

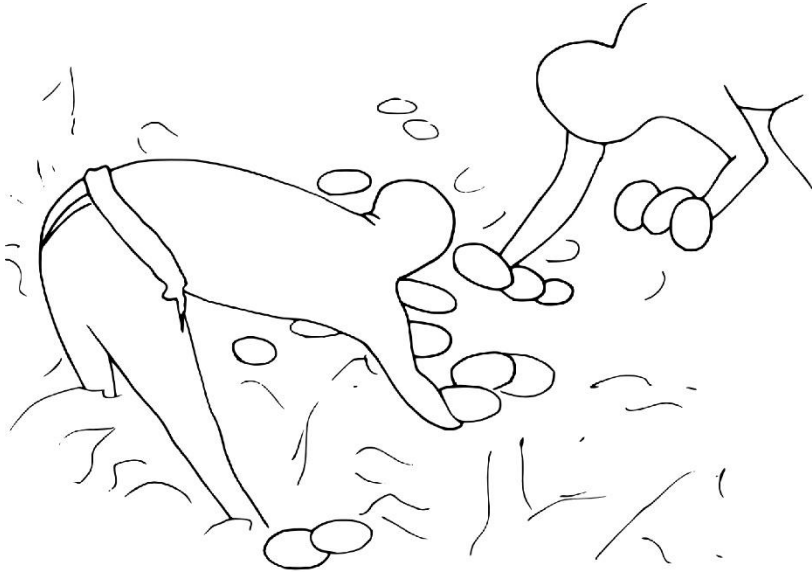


Fig.007 Natives gathering a particular mushroom in the forest. Thanks to their knowledge of what is edible the variety of food they eat is very broad as if the forest itself is a giant supermarket with the only exception that they don't have to pay for the food and in turn the only work is that of collecting it.

Diet Among the Natives of Higher Africa

Natives "do not indulge in cannibalism, human sacrifice, torture, mutilation, sorcery, ritual murder, intertribal war, initiation ordeals or any of the cruel customs that are associated with equatorial Africa" (Hallet 1973). Yet when it comes to animals if they find a turtle they open up its belly and extract the "leathery-soft white eggs" to devour them immediately to then toss the turtle into a "black pot" for boiling (Hallet 1963). And when in the night frogs croak "from all sides of the camp" native make "fierce onslaughts" on them. Beside wild honey, natives eat ants "alive" or roasting them "wings and all" and even "medium-sized greenish and hairy" caterpillars. As for their main diet natives never do "any planting, and though game is at times fairly abundant, meat is by no means" their chief sustenance. They mainly eat the "produce of the forest, such as roots, leaves, nuts and various fruits" and "meat constitutes only thirty per cent of their food" (Schebesta 1933). In a hunting and gathering the basket of a native woman gets "full of mushrooms" berries, nuts and "green leaves" or antelopes killed "at the net". Men hunt "at least forty" animal species including "ten kind of monkeys". An "excess of meat means wealth" making them "independent from the need of work" such as after the killing of an elephant (Duffy 1984).