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Abstract:
Among the Hazda hunter-gatherers of Tanzania, children are active foragers and collect various types of wild plant foods and hunt small sized prey animals. The collection effort of Hazda children is reported to have a positive effect on a mother's foraging yield (Bulurton-Jones et at. 1994, Journal of Anthropological Research 50(3): 217; Hawkes et al. 1995, Current Anthropology 36(4): 688), yet few quantitative data are available on the caloric values of children's foods and the ways in which children distribute their own foraging yield. Here, we report on foraging return rates, consumption data, and the compositional values for several of the plant foods collected by children. Due to predator pressure, it is not safe for children to wander far from camp without adult supervision, therefore they typically focus on foods that are close to camp and easy to collect and process. We calculated the caloric content for the following foods: baobab fruit (346 kcal/100g dry matter (DM)), berries (320 kcal/100g DM), legumes (311 kcal/100g DM), drupes (325 kcal/100g DM), and figs (365 kcal/100g DM). Legumes, drupes, and figs have not been previously analyzed; our values for baobab and berries agree with previous analyses (Murray et al. 2001, Journal of Food Consumption and Analysis 14: 3). In addition, we calculated foraging return rates and daily consumption values for children. Our results suggest that they collect a significant portion of their daily caloric intake and act as allomothers providing caloric contributions to other children.
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