

Thanks to DNA research, we now know that everyone on the planet is descended from a small group of people who lived just 60,000 years ago on the savannahs of East Africa. There are conflicting opinions about exactly what they ate and whether, since then, our bodies have had time to adapt to the major changes that have occurred in the human diet. Here, **Geoff Bond** tells us why he believes that we are still living with bodies and brains designed for a hunter-gatherer life.

Life on the Wild Side eating like a hunter-gatherer

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So what was the savannah lifestyle that shaped us humans? Evidence points to forager bands of some eight to ten families. Every day the women went off foraging, carrying children on their backs. The men went off singly or in small groups: trapping, scavenging or occasionally hunting. People may have eaten around two to three pounds of plant food per day and eight to twelve ounces of animal food.

Studies on modern foragers like the !Kung San, Australian Aboriginals and Hadza find that these peoples don't suffer obesity, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, arthritis, and all the other 'diseases of civilization' we know today.¹⁻³ Their blood cholesterol levels (in spite of high intake) and blood pressure are

low. They don't have varicose veins, acne or cellulite. All of these conditions are due to the mismatch between our evolutionary history and the way we live today.

Plant power

Our ancient ancestors ate large volumes of plant food that was rich in micronutrients and high in fibre.⁴ Our bodies came to expect a consistent throughput of that kind of plant food. As well as high levels of vitamins and minerals, these plants were packed with phytochemicals – those tens of thousands of flavonoids, carotenes, terpenes and the like. Our biochemistry has been shaped by them.

Our bodies also rely on a healthy biomass in our colons, for which a plentiful supply of fibre is vital.⁵ When our gut bacteria aren't right, things go wrong,

