

Tooth variety



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■ **Humans have different types of teeth as an evolutionary trade-off to balance a versatile diet with a smaller jaw size. This setup allowed early humans to process diverse foods efficiently while saving jaw space for brain growth. Rather than one perfectly-designed tooth that can slice and crush equally well, mammals like humans developed sharp blade-like canines for slicing meat and broad-surfaced molars for crushing nuts and seeds. Only a few species such as the spotted hyena came close to having teeth that can handle both functions well through adaptation, palaeontologists at the University of California, Berkeley, US, found.**