



SALT

Why was salt so important?

Salt was really important because it kept food from spoiling and made food more tasty. It was also used as a medicine to cure many ills. People living in hot climates need salt to replace what the body loses in sweat. Much of the salt used by people of West Africa came from Taghaza, a city in the Sahara Desert. According to one traveller, salt was so plentiful there that houses were built of salt blocks. The slaves who mined the salt from open pits were the only people who lived in Taghaza. By the time the salt reached western Africa its value had increased greatly. Sometimes it was traded for an equal amount of gold. Salt is still traded there today.

TASKS

1. Make a list of the reasons why salt was so important?
2. Why do you think that people in the West African kingdoms were happy to swop gold for an equal amount of salt.

