



An Uncommon History of Common Things

By Bethanne Patrick, John Thompson

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Sometime about 30,000 years ago, somebody stuck a sharp rock into a split stick—and presto! The axe was born. Our inquisitive species just loves tinkering, testing, and pushing the limits, and this delightfully different book is a freewheeling reference to hundreds of customs, notions, and inventions that reflect human ingenuity throughout history.

From hand tools to holidays to weapons to washing machines, *An Uncommon History of Common Things* features hundreds of colorful illustrations, timelines, sidebars, and more as it explores just about every subject under the sun. Who knew that indoor plumbing has been around for 4,600 years, but punctuation, capital letters, and the handy spaces between written words only date back to the Dark Ages? Or that ancient soldiers baked a kind of pizza on their shields—when they weren't busy flying kites to frighten their foes?

Every page of this quirky compendium catalogs something fascinating, surprising, or serendipitous. A lively, incomparably browsable read for history buffs, pop culture lovers, and anyone who relishes the odd and extraordinary details hidden in the everyday, it will inform, amuse, astonish—and alter the way you think about the clever creatures we call humans.

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