

What did the Romans ever do for us?!



Carrots?

Carrots – wild ancestors of carrots originally came from Iran and Afghanistan, but selective breeding enabled the domestic carrot to evolve. It is this that the Romans (probably) spread into western Europe. The later evolved, orange carrot found its way into Britain in the 14th Century.

Other food introduced by the Romans were: apples, pears, apricots, turnips, coriander, asparagus, cherries, grapes, cabbages, dates and peas.

Yes



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Arches?

Arches – Although seen before in Mesopotamia, the first real systematic use of them was by the Romans in about 200BC. This was made easier by the development of a building material that was lighter, stronger and cheaper than traditionally used stone: concrete. Arches meant structures could stretch over larger gaps than beams across posts, so this gave rise to the engineering of aqueducts, viaducts and much taller buildings than had previously been seen.

Pont du Gard, France
Built c.19 BC

Yes



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Chickens?

Chickens – First domesticated in India and introduced into western Europe in 1st Century BC.

The Romans then spread them throughout their empire. Rabbits and hares were also introduced to Britain and other countries by the Romans, as the Romans liked to eat them.

Yes



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Glass windows?

Glass windows – the Romans were the first to use glass for windows in c A.D.100, although it only became common in ordinary buildings in Britain in the early 17th Century. Previously they just had holes in the wall, cloth/animal skin coverings or wooden shutters. As a result, and due to the climate of Britain, the size of windows in England were very small, so houses were very dark.

The glass used by the Romans was still very opaque.



Yes

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Roads?

Roads – Corduroy roads (logs laid horizontally across the pathway – great for covering marshy land but no good for hooved animals) have been found in Glastonbury dating back to 4,000 BC, but generally 'roads' were just dirt tracks. Most transportation was done by river as it was fast and easier. The Romans built 10,000 miles of paved roads throughout Britain, some of which would have had a pathway (pavement) on either side of the road. This had a huge impact on trade.

A Roman street, Pompeii



Yes

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Plumbing?

Plumbing – the word plumbing comes from the Latin, plumbum, meaning lead. Excluding the name, Roman engineering allowed for flushable loos, sewage and waste water pipes, under floor heating, central heating and thermal baths.

Roman plumbing



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Christianity ?

Christianity - Roman was very negative to it initially but it became an officially supported religion in the Roman state under Constantine I, in AD 313, and quickly became dominant. All religions except Christianity were prohibited in AD 391 by an edict of Emperor Theodosius. It is not entirely clear how Christianity came to Britain, but it became popular while Britain was under the rule of the Roman Empire.

Roman mosaic, said to be the head of Christ.



Maybe

What did the Romans



Three Course Meal?

The three course meal – the Celts would have had a one pot affair, however, the Romans - renowned for feasting - regularly had a starter, main and pudding. Binge eating was also common place among the Romans, with a whole room being set aside for vomiting, so the diner had space to go back for more.



Yes

What did the Romans



The water wheel?

Water wheel – Mining for metals had previously been very small scale, but Roman engineering allowed mass production. Partly due to hydraulic mining (using huge sluices of water to wash away debris, exposing metal 'veins' that can be followed and extracted) and partly by the *reverse overshot water wheel* (to remove water from mines). The water wheel was first invented by the Greeks in the 3rd century BC but it was taken up by the Romans who spread the engineering throughout western Europe.



Yes

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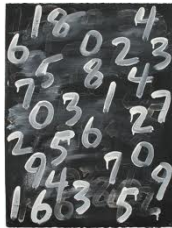


The Fire Brigade?

Fire brigade - The first organised fire department began in Rome during the 1st century BC, consisting of slaves and buckets on a chain. Prior to this, protecting one's home against fire was of personal concern. The idea for an organised fire department was taken up from a business man who would only put out fires if paid at the moment your house was burning. If a price could not be agreed, he left it to burn and once destroyed bought up the property for a fraction of the price it was worth. This idea was also taken up by insurance companies in Britain after the Great Fire of London, 1666.

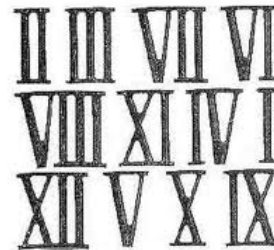
Yes

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Numbers?

Numbers - The Romans gave us Roman numerals, which were largely abandoned by the 14th Century in favour of Arabic numerals. As the name suggests, they came from the Arabs (from North Africa and the Middle East) and are still the digits we use today – invented in AD 500.



No

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Paper?

Paper – Invented in China in 150BC out of cloth, wood and straw. It spread to Europe in the 13th Century. Romans predominantly used wax tablets, but also slate, papyrus and parchment scrolls – these last two were very expensive so generally reserved for the most important documents.

Roman wax tablet



No

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Glasses?

Spectacles – invented in Italy, but not by the Romans, in around 1286. They started becoming popular in the early 1300s.



No

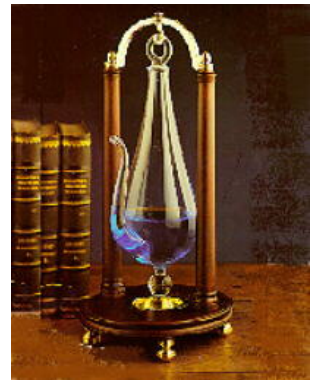
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The barometer?

Barometer - Used to measure air pressure and help forecast weather. The mercury barometer was invented in 1644 by Italian scientist Evangelista Torricelli.

An early, 17th Century, glass barometer.



No

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The toothbrush?

The tooth brush – toothbrushes as we would recognise them, i.e. a handle and bristles, were used in China during the 13th Century. It was adopted in Europe in the 17th Century. The Romans cleaned their teeth with a paste made from crushed bones.

Early Chinese toothbrushes.



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Batteries?

Battery - invented by Italian scientist Alessandro Volta in 1800. The word 'voltage' comes from his name. The Romans knew nothing of electricity except that certain fish, such as the catfish, could produce a shock that could be conducted through other materials. Electricity remained little more than an intellectual curiosity until the 1600s.

Alessandro Volta



No

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Soap?

Soap – The Romans may be renowned for their baths but they did not use soap. They would go into a hot room, cover their bodies in oil and then scrape it off. The Celts in fact gave it to the Romans, however, it was also being used in China and Arabia. (The oily gunk from Athletes and Gladiators was collected by women and used as face masks).



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Long distance radio?

Long distance radio and wireless communication – Invented by Italian physicist and electrical engineer, Guglielmo Marconi. He achieved his first radio link in 1895. The Ancient Romans did have their own methods of communicating over long distances, such as messengers, messenger pigeons, flags and light (fire).

Marconi with his radio



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Pizza?

Pizza – The Ancient Greeks had a dish very similar to modern pizza – bread covered with oils, herbs and cheese, which was called 'pita' meaning pie – spreading to eastern Europe and the Middle East. From this the Romans developed 'placenta', bread topped with cheese and honey. Modern pizza originated in Italy as a tomato pie and in 1889 cheese was added.

'Placenta' – The dough is not too dissimilar to modern filo pastry.

No



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Houses?

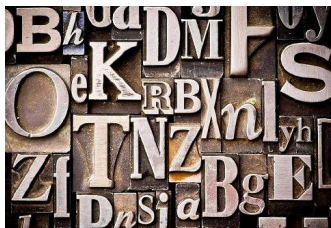
Houses – houses were obviously around before the arrival of the Romans, however, Roman architectural designs and building materials did leave their mark. Celtic houses were round, single roomed and held up by a pole in the middle. The Romans has pointed roofs, central heating, multiple rooms and often more than one floor. The ancient Roman (and Greek) architectural design is still copied today.

A Roman villa

Kind of



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Letters?

Letters – Letters we use today come from the Latin alphabet that was spread around Europe by the Romans. After the Romans left it remained in religious and intellectual works – the vast majority of Britain remained illiterate for a long time after.



Yes

Other things the Romans left their mark on were: towns, language, fast food, art, literature, organised infrastructure, democracy, law/public order, public libraries, adverts, street cleaners, cats, education, censuses, the calendar, parks and wine to name but a few.

First arriving in 55BC with Julius Caesar. He fought his way up to the Thames and then turned back.

Caesar returned the following summer, 54BC, with 30,000 foot soldiers and 2,000 cavalry men. Local tribes finally surrendered and agreed to pay tribute to Rome in return for peace. This lasted for nearly a century.

Emperor Claudius arrived in AD 43 to finish off the job.

The Romans occupied Britain from AD43 to AD410

Why Britain: maybe...

The Romans were cross with the Celts for helping the Gauls against Caesar

Looking for riches – land, slaves and metals

Why did they leave:

Internal instability within the Empire and attacks from various migrating people. All Romans were called back to fight for Rome.

The Romans were very good at taking on other cultures ideas, however they weren't that great at innovating in their own right. In the 400 years they occupied Britain, they failed to make any technological advances.

As a modern Briton we would probably feel more at home in Ancient Rome than in Ancient Britain.