

Proposal for the Bone Emoji

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Credit: Aphelandra Messer

Images



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Introduction

Bones are a fundamental part of existence, and so it's unsurprising that the term *bone* is used in numerous literal applications and metaphorical extensions. Evidence suggests that if a bone emoji were available, people would find various ways to incorporate it into their emoji repertoire.



Name

bone, dog bone

Selection Factors Inclusion

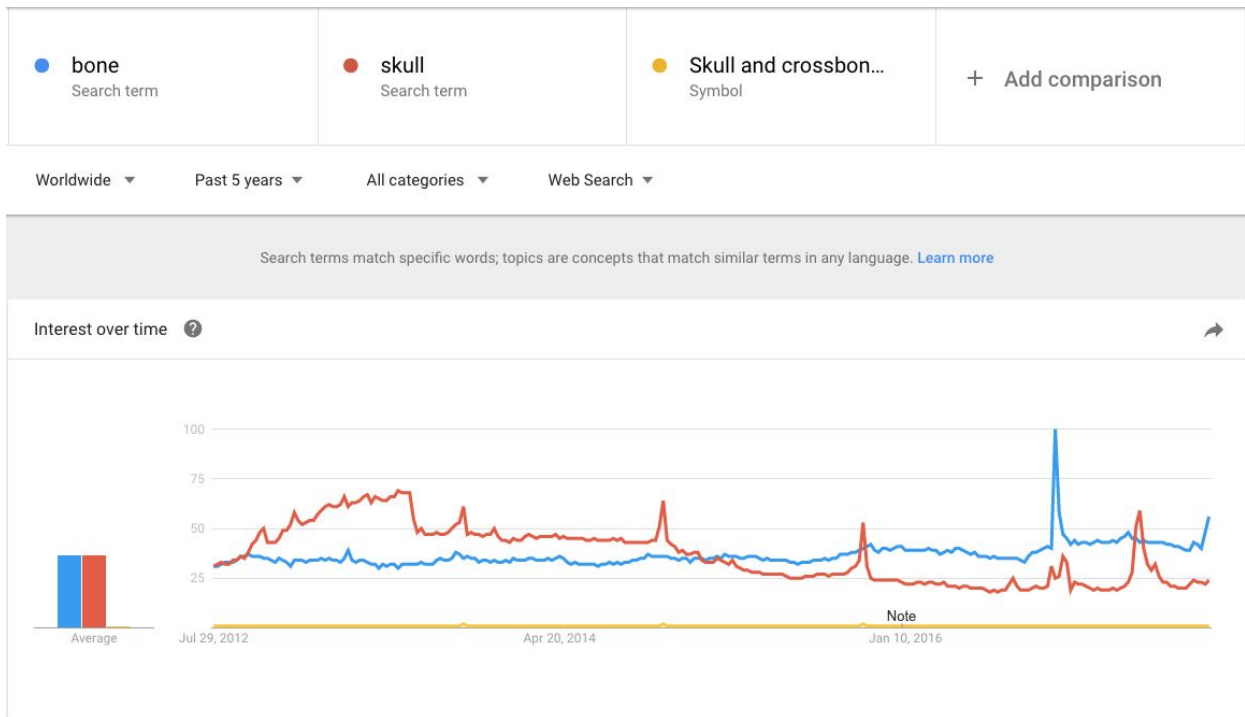
A. Compatibility

The bone emoji does not currently appear on any major platforms.

B. Expected Usage Level

Google Trends

As you can see from this screenshot of lookups for *bone*, *skull*, and *skull and crossbones* over the last five years, the interest in *bone* is not only constant over time, but in 2015 it surpassed interest in *skull* (which is already an emoji). *Bone* is far more popular than *skull and crossbones* (also already an emoji), likely because it's a much more general term and so can be used in far more contexts.



Instagram

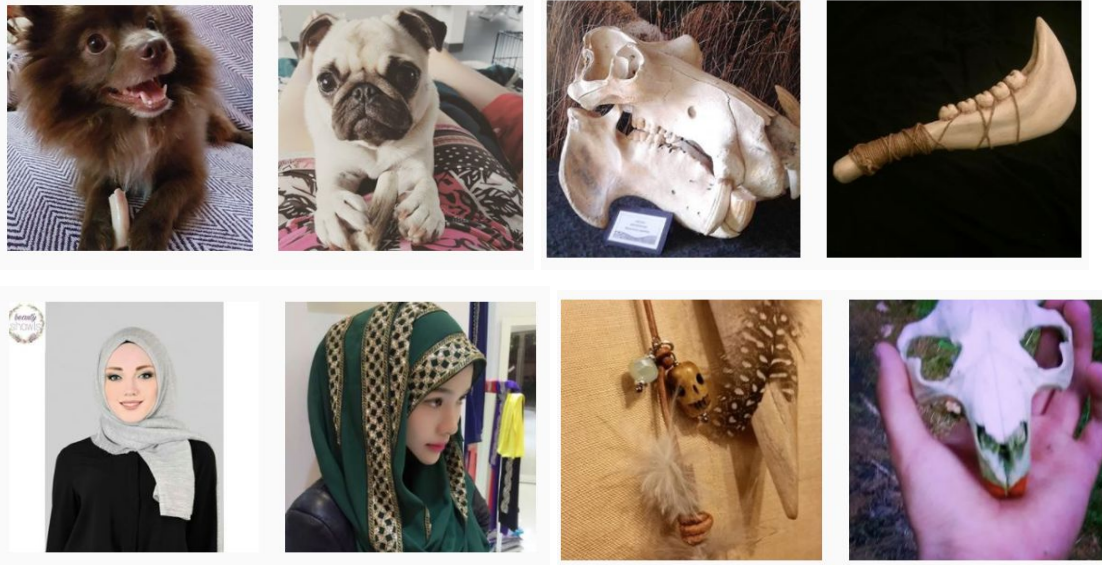
Current Instagram hashtag counts:

#bone 1,189,397 posts

#skull 9,311,633 posts

#skullandcrossbone 50,521 posts

On Instagram, **#bone** is often used with photos of dogs, X-rays, animal skulls, jewelry containing bone, weapons carved from bone, and women wearing hijabs (*bone* is sometimes used to refer to the [underscarf of a hijab](#)). Below are a sample of Instagram posts tagged with **#bone**.



Multiple Meanings

Anatomy/Medical Uses:

The bone emoji can be used to refer to literal bones in a body (from humans to dinosaurs). It could also be used in the context of broken bones, x-rays, skeletons, bone health, bone marrow, calcium, osteoporosis, etc.

Skeleton Imagery:

Aside from the more medical bone emoji uses, this emoji would likely be very popular surrounding topics like Day of the Dead, Halloween, various catacombs around the world, and the horror genre in general.

Dogs:

Dogs are the animal most associated with chewing on bones (including toy bones). Countless photos on Instagram tagged #bone are photos of dogs.

Food:

Bone broth is very popular across the globe. This sense could be possibly illustrated by the meat on bone or poultry leg emoji.

Raw Material:

Bone is a raw material used in tools, weapons, musical instruments, jewelry, etc.

Structural Metaphors:

Bone is used metaphorically in many contexts to refer to structure. A common way to talk about the structure of a building is through bones: *Does this house have good bones?*

Clothing:

Certain clothing items use bone (real or metaphorical) including corsets and the underscarf of a hijab.

Sex:

Boning is a very common euphemism for sex. In addition to the gerund form, it's also used as both a transitive and intransitive verb. *Bone* is used as a noun to refer to the penis.

Idiomatic Expressions:

not a mean bone in her body

bad to the bone

chilled to the bone

bone tired

bone up

feel in one's bones

have a bone to pick with someone

make no bones about it

C. Image Distinctiveness

The bone emoji is very simple in both shape and color, and would be easily recognizable even when displayed at a very small scale. While there are other emoji that currently contain bones (skull, skull and crossbones, meat on bone, and poultry leg), the standalone bone emoji would have a shape that is very distinct from these existing emoji.

D. Completeness

Current emoji offerings include many parts of the body, which are used both literally and metaphorically: mouth, tongue, brain, eyes, eye, nose, ear, and various hands, with a leg/foot emoji currently under consideration by the Unicode Emoji Subcommittee.

Adding a bone emoji to this collection would be one of the next logical additions. Bone emoji is more akin to the brain emoji than the other parts of the body in that it's internal.

E. Frequently requested

The bone emoji is frequently requested on Twitter for use in a variety of contexts.

Actual dogs (the second one uses it in place of ❤️):

john sundman follows

 **Sarah B Tompkins**  @SarestBearest · Mar 31

Replying to @bhappytogetherr


HAPPY BIRTHDAY OSCAR! 🐶👉 (closest I could find to **bone emoji** 🙄)!

   1 

 **ruby** @cornettofilms · Mar 26

i 🐶 my dog (that's the closest to a **bone emoji** they had)

god | **PINNED TWEET** @charilecox
YOU ARE A FURRY twitter.com/teriyakigod/st...

Metaphorical dogs:

 **dom**  @domluszczyszyn · May 14

Replying to @OnTheForecheck

do i look like a dog (how tf there no **bone emoji** tho)

 1   

Everything + broken bones:

 **BambiRodo**  @OopsRodo · 29 Dec 2016

If they had a dog **bone emoji** I would use it for everything

 **h_rry_** @h_rry_n_ · 25 Dec 2016

Replying to @nadiathescammer

👉 (there's no broken **bone emoji**)

Bone broth/soup:



Expressions like "bad to the bone":



Sex/booty call/"boning":



Selection Factors Exclusion

F. Overly Specific

The bone emoji is a general-use emoji. Currently people sometimes use the more specific emoji that contain bones (skull, skull and crossbones, meat on bone, and poultry leg) to express the more general bone concepts because there is currently no more appropriate option.

G. Open Ended

The bone emoji is extremely versatile. The term *bone* itself is highly polysemous and is used in varied contexts and in several idiomatic expressions.

H. Already Representable

While you can sometimes approximate the concepts covered by the bone emoji using more-specific bone-related emoji (skull, skull and crossbones, meat on bone, and poultry leg), people often supplement their bone-related emoji use with an explanation of how there is no bone emoji, and so these other emoji will have to do. They often then ask why there is no bone emoji.

I. Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

No brands or celebrities use similar bone imagery to my knowledge.

J. Transient

Bones provide the very structure to human and nonhuman bodies and so every emoji user will be able to relate to this universal symbol. Bones are not going anywhere and neither are the many many metaphorical extensions and idiomatic phrases related to bones.

Sort location

The bone emoji should appear next to the brain emoji since they both represent internal body parts.

Author Bio

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