

## How did the ancient Romans deal with plumbing?

The Ancient Romans built huge and extensive *aqueducts*, which is Latin for waterway. These under- and above- ground channels, were made of stone, brick, and volcanic cement, brought fresh water for drinking and bathing as much as 50 to 60 miles from springs or rivers. Aqueducts helped keep Romans healthy by carrying away used water and waste, and they also took water to farms for irrigation.



The capital in Rome alone had around 11 aqueduct systems supplying freshwater from sources as far as 92 km away (57 miles).

## So how did aqueducts work?

The engineers who designed them used gravity to keep the water moving. If the channel was too steep, water would run too quickly and wear out the surface. Too shallow, and water would stagnate and become undrinkable. The Romans built tunnels to get water through ridges, and bridges to cross valleys.



Once it reached a city, the water flowed into a main tank called a castellum. Smaller pipes took the water to the secondary castella, and from those the water flowed through lead pipes to public fountains and baths, and even to some private homes. It took 500 years to build Rome's massive system.

To this day, Rome's public fountains run constantly, as do smaller taps that provide fresh water to anyone who stops for a drink.

## Roman Roads

The Ancient Romans built the first roads in Britain. They built over 9,000 kilometres of roads. The roads were so well built that you can still see some of them today, 2000 years after they were first built!

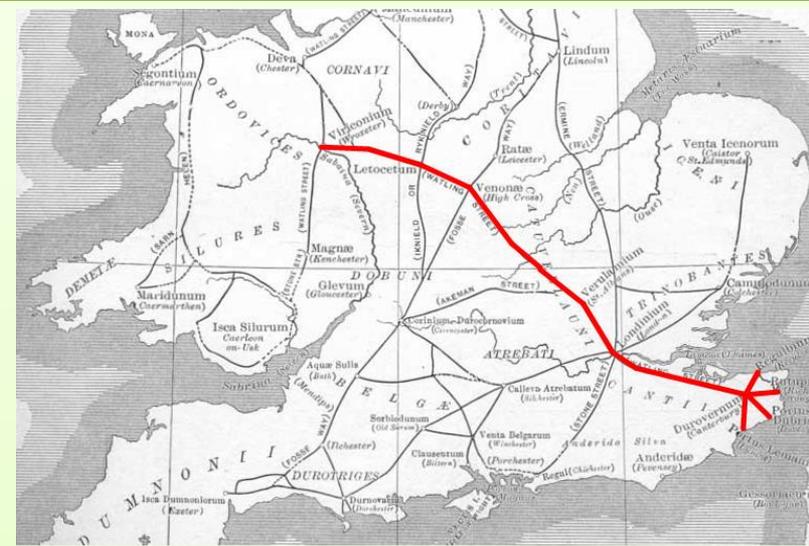
Many of our modern day roads are in the same place as Roman ones. You can often tell if it is Roman road because it will be straight.

The Romans built roads because it was important for the Roman army to be able to move soldiers and all their baggage around the country.

They built their roads as straight as possible, in order to travel as quickly as they could. Winding roads took longer to get to the place you wanted to go and bandits and robbers could be hiding around bends.

Roman roads sloped down from the middle to ditches on either side to allow the rain to drain away and not make the road too muddy.

Locally, with the foundation of Londinum (London) as the capital of Roman Britain, a route was developed to become the main road to the west from London. It went through what is now Shepherd's Bush, Chiswick and Brentford to Staines and Silchester with a division at Hounslow to Bath. This was the main road west from London for nearly 2,000 years.

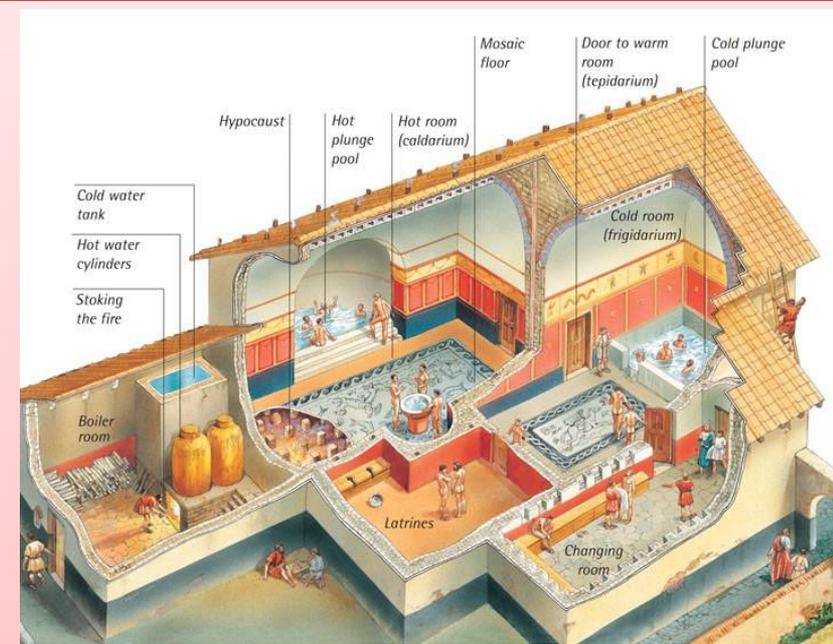


A **Roman** bath was a public bathing house that the people of Ancient **Rome** visited to bathe, exercise, relax, and meet friends. The rooms and waters of the **bath house** were heated by a hypocaust, which was a heating system that used a wood-burning furnace.

Every Roman city had a public bath where people came to bathe and socialise.

The main purpose of the baths was a way for the Romans to get clean. Most Romans living in the city tried to get to the baths every day to clean up. They would get clean by putting oil on their skin and then scraping it off with a metal scraper called a strigil.

The baths were also a place for socialising. Friends would meet up at the baths to talk and have meals. Sometimes men would hold business meetings or discuss politics.



strigil