

# Kitchen Paleontologist

## IDEAS FOR SUPPLIES

3–4 cups of rice, quinoa, or oatmeal

🌀 3–4 kinds of pretzels of different sizes and shapes

**When paleontologists discover fossil bones, they are usually scattered over an area. Sometimes the bones of more than one creature are mixed together. Perhaps the bones can be put together, but a piece is missing. This activity will give you an idea of what paleontologists do.**

Separate the rice into separate bowls or bags. Break each pretzel into three to five pieces and mix them into the rice. It may be more fun, and more of a challenge, if you have someone do this step for you!

Dig the pieces back out and try to fit them together just as scientists fit together fossils to recreate the entire skeleton.

- \* What tools can you use to help yourself build the entire pretzel?
- \* Were you able to find all the pretzel bones during your first dig? If not, what did you do?
- \* Were you able to put a whole pretzel back together? Were there pieces missing?
- \* What steps do you think a paleontologist might take in the field to collect bones and keep them safe?

### DID YOU KNOW?

In 1877, a paleontologist named Othniel Charles Marsh accidentally put the wrong skull on an apatosaur's skeleton, creating a whole new breed of dinosaur that never actually existed—the brontosaurus!

**THINK MORE:** Why is it important to keep an open mind while assembling the parts of a whole? What dangers might paleontologists face when they make assumptions about what a skeleton is supposed to look like?