

7 The Romans

The Roman Empire

According to legend, Rome was founded by two brothers, Romulus and Remus. Rome was then ruled by kings until it became a Republic in 509 BC. The Republic collapsed when several generals tried to take power. After many battles, an emperor came to power. The land that he ruled became known as the Roman Empire.

Can you name some of the countries in the Roman Empire? Use your atlas to help you.



The Romans began to gain more land and increase the empire. The Roman Empire spread to Britain in the north, Spain in the west, Northern Africa in the south and Iraq in the east. Much of the empire was gained through fighting. As the empire grew, the army grew. Captured soldiers were forced to join the army.

'Land of Winter'

The Romans did not invade Ireland. They called Ireland Hibernia, meaning 'Land of Winter'. Stories are told that when the Romans were in Britain, they sent scouts to find out what kind of country Ireland was. The scouts reported that people living in Ireland were savages and that they lived 'a wretched existence because of the cold'.

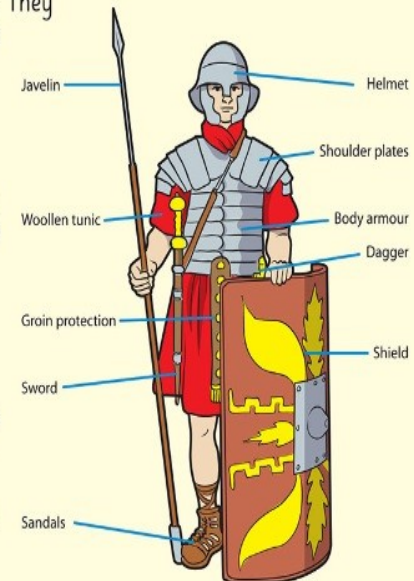


Web Watch!

The Roman Empire lasted for over 1,000 years. You will find more information and a list of all the emperors who ruled during that time, on this website: <http://www.unrv.com/government/emperor.php>
Also visit: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/>

Roman Army

The Romans conquered so many countries because they had such an excellent army. The Roman army was well organised and equipped. Roman soldiers were tough. Their job was to fight and defend Rome. They were away from home for long periods of time. They marched 30km a day wearing their armour and carrying their food and camping equipment. Each soldier belonged to a legion. Each legion was divided into companies called centuries. The centurion was in charge of these.

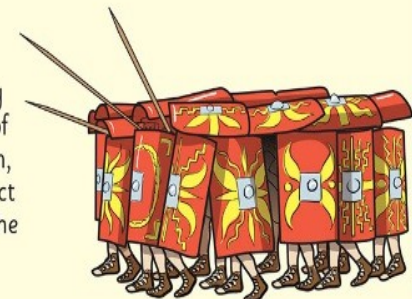


Roman Soldier

Roman soldiers fought with short swords, daggers and a long spear. They also carried a shield for protection. They wore armour and a metal helmet on their head.

The Tortoise

Roman soldiers were trained well. They marched with their shields held in front of them. When arrows were shot at them, they used their shields to protect themselves. This was known as the 'tortoise'.



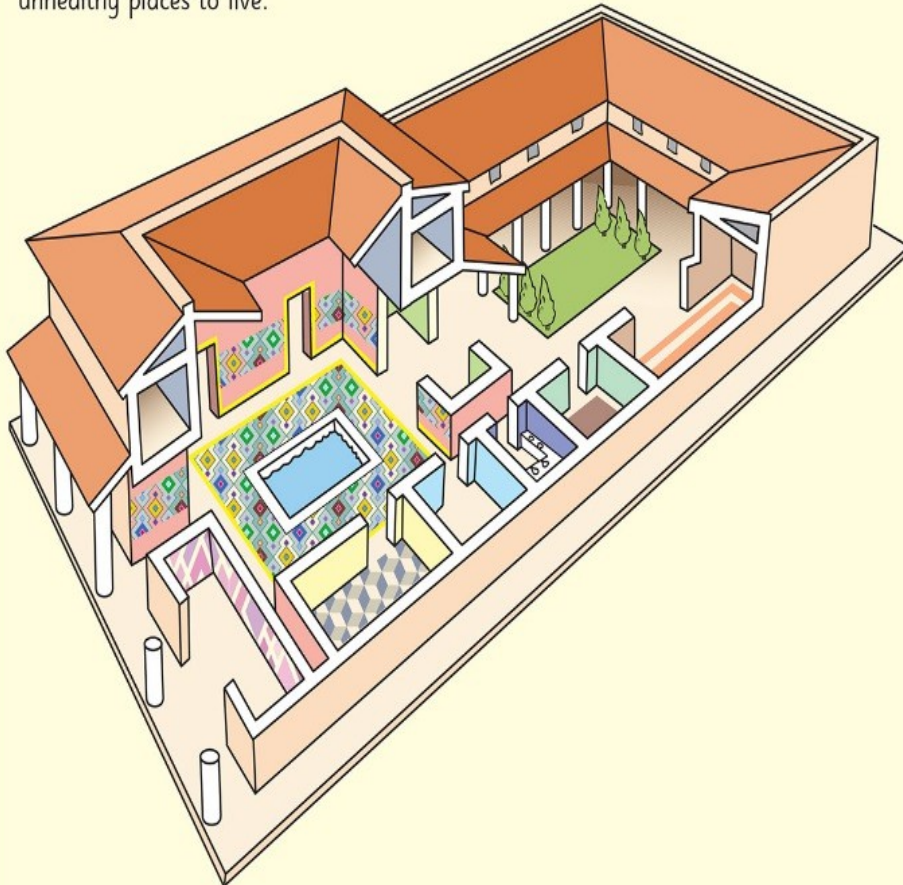
The Ballista

The ballista was like a giant catapult which fired arrows and boulders at the enemy.



Homes

There were many differences between houses of the rich and houses of the poor in the Roman Empire. Poor Romans lived in crowded blocks of flats. There was no heating or running water. The flats were dirty, noisy and unhealthy places to live.



Wealthy Romans lived in single-storey buildings, often made of stone or brick, called villas. There were mosaics on the floors or walls. The buildings were divided into two parts. Each part was centred on an open space which let in fresh air.

Clothes

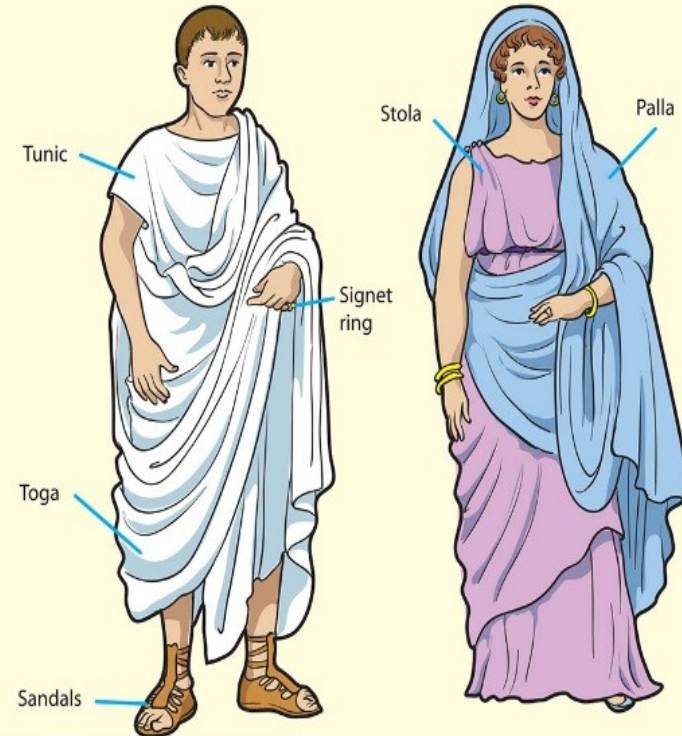
Roman clothes were made of wool.

Toga

Only male citizens wore a toga. This was very large and was draped over the body leaving the right arm free. It was worn on special occasions.

Stola

Women wore a sleeveless dress called a stola. Over this, they wore a large shawl known as a palla.



Tunic

A tunic was worn underneath the toga by wealthy men. A belt was tied around the waist.

Jewellery

Men were only allowed to wear one piece of jewellery, a ring. This ring was used to make a mark in wax when sealing documents. Many men ignored this, choosing to wear several rings and brooches to pin their cloaks.

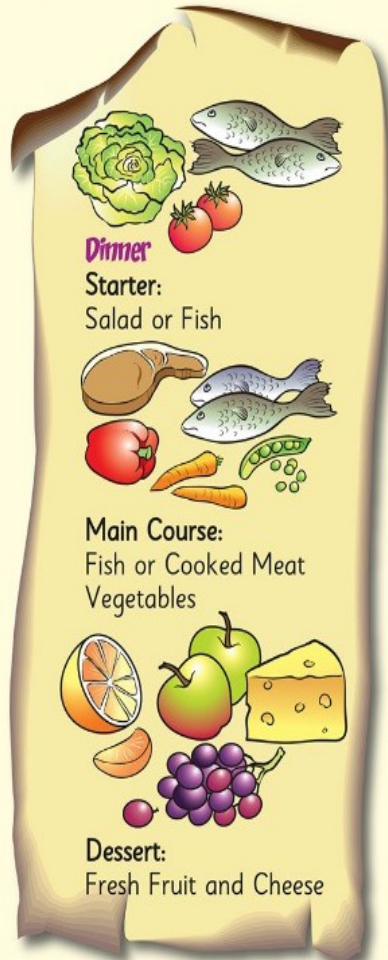
Shoes

Romans wore open-toed sandals indoors. Outdoors they preferred to cover their toes.

Roman Meal

The Romans ate their meals while lying down. They had three meals a day. Dinner was their main meal and it could last for hours.

Romans ate their food mainly with their fingers. They used knives made of antlers, wood or bronze to cut their food. They also used spoons. Poorer Romans had simple food such as porridge, bread, vegetables and fish. As the Roman Empire grew, Romans began to try foods from other countries. They ate more fish and used more herbs and spices.



Entertainment

Amphitheatre

Romans loved to go to the amphitheatre to watch fights. The Colosseum was the greatest amphitheatre and could seat 50,000 people. Gladiators were slaves who were taught to fight in special schools. Sometimes they fought wild animals such as lions or bears. The crowd often decided whether the gladiators lived or died. If a gladiator fought bravely, the crowd would turn their thumbs up, but if the gladiator did not fight very well, the crowd would turn their thumbs down. This was the signal they used to show whether they wanted the gladiator to live or to die.



Hippodrome

Romans went to the hippodrome to watch chariot racing. Circus Maximus was the largest hippodrome and could seat 250,000 people. The chariots were pulled by two or four horses. They drove at very fast speeds. Sometimes drivers were trampled to death.



Ruins of the Circus Maximus in Rome

Roman Baths

Roman baths were an important part of Roman daily life. Most Romans went to the baths in the afternoon. It was a popular place to meet people, chat, relax and carry out business meetings. Olive oil was used instead of soap.



Fun Facts

At Roman dinner parties, guests ate their food using their fingers and lying on a large couch with a table in the centre.

The Romans invented central heating. Hot air moved through spaces under the floors and up the walls. The hot air came from a furnace and it was the slaves' job to keep the furnace lit.

The Emperor Caligula suffered from an illness that affected his mind. He appointed his horse a senator.

The Romans invented cement. It was made by mixing volcanic ash, lime and water. They had to be careful because it set very quickly.

Dormouse was a real treat for Romans. The mice were kept in jars and fattened up until eaten.

Many of the months of the year are named after Roman Gods and rulers. March is named after the Roman God of War, Mars. August is named after the first Roman Emperor, Augustus.



Question Time

- 1 According to legend, who founded Rome?
- 2 What was the leader of the Roman Empire called?
- 3 What weapons were used by Roman soldiers?
- 4 What was a centurion?
- 5 What were the advantages and disadvantages of being a Roman soldier?
- 6 Why was the Roman army so successful?
- 7 What clothes were worn by Romans?
- 8 Describe some of the battle tactics used by the Roman army.
- 9 Why, do you think, did the Romans build roads?
- 10 List some of the entertainment popular with Romans.
- 11 Name the first emperor of Rome.
- 12 Why, do you think, did the Romans not invade Ireland?



Creative Time

- 1 The Romans used to decorate their floors and walls with mosaics. Create your own mosaic picture for a Roman house. First, decide what your picture will be. Then, sketch the outline for your mosaic. Using different coloured squares, glue down the colours to create a colourful mosaic like in Roman times.
- 2 Design your own Roman menu for a feast.
- 3 Paint a portrait of a Roman emperor for a new Roman coin.





Puzzle Time

1 Fill in the missing words:

Rome was founded by two brothers, _____ and _____ . In 509 BC, Rome became a _____ . The Empire was ruled by an _____ . The Romans conquered many countries because they had a good, organised _____ . Roman male citizens wore a _____ . Women wore a dress called a _____ . Most Romans went to the _____ in the afternoon.

2 Roman Numerals

Romans used a system of numerals made up of only seven letters. Roman numerals can still be seen today on some clocks or watches. Why, do you think, do we not use Roman numerals when writing numbers today? If a numeral is placed to the left of another, the number is taken away, for example IV = 4 and IX = 9. If a numeral is placed to the right of another numeral, the number is added on, for example: VI = 6 and MD = 1,500.

Write this year in Roman numerals.

Match the numerals to the correct numbers

XV	1,515
LIV	600
LI	19
XXXVII	15
XIX	37
DC	51
MDXV	55

I	= 1
V	= 5
X	= 10
L	= 50
C	= 100
D	= 500
M	= 1,000



Time Detective

1 Find out about the legend of Romulus and Remus. Draw pictures and write the story.

2 Make a table showing a list of Roman emperors and the dates that they ruled. Look up an encyclopaedia or the Internet to fill in the details.

Year	Emperor	Year	Emperor	Year	Emperor
23 BC	Augustus	217		305-307	
14 AD	Tiberius	218		308-324	
37	Gaius (Caligula)	222		306-337	
41	Claudius	235		337-340	
54	Nero	238		337-350	
68-69		244		337-361	
69		249		361-363	
69		253		363-364	
79		268		364-375	
81		269		364-375	
96		275		367-383	
97		276		375-393	
117		282		379-395	
138		283		385-388	
161-180		284-305		392-394	
176-192		286-305		395-423	
193		293-296		425-455	
193-211		293-311		457-474	
198-217				475-476	