

# THE KITCHENS

WESTGATE  
OXFORD



Kitchen at start of excavations

## The Ovens

The pair of ovens were fuelled with both timber and roundwood from a wide range of tree species, including oak, ash, field maple, hawthorn, willow, beech, and poplar, as well as blackthorn, cherry or plum and alder or hazel, all of which would have been available in local woodlands, if not on the friars' land itself.

Charred grains of wheat, barley, oats and rye were found, probably for making pottage (a thick, mainly vegetable, soup or stew), since bread would probably have been made from pre-ground flour.



Thick charcoal deposits under excavation



Pair of ovens in the kitchen



Layers of kitchen waste in rubbish pit

## Rubbish Pits in the Kitchen Yard

The deposits filling the rubbish pits give a better understanding of the rich variety of foods consumed within the friary.

Apart from the cereals mentioned above, nuts, including hazelnut and walnut, were evidently eaten, while some smaller seeds may be from culinary herbs and plants used as flavouring. Mutton, lamb, pork, beef, chicken, goose and smaller birds were consumed, as well as a wide range of fish, including cod, whiting, haddock, herring, eel, gurnard, conger, grey mullet, thornback ray, salmon or sea trout, and small freshwater roach and dace.

While the freshwater fish is likely to have been caught locally (perhaps from the channels flowing through the friars' land), many of the sea fish would have been transported from the coast, preserved by pickling or salting and drying. The remains of shellfish, including oysters and mussels, were common, as was eggshell, with poultry providing eggs as well as meat.

To what extent all of the foods represented in the rubbish pits were eaten by the friars themselves is unclear, since food would also have been prepared for guests. The foods eaten by religious communities was strictly regulated, and mendicant orders were reliant on alms. Meat consumption was heavily restricted and it is likely that cereals constituted a large part of the friars' meals, supplemented by cheaper fish, such as herrings, eels and dried cod and whiting.



Kitchen during excavation



Modern Oxford Greyfriars were invited to visit the remains of the original Greyfriars' kitchen



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