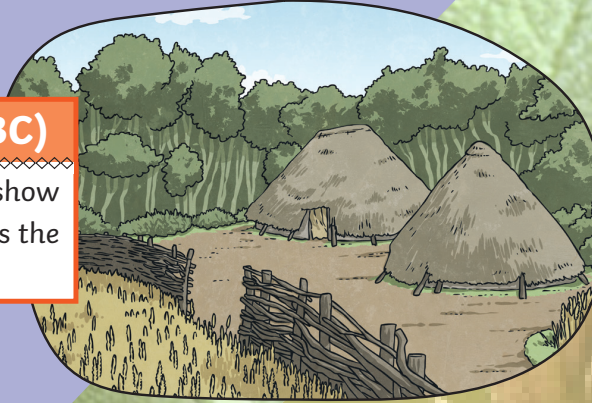


History of Spices Timeline

Neolithic Period (c.8000 BC - c.3000 BC)

Archaeological remains from tombs and caves in Europe show that plants were being used for seasoning food as early as the Neolithic period.



c.1750 BC

Three clay tablets survived from ancient Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq, Syria and Turkey). More than 30 recipes were recorded on them. Cumin and coriander were imported. The tablets form the world's oldest cookbook.

3000 BC

2500 BC

2000 BC



c.2700 BC

According to ancient myths, the first guide to Chinese herbal medicine, 'Pen Ts'ao Ching', was written by Shen Nung around this time. This document refers to over one hundred plants, including the spice cassia which is similar to cinnamon. Evidence suggests the Chinese carried cloves in their mouths when addressing the emperor to keep their breath fresh.

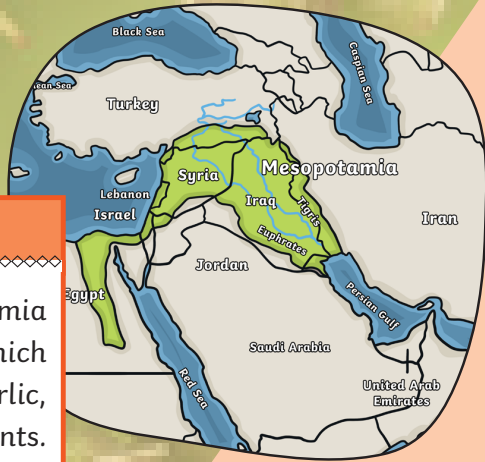


c.1550 BC

Ancient Egyptians employed herbs and spices, including cinnamon, in cosmetics, medicine and food. The Ebers Papyrus - dated around 1550 BC - is a medical document listing herbs and spices and their uses.

BC

In ancient Mesopotamia (modern-day Turkey) on which is recorded where garlic, important ingredients. Oldest cookbook.



c.1500 - 1000 BC

Cloves, nutmeg and mace were transported to India from the Moluccas, which became known as the Spice Islands, in eastern Indonesia. Nutmeg and mace were frequently mentioned in the oldest scriptures of Hinduism in India, the Vedas, composed between 1500 and 1000 BC.



In ancient Greece, about the spices of Asia scented with them, (sweet'. In 400 BC, Hippocrates 'The Father of Medicine', wrote a book illustrating the value of spices in treating disease. During the spice trade developed using camel caravan trade route that link

1500 BC

1000 BC

500 BC

c.1550 BC

The Egyptians embalmed their mummies with spices, as well as using them as medicines and to flavour food. Papyrus - dating from around 1550 BC is a document detailing knowledge of spices and their medicinal properties.

c.1000 BC - AD 0

Many references were made in the Christian Bible to the use of various herbs and spices, such as frankincense and myrrh. This is evidence of their widespread use across western Asia at this time. In 1000 BC, Queen Sheba was said to have visited King Solomon in Jerusalem and offered him '120 measures of gold, many spices, and precious stones', indicating that spices were considered to be valuable items.



The Greek physician Hippocrates over 500 years ago absorbed into the city of Alexandria world. The Roman Arabian mercantile spices became flourished as spices became

c.500 BC

In Greece, Herodotus wrote in *The Histories* about the spices of Arabia where 'the whole country is full of them, and exhales an odour marvellously sweet'. In 400 BC, Hippocrates, dubbed the 'Father of Medicine', wrote a collection of medical documents describing the value of herbs in easing pain and curing ailments. During the Bronze Age, a profitable herb trade developed between the Arab World and India, with camel caravans along the Silk Road (an ancient trade route that linked Europe with east Asia).



AD 300 - 1100

Following the fall of the Roman Empire, sea trade routes to India collapsed and spices became more difficult and expensive to obtain in Europe. However, the spice trade continued to flourish along the Silk Road, with Constantinople becoming a major commercial centre. While Europe declined during the Dark Ages, the Indonesian, Arabian, Chinese and Indian traders continued to profit from trading in spices.



AD 0

AD 100

AD 200

AD 300

AD 400

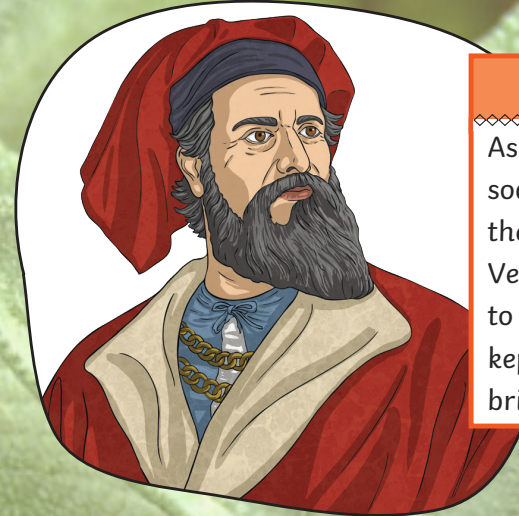
AD 500

AD 600

c.AD 100

The Greek physician, Dioscorides, further developed the earlier work of Hippocrates by listing the medicinal properties of over 500 plants in his 'De Materia Medica'. Egypt was absorbed into the Roman Empire in 30 BC, and by AD 100 the city of Alexandria had become the biggest trading port in the world. The Romans began to sail directly to India, bypassing Arabian merchants along the Silk Road, which meant that spices became easier and cheaper to obtain. The spice trade flourished as the Roman Empire expanded and the use of spices became more widespread across Europe.





AD 1

As demand for spices grew, prices soared and people began to pay more for the cost. Marco Polo embarked on a journey from Venice to discover a new route to the East to bypass the Arab traders who kept prices high. He returned to Europe bringing with him new and

AD 600

AD 700

AD 800

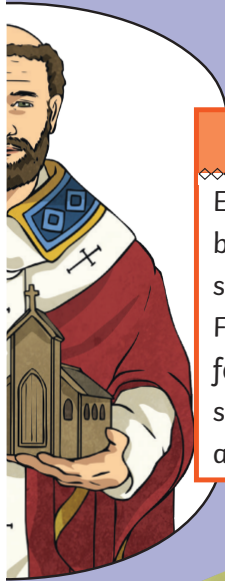
AD 900

AD 1000

AD 1100

AD 750 - 800

European cultivation of spices and herbs was largely controlled by the church during this period. Benedictine monks used spices for medicinal purposes. Charlemagne, the King of France and Holy Roman Emperor, was the first leader to have farmers plant culinary herbs such as anise, fennel, fenugreek, sage, thyme, parsley and coriander. However, these were only available to the very wealthy for use in food.

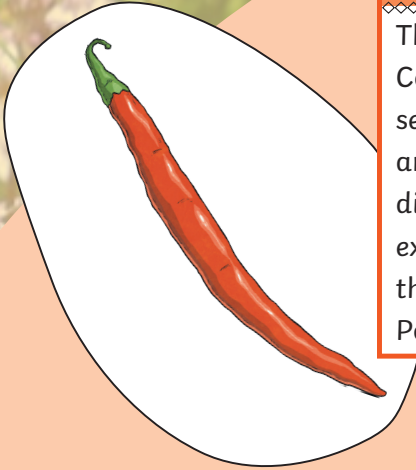


AD 1100 - 1300

The Crusades - a series of religious wars between Christians and Muslims - led to an increased level of international trade, including trade in spices. Black pepper, in particular, became extremely valuable and was even used as currency. Wealthy brides received pepper as a dowry and some landlords received "peppercorn rent" (rent paid using peppercorn). The Italian cities of Venice and Genoa grew especially wealthy as they capitalised on the renewed trade in spices.

AD 1270

As spices grew throughout Europe, prices rose and people began to search for ways to reduce the cost. Marco Polo embarked on a journey from Europe over a new route to east Asia. He sought to bypass the Arab traders who controlled trade and the Silk Road. He returned 25 years later from China, bringing him new and exotic herbs and spices.



AD 1492

The European Age of Exploration began with Christopher Columbus, who set sail from Spain for his voyage west in search of a new route to India. He returned with allspice and chilli peppers from the Caribbean and named the newly-discovered land the West Indies. In 1497, the Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama, set out to discover a sea route to the East. He reached the west coast of India and returned to Portugal with a cargo of herbs, spices and jewels.

AD 1519

Magellan's fleet of ships completed the first circumnavigation of the globe. His ship returned to Spain with a rich cargo from the Philippines and the Moluccas. A wide variety of spices became available throughout Europe as a result of his exploration and the opening of the sea routes.

AD 1200

AD 1300

AD 1400

AD 1500

AD 1600

AD 1325

An Islamic scholar, Ibn Battuta, travelled from his home in Tangier, Morocco across the Islamic world, crossing north Africa, Arabia, India, China, Sri Lanka and arrived at the Spice Islands, before returning to Morocco. He was the person who had travelled the greatest distance at that time in history. He wrote a travel book called the 'Rihlah', The Journey, detailing his experiences along the Silk Road as well as across the maritime trade routes.



AD 1519

Spanish conquistadors, led by Hernan Cortez, conquered Mexico and discovered vanilla, which was used by the Aztecs as a flavouring to season their chocolate beverages.

As wars between European powers increased, the demand for spices rose to a new level. The price of spices increased to an extremely high level. Wealthy merchants and some kings used their money to buy spices from Venice and they capitalised on the high prices.



AD 1521

Magellan's fleet completed the first circumnavigation of the globe. One of the main reasons for the voyage was to find a route from Europe to the Spice Islands. A wider range of herbs and spices became available in Europe as a result of exploration and colonisation.



Present Day

Today, herbs and spices are traded around the world and are used in a wide variety of ways. As technology has advanced, the world has become easier to navigate, goods are transported more easily, which has resulted in a vast range of spices being available at a lower price.

1600

AD 1700

AD 1800

AD 1900

AD 2000

AD 1600 - 1800

At various times, the Portuguese, Dutch, French, Spanish and English established dominance over various parts of the spice trade in various parts of the world. The United States entered the spice trade when the American 'clipper' ships sailed to the east carrying tobacco, sugar and cotton in exchange for tea, coffee, textiles and spices. This period saw empires and fortunes made but was also characterised by brutal conquests, piracy, and greed. Many devastating battles were fought between European countries competing with one another for power and wealth, and the legacy of colonisation is still being felt by many people today. By AD 1800, no single country had dominance over the spice trade and prices began to fall.

