew to never wear a bandanna.

“Fernando”



“Can you hear the drums, Fernando?”

I'm not even sure why I call him Fernando, except that he looks like one. He appears to be the replacement for Garcia, but Fernando clearly takes more pride in his dress. 'Ol Fernando appears to wear the pirate garb of an earlier era than the other pirates. Say late 17th century as opposed to the early 18th. One of the cooler Pirate torsos, Fernando wears a white shirt left waaaaay open and a nifty little green vest.

Fernando donned the usual assortment of pirate pants—red, black, green, blue, and yes, the infamous peg-leg. He typically wore a bandanna, usually red but with the rare black color for the 6289 Red Beard Runner. He also appeared with the brown tricorne in a few sets, and once, in the Pirates Perilous Pitfall (PPP), with the Jolly Roger hat—with a feather no less! Stealing Red Beard's thunder in the last year of the pirate line certainly took guts—clearly this is a pirate not to be underestimated.

Tattoo Guy



Do you get it? No? Try saying it out loud.

My personal favorite of the new pirates, this one was darn expensive to get in 1996, available only in the over-priced Red Beard Runner (that set included two; he was the only new figure to be repeated in a set), but LEGO later relented and included him in the more moderately priced 6249 Pirates Ambush as well as the PPP. The best part is the torso; Tattoo Guy wears only a purple vest and a swell looking anchor tattoo—the only visible body decoration in the history of the LEGO Pirates.

Tattoo Guy also wore the rare black bandanna, but more often the red, and only sported blue and grey pants. It's been suggested on Eurobricks that Tattoo Guy is one of the rarest Pirate figures, but I'd wager that the legendary Steve would wipe the floor with him any day. Tattoo Guy appeared in three sets, with the Red Beard Runner including two copies of the figure.

**Next month: It's A Pirate World--We Just Live in It:
Imperials, Islanders, and the Undead!**