

Eating and Drinking in Roman Britain



Key Stage 2 Explorer Pack Session

Support Notes for Teachers

Session structure

The session consists of a sequence of interactive activities which will enable the pupils to explore eating and drinking in Roman Britain. The session also enables pupils to think about how archaeologists use a range of sources to build up a picture of life in the past.

- **Introduction:** The session opens with a general introduction to Roman Britain and the different sources that archaeologists and historians can use to find out about life in the past. During the session pupils will have a chance to draw on some of these sources themselves as part of their work in the gallery.
- **Gallery Activities:** The pupils will then engage in a series of gallery-based activities which will encourage them to use the objects on display as a source of evidence for eating and drinking in Roman Britain. These activities will include working with clue cards to locate specific objects linked to the theme of the session and using a Roman recipe from the first century AD as the stimulus for finding out about implements used in the preparation and serving of food. The pupils will have an opportunity to handle real and replica objects which reflect material on display in the gallery.
- **Plenary:** The session closes with a chance for the pupils to reflect on what they have learned during the session.

Important Note: Object Conservation

During the course of the workshop the pupils will be handling a range of replica and real objects. These objects are drawn from the handling collection of the Department of Education at the British Museum. The Museum would, therefore, very much appreciate it if pupils attending the workshop could wash and dry their hands before the start of the session to help conserve the objects being handled. We recommend that pupils also wash their hands after the session, particularly if they are due to go straight into their lunch break.

Eating and Drinking in Roman Britain

Key themes covered by this explorer pack session are eating and drinking in Roman Britain and how we can find out about the past using a variety of sources of information - in particular the use of excavated objects displayed in a museum.

Before the day of your visit you may like to talk to the pupils about the chronology of Roman Britain - when did the Romans arrive, which areas of modern day Britain did the Romans occupy, which other areas of the world did the Romans make part of their Empire, when did the Romans leave Britain ?

During the session pupils will be investigating how archaeologists find out about the past. You may like to discuss with the pupils the different sources of information (such as objects, written documents, drawings and paintings) which archaeologists and historians use to help them reconstruct the past beyond living memory. It would be useful for the pupils to think about the difference between primary sources (such as those listed above) and secondary sources in the form of history books, information on the internet or filmed reconstructions where people have used primary sources to present their own view of the past. The pupils may also like to think about how primary sources are made available to us today through processes such as archaeological excavation, preservation in an archive or display in a museum.

Objects from Roman Britain in the British Museum

There are many objects from Roman Britain on display in the British Museum.

A good starting point is the COMPASS website at www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass where you can search for objects from Roman Britain in the Museum collections.

There is a children's COMPASS website at www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/childrenscompass

Below are a few key galleries which you may like to include as part of your visit.

Gallery 49: Roman Britain Gallery

A wide range of objects relating to life in Roman Britain.

Gallery 69: Life in Ancient Greece and Rome

Farming (Case 15)

Transport amphorae for olive oil, wine, grain and fish sauce (Between cases 16 and 17)

Roman Household Utensils (Case 11)

Gallery 70: Imperial Rome

The Chaourse Hoard (Case 31)

Follow-up activities

At the end of your session you will be provided with copies of the Roman recipe used during the session with space for the pupils to record information about the objects which could be used to make the recipe in Roman times. You may choose to complete this sheet in the Roman Britain gallery on the day of your visit. Alternatively, the sheet can be completed back in the classroom by searching the Museum's internet database of objects, COMPASS, to find suitable objects to undertake the different steps in the recipe.

Back at school pupils could undertake further research into food and drink in Roman Britain - what types of food would have been eaten, how was it prepared and how did people eat their food? This information could be presented in a non-chronological written account, via reconstruction drawings (what would a Roman kitchen have looked like and what food would be prepared in it?) or through role-play (act out the preparation and consumption of a Roman banquet).

Training for teachers

There is a linked training session for all teachers who attend an explorer pack session at the Museum. You will automatically be booked on this session when you book your school group in for one of the pupil sessions. The training session will offer an opportunity for you to learn how to use the explorer pack yourself so that you can return to the Museum with further groups and deliver the session independently using resources provided by the Museum. Further details about this training session can be found in *Information and Events for Schools and Teachers*.

Curriculum Links

National Curriculum for History at Key Stage 2

Programme of Study: Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in Britain

An overview study of how British society was shaped by the movement and settlement of different peoples in the period before the Norman Conquest and an in-depth study of how British society was affected by Roman or Anglo-Saxon or Viking settlement.

Contact Details

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Please quote the reference *Eating and Drinking in Roman Britain: Key Stage 2 Explorer Pack Session* in all enquiries.