

# DAILY LIFE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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SCHOOLS, THE GODS, LEISURE AND MORE!

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# **Daily Life in the Roman Empire**

**- Text -**

**For Women  
At School  
For Fun  
With the Gods  
With Food**

# Daily Life in the Roman Empire...

## FOR WOMEN...



An average Roman wife preferred to stay indoors, at home. Here, she would spend her time taking care of the home, her children, and simple household chores, like taking care of a garden or spinning wool into yarn to make articles of clothing. She would even pass these skills onto her daughters. It was her job to take care of her husband, children, and household; if not for her, the home would have fallen apart.

Unfortunately, though, women had very few rights in everyday society. In Rome's early history, a woman's husband maintained complete control over her life. In fact, woman could not even make a simple suggestion to her husband. In this time, it would have been absurd to think a woman could vote or participate in government, as these were both restricted from her.

As Rome evolved into an empire, however, things started to slowly change. While they still had few political freedoms, women were allowed to speak more openly at home with their husbands. While still rare, it became more common for women to own land, run businesses, and even have their own slaves.



Did you know that in Rome's early history, women were not allowed to drink wine?  
A husband would kiss his wife's lips to see if they tasted sweet. If they did, she could be severely beaten!

# Daily Life in the Roman Empire...

## AT SCHOOL...

Schools did not exist in Rome's early history. However, this did not mean that children went untaught. Roman boys were often taught by their fathers the skills they would need to be successful in life. These skills included hunting, proper manners, and basic reading and writing. Girls, like their siblings, were taught by their mothers how to cook, spin yarn, and make clothes. Essentially, girls were prepared for their lives as homemakers.

Once schools were created, only Roman boys and a small selection of girls could attend. All those who attended were sent at around the age of 6 or 7, but only boys would continue until their late teen years. Boys were taught how to read and write, as well as study mathematics, politics, and public

speaking. These subjects would prepare boys for government life. But, school was very intimidating: boys would often be whipped for making the slightest mistake.

In general, girls did not go to school. Only the girls from the richest families could attend, and here they learned basic skills like reading and writing. For the vast majority of girls, education continued at home with their mother. As girls aged, they were taught how to play musical instruments, how to sew, and were instructed on how to properly run a kitchen.

Did you know that "paper" was too expensive to let Roman boys write on?

In fact, they had to use a wax tablet until they proved they were good enough to use paper!

# Daily Life in the Roman Empire...

## FOR FUN...

Romans would do a variety of things to have fun! As children, the Romans would play with toys that people still play with today, such as rattles, balls, or marbles. Roman children would also play with dolls, however they would not be made out of plastic. Instead, dolls would have been made out of wood, wax, clay, or bronze. A popular game that children would play was one where they had mice pull tiny carts, and they would see which one was the fastest!

Into adult life, Romans entertained themselves by

Have you ever thrown a ball with a friend? The Romans did too! But, I don't think it was the same...

The Romans made their balls out of a pig's bladder, wrapped around with leather!



The Colosseum

attending the gladiator games and chariot races. Most of these events took place in the Colosseum, which was an outdoor stadium that could hold over 50,000 people. Here, gladiators fought to the death, Christians were fed to lions, and circus shows entertained the crowds!

The main attraction in Rome were the gladiator games. Here, famous fighters, often slaves or prisoners-of-war, fought to the death. These shows were usually free, since the emperors believed it was a good way to keep the people happy!

# Daily Life in the Roman Empire...

## WITH THE 300S...

**Religion played a central role in the daily lives of ancient Romans. The Romans, like the Greeks before them, turned to the gods to explain the natural world. Too, Romans believed gods controlled every moment of their lives, which is why they spent a great deal of their day worshipping them.**

**The Romans worshipped a variety of gods, with most being based off the beliefs of their Greek ancestors. For example, Zeus, the supreme god to the Greeks, was Jupiter to the Romans. Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom and warfare, was translated to Minerva. The Roman god Neptune, the god of the sea, was equivalent to Greece's Poseidon. Each Roman god had their own temple and**

**each was celebrated on their own special holiday.**

**At home, religion continued to play a central role to the Romans. Each home had a small altar where they kept household gods called "lares." Romans believed these spirits observed, protected, and influenced all that happened within the home, therefore it was important to spend time each day worshipping these gods. In fact, it is believed that most Romans thought it was more important to please their "lares" than the public gods, such as Jupiter or Neptune.**



"Lares" on an altar

# Daily Life in the Roman Empire...

## WITH FOOD...

To the Romans, what you ate each day depended largely on what class you were a member of. But, no matter what you ate, it was fairly common for Romans to have one main meal in the late afternoon, from around four in the afternoon to six in the evening. Breakfast and lunch were typically very light, usually consisting of bread or fruit. If you were part of the lower class, you could expect to eat mostly cereal grains, often spoiled or rancid, at each meal. Gruel or porridge was also very common. Meat was far too expensive for the average Roman, so this luxury would have been a dream for a member of the lower class.

Wealthy Romans enjoyed a life of extravagance. Their meals were filled with a variety impressive items, and this was exactly their goal; the wealthy class enjoyed showing off their wealth to all who were around. Wheat pancakes and honey were a common breakfast meal, and lunches consisted of fine bread, cheese, and wine. Many options typically existed at evening meals. For example, there would be a variety of exotic meats, such as roasted peacock and ostriches, vegetables, herbs, and spices.

Did you know that wealthy Romans would have extravagant banquets that lasted for hours upon hours? What's really strange is that in order to continue eating, they would induce vomiting.



# DAILY LIFE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

As you navigate...

Create a sketch  
that relates to your notes!

What are TWO details you can record about life for women?

For Women

With Food

What are TWO details you can record about Roman food?

Create a sketch  
that relates to your notes!

**WHAT WAS IT  
LIKE TO LIVE IN  
THE ROMAN  
EMPIRE?**

For Fun

At School

What are TWO details you can record about what people did for fun in Rome?

Create a sketch  
that relates to your notes!

What are TWO details you can record about Roman religion?

For the Gods

Create a sketch  
that relates to your notes!

What are TWO details you can record about Roman school?

Create a sketch  
that relates to your notes!

# DAILY LIFE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

## Louvre Museum Pamphlet/Brochure

You have been hired by the Louvre Museum in Paris to design a new brochure on an upcoming exhibit: the Daily Life of Romans! The museum paid a great deal of money to have this exhibit in their halls for the next two weeks, and they need a pamphlet that showcases everything that will be viewed. Using your expert knowledge of daily life in Rome, create a brochure that shows the 5 major categories!

### What is this worth?

\_\_\_\_\_ Quality of Writing

\_\_\_\_\_ Focus on Topic

\_\_\_\_\_ Creativity of Pictures

\_\_\_\_\_ Overall helpfulness of brochure in helping me understand life in Ancient Rome