

Hunter-gatherers

About 2 million years ago

Homo erectus began to evolve. They were the first hunter-gatherers that looked and behaved a bit like us.

Hunter-gatherers were some of the earliest humans on Earth. Their culture developed as far back as 2 million years ago in Africa before the world as we know it today. These people had a particular way of getting what they needed to survive and were the first to develop a regular and varied diet. Read on to find out what made them so special.

How did they get their name?

Hunting was a big part of their life. They used tools, like spears and bows and arrows, to catch animals such as deer, rabbits and fish. They needed skill and a lot of patience to succeed. Sometimes they worked alone, but mostly, they worked together to catch bigger animals.

Gathering was important too. Hunter-gatherers picked fruits, nuts and plants from the wild. They were extremely clever, for they knew which plants were safe to eat and which could be used as medicine.



How did they get their name?

Over time, humans learnt new ways to source food and build homes. People began to farm and raise animals, which changed how they lived. Because they could grow food in one place, they could settle, build homes and settlements and didn't have to move around to find food. With more reliable food, families grew and people had spare time to learn new jobs, like making tools or weaving, and to trade with others.

Hunter-gatherers still matter in this story. Their way of life was a major step in human history, and we can still learn from them today. They teach us survival skills and show us how people lived long ago. Even though our lives are different now, it's important to understand where we came from and how things used to be.

How did they live?

They typically lived in groups of 10 or 12

Their homes were simple shelters made from sticks, leaves, and animal hides. These shelters were easy to build and take down so they could be moved easily. This was helpful because they followed the animals and the changing seasons. Even though they didn't have books or TVs, hunter-gatherers had other ways to share stories and pass on their knowledge. They used cave paintings and carvings to show their experiences and had their own languages and communication methods.



Prehistoric hand paintings made by hunter-gatherers.



Bringing lunch home!

Almost 800,000 years ago,

Hunter-gatherers began to use fire for cooking and guarding against predators.