

# Section 1 – The Foragers

---

## What Makes Us Human

### Cooking

Cooking is now seen by many as the definitive characteristic of modern humans, from which all others followed. It seems to have directly influenced the development of tools, especially blade design, but it had many other consequences.<sup>1</sup>

Cooking, particularly of meats and fats but also starches, partially pre-digests the food, making more energy available to us and allowing us to use less to digest it. We put this extra energy into growing brains. Growing big brains burns many calories and just running them consumes a significant part of our daily food intake. We know that the physical structures that allow us to speak were evolving at the same time as our brains were growing larger. Speech allowed more complex and efficient communication and cooperation. This encouraged conceptual thinking and other intellectual skills, again leading to the development of bigger brains.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wrangham, Richard. *Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human*. Profile Books, 2009.