

Culture and Science of the Acorn IX -Acorns in Europe and America 2-

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Summary

When the glacial period terminated the forests of the family Fagaceae bearing acorns were widespread in the Temperate Zone of the Northern Hemisphere. There were many wild plants and animals in the forests, which were therefore treasuries of foodstuffs for ancient gatherer-hunters. With the beginning of cultivation and stock raising, it was natural that the same wild species became targets for crops and domestication. The pig was selected as the best domestic animal for edible meat, derived from the wild boar living in the acorn forests of the Eurasian continent. The pig has many varieties to fit the tastes of different peoples, because it is the most improvable among the domestic animals. All parts of the pig can be utilized as edible meat except for the head. One of the most important taste components of meats is the lipid. Beef and mutton are used only for warm foods such as steak, sukiyaki and barbecue, because the melting points of the lipids in their meats are high. In contrast, the melting point of the lipids in pork is low, so that it can be also used for cold foods such as hams and salami sausages. The ancestor of the pig, that is the wild boar, likes acorns as a foodstuff. This inclination is shared by the pig and pasturage in acorn forests has been carried out for pig-breeding in Europe since ancient times. The acorn remains a prime food for production of delicious pork and forest pasturage is still carried out in parts of Europe to provide high-class pork with a distinctive taste.