

Stone Age people may have enjoyed a healthier diet than many people living today. Humans were hunter-gatherers for much of the Stone Age. This meant that they had to hunt animals and gather food that was growing wild. They ate vegetables and fruit that were in season and lots of healthy fish. They would take honey from wild beehives if they wanted something sweeter.

Part of being a hunter-gatherer meant moving from place to place to find food. Stone Age people were stronger and more physically fit because of their lifestyle. There wasn't any of the powerful medicines or medical knowledge that we enjoy today. That meant that any injury might be life-threatening. Even a small cut could become infected. They would have relied on wild herbs and mystical beliefs to try to heal their sick.

Some of the varied diet that the Stone Age people enjoyed will be very familiar to you. Some things might seem a bit more ... interesting.



Seeds and Nuts

Seeds and nuts would have been harvested throughout the year. They were a great source of protein and fibre. There is also evidence that Stone Age people ate grass seed and wild grasses.



Pondweed

Scientists have found evidence in Stone Age fire pits that people ate lots of aquatic plants. These included seaweed and pondweed and others that grew in the rivers. The fact they were found in the fire shows that they were cooked before being eaten.

Fish and Shellfish

Stone Age people knew how to hunt fish in rivers. They would use barbed spears or nets to catch fish and crabs. People that lived near to the coast would also fish in the sea for food.



Eels

It wasn't only fish that Stone Age people caught and ate from the water. They ate eels and anything else they could catch. There is also evidence that they ate insects, bats, foxes and moles.



Farm Animals

Humans started to farm animals during the Neolithic period. The first animals they domesticated were cattle, sheep and pigs. Having animals close by meant that it was easier to find food. This was a big factor in people creating permanent villages and towns.

RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. Where did scientists find evidence that people ate plants from rivers?
2. Which strange creatures did the Stone Age people eat from the water?
3. What was a great source of protein and fibre?
4. Where did people who lived by the coast fish?
5. What might they have used to heal injured people?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

In the section **Farm Animals**, find a word that means something was tamed and no longer wild.

S

Why might some Stone Age people have had healthier diets than modern humans?

I

Why does the author suggest you might find some of the foods more interesting?

I

Why might a small cut have been dangerous?

V

In the introduction, find a word that means “lots of choice”.

Answers:

1. The fire pits
2. Eels
3. Seeds and nuts
4. In the sea
5. Wild herbs and mystical beliefs

V: Domesticated

S: They had lots of exercise and ate healthy, natural foods. Children may point out that they had no sweets or fast-food either.

I: They are unusual or strange choices of things to eat/we don't eat them today

I: It might get infected and there wasn't medicine to treat it

V: Varied