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# Historical Evolution of Food

## UNIT 2





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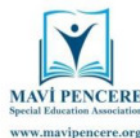
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## 2.1. Human History and Food

In the beginning of the history of mankind, the nutrition culture was based on foraging, and communities would migrate to different regions as their food got depleted. With the development of the tools used, hunting also started to develop, and the social order was established to provide food for feeding. The populations of societies whose diets started to change increased in number, and this process laid the foundations for sedentary life. The transition to settled life brought progress in agriculture and accelerated the development of materials (utensils, etc.) used for cooking. Societies that benefited from seeds only by eating them in their foraging life also needed methods of planting seeds in the soil and making use of them in different ways.

The excess of food after productive harvests also led to the improvement of food storage and storage conditions. Initially small settlements began to turn into villages and then into big cities over time. Thus, the protection of agricultural lands and the process of finding food gained more importance and wars began in the history of mankind.

People, whose lands or fields are damaged in a different region, spread over different lands to survive or seized different agricultural lands in order not to starve. For this reason, the process that started with the protection of the lands and fields prepared the ground for the military system. Counting, storing and distributing the products obtained from the protected lands formed the social rules and the first professional distributions. With the domestication that started in 8000 BC, humans took animals under control for the first time. Along with this, the domestication of horses led to development in the military field, while milk and products were introduced into the diet of people for the first time. Societies that produced their own food, created food surplus and switched to animal husbandry became a state by growing, while hunter-gatherer societies either disappeared or joined agricultural societies.



## 2.2. Cereals and Historical Process

Grain group contains bread, rice, pasta, noodles, couscous, bulgur, oats, barley and breakfast cereals. These foods are made from grains such as wheat, oats, rice, rye, barley, and corn. Cereals have an important place in human nutrition. Although grain consumption is mainly in the form of flour, wheat flour is understood firstly when flour is mentioned, and other flours are also referred to by the name of the grain from which they are obtained.

Wheat, a vital cereal plant, is also one of the most valuable building blocks of biodiversity on earth. Wheat is the most produced plant in the world. It is also the livelihood of millions of people and the raw material of many industrial products. While wheat meets a large proportion of the food need, it is accepted as an important food in many different parts of the world with the process of spreading to the world starting from Mesopotamia. The wheat-human relationship, which started in the hunter-gatherer period, became indispensable with the transition to the settled order.

Although the history of the collection of grains from nature dates back to 17000 BC (Tanno and Willcox, 2006), wheat was brought to the New World for the first time by the Spaniards, and with the planting of a few wheat grains in rice sacks sent from Spain to Mexico in 1529 it was introduced to the American continent. It is believed that the historical migration route of the varieties defined as Mexican wheat emerged in this way.

Cereals (wheat, barley, rye and oat) cereal products are important nutrients for health since they contain high levels of potassium, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, a small amount of fat and other nutrients. It has important roles in nervous system, digestive system, skin health and resistance to diseases.





## 2.3. Migration of Fruits

Fruits began to be another source of human food in three ways in the world; the collection of wild species from nature, the cultivation of native species slowly bred by nature and man, and the development of species transported through successive colonies and migrations from the Neolithic ages to the present. In tropical countries where the rural population is dense or in countries where winter is too harsh to be suitable for the growing large fruits, people just picked them from their wild environments, on the other hand the cultivation of domesticated species has enabled intensive fruit growing in Mediterranean countries. Fruit trees are able to withstand summer droughts thanks to their roots and have allowed and enabled the development of civilisations and gastronomy history for millennia.

Many species of fruit were introduced to Egypt in the 20th century BC. They were also present in the eastern shores of the Mediterranean by means of migrations before the 10th century BC. People can take care of and produce olive, fig, almond, pistachio and oak trees growing wild in their own nature since the Bronze Age and their growth has been improved by grafting in 4500s BC. They also enabled the transformation of wild vineyards and olive groves into the growing areas in Ancient Greece between the 11th and 6th century BC. The Phoenicians ensured the spread of olives, figs and grapes to the Mediterranean.

Alexander the Great brought the first citrus (cedrat), which is known to have been grown towards the end of the 6th century BC, to Ancient Greece. It is known that Italy was covered with orchards in the period after Christ, and legionnaires carried these fruits to Spain. While fruit cultivation in Europe declined significantly with the collapse of the Roman Empire, it is seen that the information on fruit cultivation continued in monasteries. Banana, which emerged from Ethiopia and Indonesia in the 6th century AD, spread to the tropical belt of all Africa in the following years. The arrival of the Spanish made the banana appear on the Pacific coast of America, too. It is known that while lemons came to Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries, apricots and peaches were transported to Europe via Arabia, and thus the foundations of fruit growing using irrigation systems began to be laid.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the Spaniards, Portuguese and British took European fruits with them to America, and they brought



avocado, pineapple and strawberry from there. In the Netherlands and Portugal, people started to grow oranges, grapefruit, tangerines and bananas brought from Asia in their own countries, thus many types of fruit as we know today spread to Europe, Asia and America towards the 1600s.

It is known that apples, pears, peaches, cherries, plums, apricots, grapes, figs, strawberries, currants, raspberries, melons and oranges were cultivated in France in the 1600s, but these products were considered luxurious and did not have much opportunity to spread in the countryside. Fruit growing, which had the opportunity to reach the most suitable climate and soil conditions with the establishment of the railway network in Europe in the 19th century, is developing with today's modern methods and techniques.

## 2.4. Historical Process of Spices

Traces of spices in human history date back to 5000 BC. The need to keep excess food unspoiled eventually led people to develop various methods, and it is known that spices were used for this purpose in the early periods of history. People realised that the spices that they used prevented the meat from spoiling and added different flavours to the meat over time, so it was generally seen as an additional method to add flavours to all foods.

Spices were used for the first time in the world in the Far East and its trade initially started in China. The spice trade started by the Chinese and it developed via Arabia and reached a wide range of areas with the contribution of India, which is one of the places where spices are produced most. Spices, which came to countries such as Egypt and Italy by land and sea, spread to the west with Ancient Greek traders. Although it is known that the first spice that the West met was black pepper and that black pepper was a very expensive spice in the early days, there were times when many spices, which are quite accessible today, were not even allowed to enter some countries.

Spices have had a great importance for people since the ancient times. People used them not only to add flavour into the dishes, but also made use of them in the field of health and cosmetics and in some religious rituals as well. Sometimes, bay leaves were made into a golden crown and placed on the kings' heads, and sometimes they were used in baths as fragrant oils.





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Spices have many benefits, and they were used in Ancient Greece, Sumer, Assyria, Egypt, China and Rome in the field of health thanks to their antibacterial properties. Spices are also used in the treatment of problems such as nausea, indigestion, cold, fatigue, high fever and diabetes. Many famous physicians in history (Galen, Hippocrates, etc.) used spices in the production of various medicines and contributed to the provision of important developments in the field of medicine.

Spices, which have a great importance for humans in history, are not only used by grinding, but also continue to provide benefits in the form of essential oils and liquid aromas. Spices seem to maintain their significance over the years as an indispensable part of the gastronomy world with their scents and aromas.

