

Did they have swimming pools?

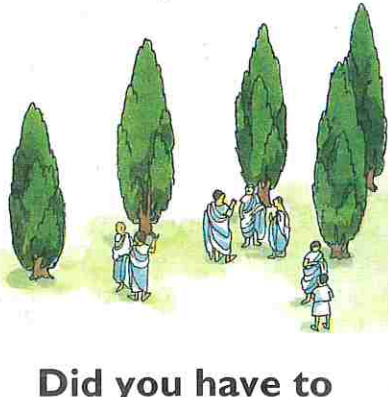
Yes, they had them in buildings called bathhouses. These were much more than indoor swimming pools. They were fantastic places where a Roman could swim, bathe, take a sauna, have a massage, wrestle

or just relax. Some bathhouses even had libraries attached to them. They were also used by Roman businessmen to hold meetings, or for friends to get together in.

Who could use the baths?

The public bathhouses were open to men and women, but they couldn't use them at the same time. The evenings were often for women only.

This is what a Roman bathhouse might have looked like. Parts of the roof, walls and floor have been left out so that you can see inside.



This is the hottest bath in the house.

A very sweaty man

This businessman is enjoying a massage.

Underfloor heating system

Changing rooms

Did you have to pay to get in?

Yes, but the entrance fee was very cheap. In the days of the emperors, it cost only one *quadrans*. That was the smallest Roman coin there was.

What were the bathhouses like?

Amazing. They used very complicated heating systems to keep different baths and pools at different temperatures. People would go from one bath to another. The bigger bathhouses were usually beautifully decorated places.

How many were there?

By AD284, there were over a thousand private and public bathhouses spread across the empire. Hundreds of thousands of Romans must have spent many hours enjoying themselves in them.

Did they have swimming lessons?

It is unlikely that bathhouses held official classes to teach people to swim. Most of the indoor pools were designed for people to bathe in.

They were too small for swimming around in. People may have taught their friends in the bigger, outdoor pools.

People actually live in these apartments. It's very noisy.

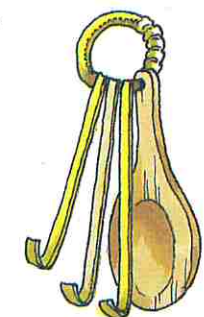
What did the Romans wash with?

Not with soap. To get rid of all the sweat and grime of everyday Roman living, they covered themselves with oil.

This Roman pot is full of oil.



Then they would scrape off the oil with special scrapers made of metal, wood or bone. These were called strigils. Some people had their slaves do the scraping for them.



These strigils are on a hoop so that they can be easily carried.

Wrestlers

No one is wearing a swimming suit.