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**WORLD
OF**

F O O D

*A delicious discovery
of what we eat*

THE BEGINNING OF CUISINE

The very earliest humans hunted animals and gathered wild plants but they had to eat everything raw. When people learned how to control fire, however, everything changed. They had invented cooking.

STONE-AGE DIET

The ancestors of modern humans may have used fire to cook meat 1.8 million years ago. Cooked meat was easier to digest, which made it more nutritious than raw meat. Cooking it also made it less likely to make people ill, but, best of all, it added tasty flavour. Eating was no longer just about refuelling the body – it was something people did for enjoyment.

ÖTZI THE ICEMAN

Ötzi the iceman lived 5,300 years ago, and his body was preserved in ice in the European Alps. We know a lot about his diet from his remains. His final meal included...



Wild goat



Red deer

Particles of charcoal suggest the meat Ötzi ate was cooked or smoked to preserve it.



Einkorn wheat



FOSSILISED FOOD

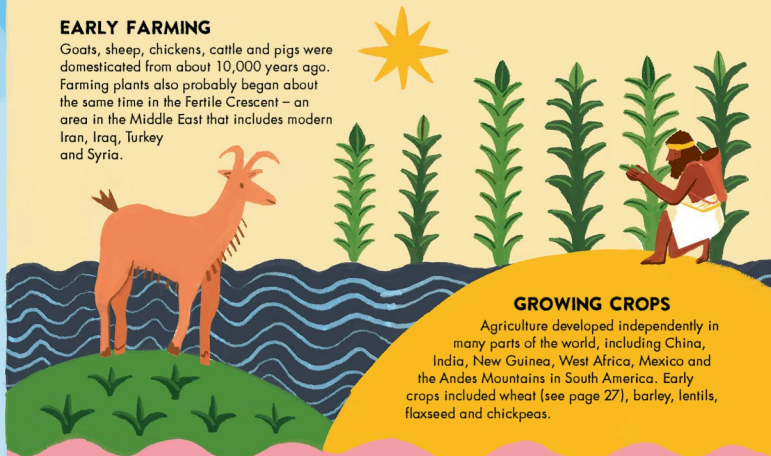
Archaeologists can often work out what prehistoric people ate by studying remains left in cooking pots and even analysing fossilised poo! In Britain around 6000 BCE, people enjoyed nettle pudding and roast hedgehog.



Ötzi the iceman

EARLY FARMING

Goats, sheep, chickens, cattle and pigs were domesticated from about 10,000 years ago. Farming plants also probably began about the same time in the Fertile Crescent – an area in the Middle East that includes modern Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria.



GROWING CROPS

Agriculture developed independently in many parts of the world, including China, India, New Guinea, West Africa, Mexico and the Andes Mountains in South America. Early crops included wheat (see page 27), barley, lentils, flaxseed and chickpeas.

INVENTING FOR FOOD

Many early technologies were designed to make the gathering, production, preparation or storage of food easier.



The earliest pottery shards date from around 20,000 years ago and were found in Central China. Pottery was useful for storing food and cooking.



Around 30,000 years ago, Indigenous Australians found that if they ground wild grain between two stones they could mix it with water and bake it to make bread.



The oldest-known fishing net was found in the town of Antrea, Finland, in 1913, and it has been carbon-dated to 8540 BCE.

The oldest written recipes can be found on clay tablets dating from around 1750 BCE. They are written in a text called cuneiform, used by the ancient Mesopotamians.



A plough is a large tool that is used to make ground ready for seeds to be sown. The earliest-ever ploughed field was found in Prague, in the Czech Republic. It is over 3,500 years old.



Early ovens were 'pit ovens', dug into the ground and lined with stones. One early example is in Mezhrich, Ukraine. It dates to 20,000 BCE, and was used to cook mammoth!

ANCIENT ROMAN BANQUETS

In ancient times, like today, people loved to celebrate with fancy food. In Rome, wealthy people enjoyed banquets so much they painted pictures of them on their walls. Archaeologists have found ancient Roman cookbooks and have even excavated the remains of the food itself. At its height, the Roman Empire spanned much of Europe and parts of North Africa and West Asia. Rome was supplied with food from around the Empire and beyond.

A ROMAN FEAST

Cena was a celebratory meal or banquet. It often had three elaborate courses served in a *triclinium*, or formal dining room. Diners did not sit upright, but laid down on low couches to eat. The guests were served by household slaves.

Lots of fish was eaten, and wealthy guests might have dined on exotic swordfish.

Sauces were strong-smelling and strong-tasting, made with salt, vinegar, spices and herbs. *Garum* was a pungent, salty sauce made from fermented fish innards. The Romans used it on many foods.

Few Romans liked beef, but they did eat hare, chicken, pheasant, lamb and pork. Wild boar was highly valued and often eaten at lavish banquets.

Snails or cochleas were soaked in milk and salt, and then fried in oil to eat.

Wine, olive oil and garum were kept in tall terracotta jars called amphorae.

It was considered polite to batch. It showed you'd enjoyed the meal!

Olives were extremely important, both as food and pressed into olive oil.

Nuts included walnuts, hazelnuts and almonds.

Only the rich could afford fine white bread made with refined wheat flour.

Sausages or farcimina were extremely popular, and whole chapters of cookbooks were devoted to their preparation.

The Romans loved fruits such as apples, peaches, grapes, pomegranates, plums, pears and especially figs.

Edible dormice were about the size of squirrels. Chefs kept them in a special 'fattening jar' called a *glirarium* and fed them on nuts. When the dormice were big enough, they were killed, stuffed with minced pork and baked.

Honey was used to sweeten dishes. The Romans did not have sugar.

RICH AND POOR

Wealthy Romans may have enjoyed exotic delicacies but the poor had much less delicious food. They had to make do with porridge called *pulmentaria* and vegetables such as lentils and onions. Many slaves ate shellfish and filled up with coarse, dry bread made from barley.

WHERE FOOD COMES FROM

Fruits, vegetables and other food crops don't always originate from the places where they are grown today. Many of the foods we eat every day were first cultivated on just one continent or island for thousands of years before they were spread by trade or migration.



NEW FOODS

When Europeans first went to the Americas, they brought many foods back, including potatoes, tomatoes and corn.

SWEET POTATOES

The sweet potato, or *kumara* as it is known in New Zealand, originally came from South America. Around 1000 CE it is thought that Polynesian sailors travelling from the Pacific Islands picked up sweet potatoes in South America, then journeyed on to New Zealand.

This map shows where some of the foods we are familiar with originally came from.

TRAVELLING APPLES

Some people think apples may have been brought from Asia to Europe by traders travelling along the Silk Road who ate the fruits and threw the cores away.

FAR AND WIDE

Some foods grow wild in more than one region. That's because the land has shifted. Over millions of years, the continents moved apart, and some countries that are now separated were once joined together. Back then, animals and weather conditions would have helped spread seeds.

FOOD CROPS

Millet and sorghum are cereal crops – types of grasses that produce edible seeds, or grain. Different species of millet come from Africa, the Middle East and China. Sorghum probably originated in Africa and spread around the globe.

TERRIFIC TUBERS

Some plants develop starchy growths, called tubers, on their roots to store nutrients for winter. Our ancestors quickly discovered that these tubers tasted good and they have been a vital food source for thousands of years.

THE HUMBLE POTATO

Potatoes originate from South America. People in modern-day Peru and Bolivia started growing them by 5000 BCE and possibly as early as 10,000 BCE. In the sixteenth century, Spanish conquistadors introduced potatoes to Europe. At first, Europeans thought the knobby vegetables were poisonous, but they soon discovered that they were easy to grow, filling and could be cooked in lots of different ways.

In the eighteenth century, King Louis XVI of France and his wife, Marie Antoinette, wore potato flowers in their clothes. This encouraged French farmers to grow the new crop.

THE POTATO FAMINE

The humble potato changed the course of history. In the 1840s and 1850s, a disease called blight started to attack potatoes. A mould covered the vegetables with purple spots, making them rot in the fields. In some countries in Europe at this time poor people relied on potatoes for food. The potato famine had a devastating effect, especially in Ireland. Here, one million people died and another million left the country. This migration continued for decades, with four million people leaving the country in the 50 years after the famine.

Colcannon (Ireland)
A mixture of mashed potatoes and cabbage.



Gnocchi (Italy)
Potato dumplings that are eaten with a variety of sauces.



Chips and fries
Sliced and deep-fried potatoes are enjoyed around the world.



POTATO DISHES AROUND THE WORLD

Potatoes are very versatile and can be cooked in almost any way. It seems every country has its own favourite dish.



Gamjajeon (Korea)
Fried savoury pancakes made with grated or ground potatoes.

Saag aloo (India)
Spiced potatoes with spinach.



Hash browns (USA)
Fried shredded potatoes.



Gratin dauphinois (France)
Thinly sliced potatoes baked in milk or cream.



OTHER TUBERS WE EAT

Potatoes aren't the only tubers we eat. Jerusalem artichokes and dahlias have edible tuberous roots and some other tubers are even more popular than potatoes in parts of the world.

Cassava, also known as manioc or yuca, is a woody, brown tuber. It was originally from South America. Today, it is a staple food for nearly one billion people around the world. Many people cook with tapioca, a starch extracted from the cassava plant.



Kat-kat manioc is a stew from Mauritius made with green vegetables, beans and cassava.

Yams come from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Their long, brown tubers are traditionally boiled or roasted. They can be white, yellow, pink and purple, and can taste sweet or bitter.



Yam is a classic base for **fufu**, a dish made of pounded starchy vegetables. Fufu originates in West Africa and is also found in the Caribbean.

Unrelated to the regular potato or the yam, **sweet potato** is a sweet-tasting tuber full of fibre, vitamins and minerals. It is popular around the world.



In Korea, **gun-goguma** (roasted sweet potatoes) are baked in big drums by street vendors in winter. They taste sweet and nutty.