



## Why Don't Westerns Use Chopsticks?

How did we Europeans quit eating with our bare hands (whereas Asians had already been using **chopsticks** for many centuries)? The answer is: aristocrats invented and popularized the **fork** starting from the **4<sup>th</sup> century AD**.

The personal table fork was most likely invented in the 4<sup>th</sup>-century **Byzantine Empire**, even though its origin goes back to **Ancient Greece**. By the 10<sup>th</sup> century the table fork had become common throughout the **Middle East: Theophano Sklereina**, the Byzantine wife of **Holy Roman Emperor Otto II**, introduced European aristocracy to this fancy tool as early as **972 AD**. One century later, it became especially popular in the **Italian peninsula**. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century its usage had become part of etiquette for Italian merchants and upper classes, who exported it to **France** via **Catherine de' Medici**. However, most of **Europe** did not adopt use of the fork until the **18th century**.

