

ROMAN TOWNS



Where were Roman towns built?

Often Romans built towns on the former sites of large Celtic tribes. Smaller towns and villages grew up around crossroads, along rivers and by the sea.

The Roman period saw the first proper towns in Britain. They had paved streets with houses and buildings laid out in a grid pattern.

Major towns and cities were surrounded by defensive walls.



What was in the towns?

- Villas and homes
- Shops
- Amphitheatre
- Warehouses
- Temples
- Baths
- Army camps



Homes

- Villas – luxurious houses for wealthy people. Often located on working farms. The owner would own the villa and the farm and slaves to do the work. Located on the outskirts of the town.
- Houses – belonged to wealthy Romans, many had no windows to keep the house private as it was surrounded by other buildings. Some had a central courtyards as outdoor space.
- Slums – apartment blocks for poorer people up to seven storeys high. No running water or drains so people living here collect water from public fountains and use public toilets. Rubbish is thrown into the street.



The Forum and Market



- A large courtyard with a public fountain a shrine to Ceres the goddess of the harvest
- People meet here every day to discuss business and news
- Around the forum are shops, offices and places to eat
- The most important buildings are around the edge of the forum including the basilica which is a town hall and law court

The Temple

- The Romans worshipped many gods and goddesses
- The most important gods and goddesses are worshipped at temples in the town
- There is an altar where priests make sacrifices to the gods and goddesses to keep them happy
- Once the animal has been killed, the intestines are examined to see if the gods are pleased or not



The Baths

- Most Roman towns had at least one public bathhouse where people went to wash, to swim and to meet friends
- Some baths had exercise yards, libraries and gardens
- Visitors went to the hot rooms first (*tepidarium*, *caldarium* and *laconicum*) then a really cold room (*frigidarium*) and finally for a massage
- Women and girls have a separate bathhouse with no exercise yard.



Shops

- The towns had many small shops:
 - butchers
 - Bakers
 - Pieshops
 - Cloth merchants
 - Shoemakers
 - Goldsmiths
 - Potters



