

You can find fossils of nearly every type of living thing from plants to

dragonflies to mammals.

This fossil is a Long-armed Lobster called *Mecochirus*. It is a crustacean that lived in the shallow sea that covered most of Europe in the Late Jurassic period (about 150 million years ago). This particular one was found in Bavaria - famous for good fossils of delicate animals.

This lobster's hard shell protected it from parasites and predators. Its long legs would have been used to move through the

Fossil recipe:

- ▶ Take one dead animal/plant.
- ▶ Put it in a place with little oxygen so that it doesn't decay very fast (the bottom of a lake or ocean will do)
- ▶ Cover in silt.
- ▶ Cover in more silt.
- ▶ Cover in so much silt that the weight turns the silt to stone (should take a few million years).
- ▶ Find fossil with hammer, chisel and some local knowledge.

Mecochirus would probably have looked and tasted a bit like langoustine - yummy!

Not all fossils are dinosaurs

Fossil Footprints

Sometimes the prints an animal leaves behind fill up with silt and make a natural cast. From these prints you can tell more about how the animal lived. Our *Mecochirus* looks like it propelled itself backwards through the water.



⋮ *Mecochirus* trail

Pressure = Treasure

If you put a lump of coal under enough pressure for a few million years it will turn into a diamond. It's the same with fossils - get a slightly boring shrimp-like creature, put it under pressure for about 150 million years and you get a magnificent fossil.

