

THE FERTILE CRESCENT

The Fertile Crescent is a region of the Middle East where the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates Rivers deliver life-giving water and nutrient-rich soils to an otherwise arid region. Wild grasses and legumes flourish in these fertile flood plains, which drew nomadic peoples to settle there over 12,000 years ago.



Known as the **Cradle of Civilisation and the birthplace of modern agriculture**, it is here that humans domesticated wild varieties of wheat, barley, chickpeas, lentils, peas and flax. With a reliable and abundant food supply, the people turned their attention to building the earliest cities with systems of writing and arithmetic, wheeled vehicles, plows and irrigation.



Wheat was easy to grow, adaptable and could be stored for years, providing insurance against future crop failures and famine. Wheat soon spread across Eurasia, Africa and the Americas and today it is the most widely grown crop in the world, feeding 4.5 billion people.

