**Source: https://study.com/learn/lesson/fertile-crescent-map-location-what-is-the-fertile-crescent.html**

**What is the Fertile Crescent?**

The **Fertile Crescent** is the region of the Middle East known as the ''cradle of civilization.'' This phrase is used to denote the fact that this region, which is rich in resources, was the birthplace of the world's first societies. The Fertile Crescent occupied the same territory as present-day Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and parts of Egypt, Turkey, and Iran. By 9000 B.C.E., the first societies and cultures had been formed and were thriving.

**Where is the Fertile Crescent?**

The Fertile Crescent rivers provided much of its fertile nature. The Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates are the main rivers that supported the fertility of the region. The majority of the Fertile Crescent is between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Some treat the [Nile River valley](https://study.com/learn/lesson/ancient-nile-valley-contributions-civilizations-facts.html) and related fertile areas as part of the Fertile Crescent because the far northern end of the Nile River is also considered part of the Fertile Crescent.

**Fertile Crescent Map**

The Fertile Crescent is located in Northern Africa and Southwestern Asia. It is situated between the Nile, Tigris, and [Euphrates Rivers](https://study.com/learn/lesson/where-is-the-euphrates-river-map.html). The three major ancient societies that developed in this region were Egypt, Phoenicia, and Sumer.

**How Did the Fertile Crescent Get Its Name?**

The Fertile Crescent was so-called because of the fertile nature of its ground and the fact that the area was shaped somewhat like a crescent. This term, however, may have been influenced by the Orientalist leanings and biases of the person who named the region. James Henry Breasted, an archaeologist, historian, and Orientalist, named the region the Fertile Crescent in order to call the attention of the scholars of his time to its beneficial properties.

**Why is the Fertile Crescent Important?**

The Fertile Crescent is important in world history because it was the site of the first developments in agriculture. As individuals did not have to rely on their own efforts to produce food, they were able to engage in other pursuits, such as goods production and philosophy. As a result of the advancements in agriculture, complex, sedentary societies were formed. These developments differed from previous transient cultures and gave rise to modern-day culture.

Some of the first Fertile Crescent countries to be formed, which became the predominant societies in the region that influenced the majority of those who came after them, were:

* Egypt: The original name of this civilization referred to the fertile nature of the northern region of the country. The Nile River made the nearby soil dark and nutrient-rich. This led to the development of agricultural and animal husbandry practices. By 8000 B.C.E., cattle were grazing in the area. Settlements and cities began to be developed around 6000 B.C.E., which is also when standardized practices of farming were created. Craftsmen and artisans began to specialize in creating products around five hundred years later.
* Sumer: This Fertile Crescent civilization established the first urbanized cities, including Eridu and Uruk, in the last half of the sixth millennium B.C.E. Beer and other crop-related products were created by the Sumerians. In 3400 B.C.E., religion began to be an important part not only of citizens' spiritual lives but also of their material ones. Surplus food was sent to the temples of the [Sumerian religion](https://study.com/learn/lesson/religion-sumer-akkad-history-gods-mythology.html). The priests in these buildings distributed this food to the people of the city. In the 1700s B.C.E., the first codified laws were created by [Hammurabi](https://study.com/learn/lesson/stele-hammurabi-overview-significance-code.html). Advances in science, mathematics, and other sectors of life were created by this civilization.
* Phoenicia: This civilization, which occupied the same region as Syria, Lebanon, and Israel, was primarily concerned with using the sea to support its citizens. Around 3200 B.C.E., Tyre and Sidon were gradually developed. Before five hundred years had passed, cities and surrounding civilizations had been firmly established. Phoenicia focused on manufacturing and trading goods.

Civilization in the Fertile Crescent began before 8000 B.C.E. when irrigation began to be developed. ….

**Source:** [**https://www2.nau.edu/~gaud/bio301/content/aghst.htm**](https://www2.nau.edu/~gaud/bio301/content/aghst.htm)

**Ancient History of Agriculture**

Developed independently by geographically distant populations, systematic agriculture first appeared in Southwest Asia with the bulk of domesticated neolithic crops and livestock now being traced to Turkey via DNA studies. The first grains of domesticated Turkish emmer wheat are found at Abu Hurerya dated to 13,500 BP. The only exceptions to this are barley, domesticated in two sites; in Israel, and East of the Zagros mountains in Iran. The eight so-called founder crops of agriculture appear: first emmer and einkorn wheat, then hulled barley, peas, lentils, bitter vetch, chick peas and flax. Bitter vetch and lentils along with almonds and pistachios appear in Franchthi Cave Greece simultaneously, about 9,000 BC. Neither are native to Greece, and they appear 2,000 years prior to domesticated wheat in the same location. This suggests that the cultivation of legumes and nuts preceded that of grain.

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| **Ancient Egyptian Farmer** |



By 7000 BCE, small-scale agriculture reached Egypt. From at least 7000 BCE the Indian subcontinent saw farming of wheat and barley, as attested by archaeological excavation at Mehrgarh in Balochistan. By 6000 BCE, mid-scale farming was entrenched on the banks of the Nile. About this time, agriculture was developed independently in the Far East, with rice, rather than wheat, as the primary crop. Chinese and Indonesian farmers went on to domesticate mung, soy, azuki and taro. To complement these new sources of carbohydrates, highly organized net fishing of rivers, lakes and ocean shores in these areas brought in great volumes of essential protein. Collectively, these new methods of farming and fishing inaugurated a human population boom dwarfing all previous expansions, and is one that continues today.

By 5000 BCE, the Sumerians had developed core agricultural techniques including large scale intensive cultivation of land, mono-cropping, organized irrigation, and use of a specialized labour force, particularly along the waterway now known as the Shatt al-Arab, from its Persian Gulf delta to the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates. Domestication of wild aurochs and mouflon into cattle and sheep, respectively, ushered in the large-scale use of animals for food/fiber and as beasts of burden. The shepherd joined the farmer as an essential provider for sedentary and semi-nomadic societies.

Maize, manioc, and arrowroot were first domesticated in the Americas as far back as 5200 BCE. The potato, tomato, pepper, squash, several varieties of bean, Canna, tobacco and several other plants were also developed in the New World, as was extensive terracing of steep hillsides in much of Andean South America.

In later years, the Greeks and Romans built on techniques pioneered by the Sumerians but made few fundamentally new advances. Southern Greeks struggled with very poor soils, yet managed to become a dominant society for years. The Romans were noted for an emphasis on the cultivation of crops for trade.

**VOCABULARY**