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Cooking began 600,000 years earlier than we thought – 21st November, 2022

Level 4

People may have started using fire to cook food 600,000 years before previously thought. Archeologists in Israel say that our early ancestors used fire to cook fish 770,000 years ago. These prehistoric humans lived on the banks of the Jordan River. They used fire to cook "huge fish" they caught in a nearby lake. Until this new discovery, scientists believed that the first "definitive evidence" of cooking was by Neanderthals and early Homo sapiens, around 170,000 years ago.

Researchers spent 16 years analyzing ancient fish bones and teeth. They told reporters that: "It was like facing a puzzle...until we could make a story about human evolution." Their biggest problem was to find out whether or not the fish had been eaten raw and then their bones thrown into the fire, or whether it had been cooked first. They said: "The whole question about exposure to fire is whether it is about getting rid of remains or a desire to cook."

Level 5

Researchers say people started using fire to cook food 600,000 years before previously thought. Archeologists from a university in Israel claim that our early ancestors used fire to cook fish 770,000 years ago. These prehistoric humans lived alongside the banks of the Jordan River in present-day Israel. They used fire to cook "huge fish" they caught in a nearby lake. Until this new discovery, scientists believed that the first "definitive evidence" of cooking was by Neanderthals and early Homo sapiens, around 170,000 years ago. The researchers will now look for more signs of prehistoric cooking.

Lead researcher Irit Zohar spent 16 years analyzing ancient fish bones and teeth. Her analysis showed that the baked fish had been eaten 770 millennia ago. She told a news agency that: "It was like facing a puzzle...until we could make a story about human evolution." She added that her biggest problem was to ascertain whether or not the fish had been eaten raw and then their bones thrown into the fire, or whether it had been cooked first. She said: "The whole question about exposure to fire is whether it is about getting rid of remains or a desire to cook." She said the fish were two-metre-long carp.

Level 6

New research suggests that using fire to cook food started 600,000 years before previously thought. Archeologists from the Tel Aviv University's Steinhardt Museum of Natural History in Israel assert that our early ancestors cooked fish with fire 770,000 years ago. The archaeologists claim that these prehistoric humans, who lived alongside the banks of the Jordan River in what is present-day northern Israel, used fire to cook the "huge fish" they caught in a nearby lake. They say their finding is the earliest recorded evidence of food being cooked. Until this new discovery, scientists believed the first "definitive evidence" of cooking was by Neanderthals and early Homo sapiens, around 170,000 years ago.

Lead researcher Irit Zohar spent 16 years analyzing ancient fish bones and the enamel found on fish teeth. Her analysis showed that the grilled or baked fish had been eaten 770 millennia ago. She told the AFP news agency that: "It was like facing a puzzle, with more and more information until we could make a story about human evolution." She added that her biggest conundrum was to ascertain whether or not the fish had been eaten raw and then their bones thrown into the fire, or whether it had been cooked first. She said: "The whole question about exposure to fire is whether it is about getting rid of remains or a desire to cook." She said the fish were two-metre-long carp, that would have been particularly succulent when cooked.