Stone Age Spice

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Stone Age spice found, according to reports in ScienceNOW, Nature News and BBC News 21 August 2013. A team of European archaeologists have studied charred residue on cooking pots from three archaeological sites in northern Germany and Denmark dated as 6,100 to 5,750 years old. They found microscopic mineral deposits that are found in plant stems and seeds labelled phytoliths. These often have a distinctive shape that enables scientists to identify what plant they came from. Researchers compared the phytoliths with those produced in the stems, leaves, and seeds of more than 120 European and Asian plants, and found a match with those in the seeds of garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*). Garlic mustard is a herb found throughout Europe and parts of Asia. It has a strong peppery flavour, but not much nutritional value, so the archaeologists concluded it had been added as a flavour enhancer. Hayley Saul, a bioarchaeologist at the University of York, UK, who led the study, commented that the findings showed "hunter-gatherers at the transition to agriculture, had a sophisticated attitude to cooking".

BBC, Nature News

Editorial Comment: It should be no surprise that hunter/gatherers knew how to cook flavoured food, because hunter/gatherers were not ape-men on their way up, but intelligent human beings on their way down. The people who first populated northern Europe were descendants of those who left the Tower of Babel, who were acknowledged by God as being so smart that nothing they planned would be impossible for them. (Genesis 11:6). However, much knowledge would have been lost as this population split into smaller groups, who had to learn to survive as they migrated into new environments away from the Middle East. Some definitely lost the knowledge of farming and became hunter/gatherers, such as Australia's aboriginal peoples, but they still had the brains to study and use any plants they found growing wherever they went. (Ref. diet, technology, mankind)

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