

Stomach Stones

Celebrate National Fossil Day with this dino digestion experiment!

Collect

- Clear plastic jar with lid
- Handful of small stones
- Handful of spinach or romaine lettuce
- Water



Assemble the model

Fill a clear plastic jar about one third of the way full with water. Drop a handful of small stones and a handful of salad greens, like spinach or romaine lettuce, into the jar. Cap the jar with a lid.

Shake!

How does this relate to dinosaurs?

Sometimes paleontologists find small rocks inside the ribcage of herbivorous sauropod dinosaurs. These stomach stones are known as gastroliths. Scientists believe that some dinosaurs would swallow stones to help grind up plant matter and aid digestion—just like some reptiles and birds do today.

In this model, the jar of water simulated a sauropod's stomach. As we shook the jar, the stones helped crush the salad into smaller pieces and began to turn the water green, replicating digestion.