

Words for Food

More Greek Vocabulary

A lesson for the *Paideia* web-app
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Words for Food

- ἡ τροφή, "food"
- τὸ βρῶμα, "food, bread"
 - Two words that mean "food" in general
 - βρωμα can also mean "bread,"
 - the main element of the ancient diet
- ὁ ἄρτος, "bread"
 - The bulk of most people's meals
 - dipped in any available garnish
 - Usually leavened
 - Barley (cheaper) or wheat (more tasty)



Other Staple Foods

- Olives, grapes, and grain
 - The three basic commodities
- ὁ οἶνος, "wine"
 - Main beverage, usually watered down
 - Alcohol killed bacteria in the water supply
 - Cheap source of calories and crucial vitamins
- τὸ ἔλαιον, "olive oil"
 - Garnish for bread
 - Provided dietary fats for manual labour
 - Also for lighting, hygiene, etc.

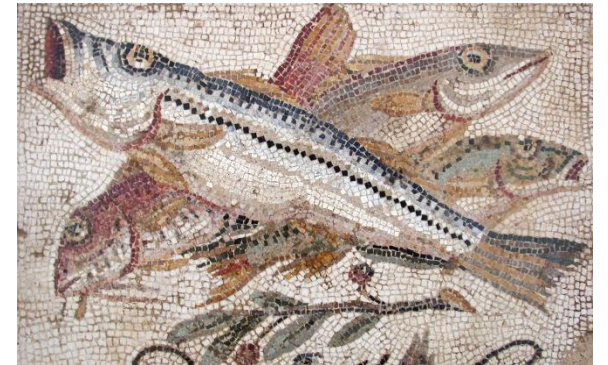


Bottom image by [Stu Spivak](#)



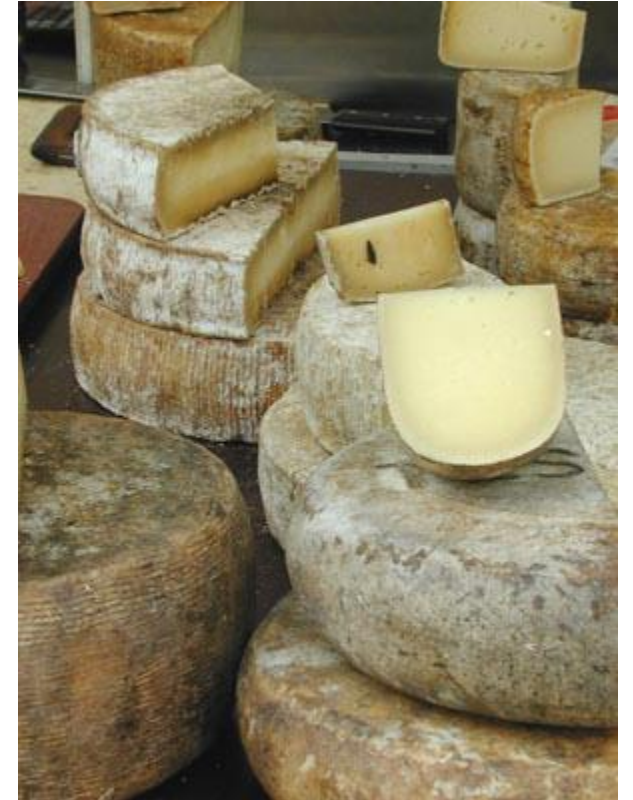
Common Luxuries

- Other foods eaten by the "middle class"
- ὁ ἰχθύς, "fish"
 - Only the wealthy ate meat regularly
 - But fish (not considered "meat") were often affordable
- ὁ καρπός, "fruit"
 - Monotonous diet livened (in season) by fruit
- τὸ σῦκον, "fig"
 - The most common fruit for ordinary people



Common Luxuries

- Some of our common foods were used only as ingredients
- τὸ γάλα, "milk"
 - Not used for drinking or in butter
 - Consumed as cheese
- τὸ ὕδωρ, "water"
 - Drunk much less than wine
 - Important instead for making bread



Common Luxuries

- Flavouring foods
- τὸ μέλι, "honey"
 - Main source of sweetening
 - Could refer to any syrup
- τὸ ἅλας, "salt"
 - Variant of ὁ ἅλς
 - Used in making bread
 - Preservative for fish, in fish sauce
 - Greens soaked in salt



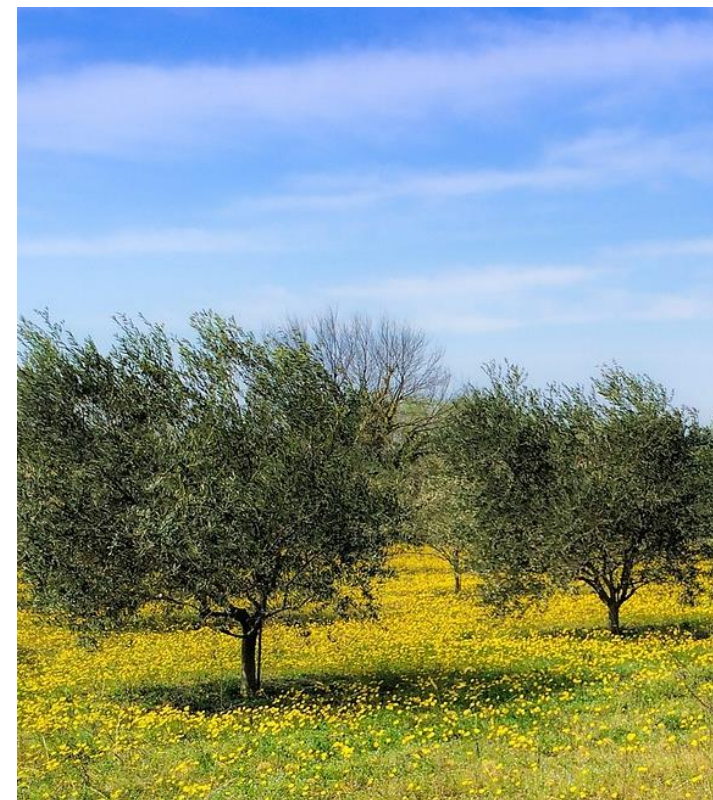
Elite Luxuries

- Only the wealthy could afford foods we take for granted
- τὸ κρέας, "meat"
 - Only available to masses during festivals
 - Birds (e.g., pigeon, pheasant) more available
- τὸ λάχανον, "vegetable"
 - Includes herbs, leafy greens, root vegetables
 - Not part of most people's diet in cities
 - Included in elaborate dishes of the wealthy



The Sources of Food

- ἡ ἄμπελος, "grape vine"
 - Vines were part of ὁ ἀμπελών, "vineyard"
- τὸ δένδρον, "tree"
- τὸ ξύλον, "tree" or "wood"
 - ξυλον often a euphemism for a cross
- ἡ σύκη, "fig tree"
 - Source of το συκον, "fig"
- ἡ ἔλαια, "olive tree, olive fruit"
 - Source of το ἔλαιον, "olive oil"



Meals in the Ancient World

- ἡ τράπεζα, "table"
 - Usually a low platform
 - People would recline or sit on the floor around it
 - Held common dishes of food
 - Root of the English "trapezoid"
- τὸ ἄριστον, "lunch, noon meal"
 - Often eaten on the go
 - Common "snack bars" in towns
- τὸ δεῖπνον, "dinner, evening meal"
 - The main meal of the day
 - Often the only sit-down meal
 - Wealthy often enjoyed entertainments

