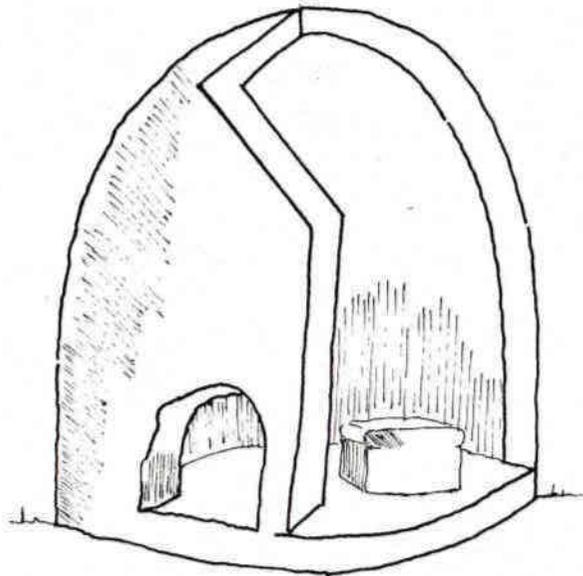


Bread was baked either on or inside a simple dome shaped oven. Archaeologists have found many traces of these types of ovens. When the oven is heated with a fire inside, the clay dome becomes very hot indeed. It is possible to bake an unleavened flat bread on the outside of the oven. Leavened loaves and buns are cooked inside the oven either on a stone beside the fire or else, when the fire has died down, put inside the oven and the door closed. It takes almost half an hour to bake a small loaf in this way. The oven was, of course, used for many other types of cooking besides baking bread.

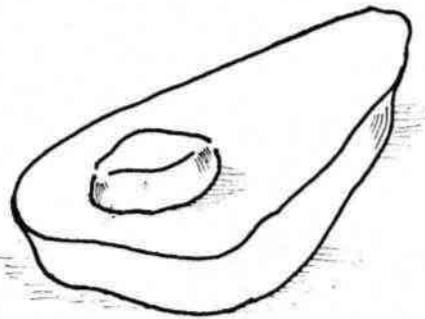


Bread & Ovens





When man became a farmer rather than a hunter-gatherer, he grew cereals like wheat and barley, oats and rye. But in order to eat these cereals he first had to grind the seeds into a flour to make porridge, gruel or bread. All over the world archaeologists have found remains of the cereals and the grinding stones used by the earliest farmers. The first wheat cereals in Britain were Emmer and Spelt.



The first grindstones were called saddle querns. A flat stone, usually a gritty type of rock like greensand, limestone or particularly millstone grit (named because it was specially for grindstones) was set on the ground, the seeds put on top and then crushed with a much smaller handheld stone called a rubber. Working a saddle quern was extremely hard and it took a long time to produce flour.

In the Iron Age a new kind of quern stone was invented. This was called the rotary quern. It was made of two stones carefully shaped to each other with a hole cut through the centre of the upper stone. A handle was also fitted into the side of the upper stone. Grain was poured through the hole and was crushed into flour by moving the upper stone round the lower one. The flour, often very fine, poured out from between the two stones onto a cloth.

The kinds of bread made from this flour varied a lot. Most of it was made by mixing flour and water together into a dough. When baked this made flat or unleavened bread like an Indian chapatti. Leavened bread was also made by leaving the dough outside to catch the natural yeasts in the air. This made into bread loaves like we eat today.

