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bar·bel¹  (bär bəl)

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n.

One of the slender, whiskerlike tactile organs extending from the head of certain fishes, such as catfishes. Also called *barb*¹.

[Obsolete French, from Old French, from Medieval Latin *barbula*, diminutive of Late Latin *barbus*, beard, from Latin *barba*; see **bhardh-ä-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]



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barbel¹

barbels on a channel catfish

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bar·bel²  (bär bəl)

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n.

Any of several freshwater cyprinid fishes of the genus *Barbus* of Eurasia and Africa, especially *B. barbus*, having four barbels on the upper jaw.

[Middle English, from Old French, from Medieval Latin **barbellus*, diminutive of *barbus*, from Latin *barba*, beard; see [BARBEL](#)¹.]

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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