The Romans

Leisure and Entertainment in Ancient Rome

Much like you all like to do today, people in Ancient Roman times liked to relax and have fun. Board games which could be played in either groups or pairs were very popular. Archaeologists today have even found some counters from Roman games.

As well as games, Romans also hunted animals in their spare time. They didn't just kill animals for food; they killed them for fun too. They liked hunting deer; in fact, they enjoyed it so much that they brought deer to Britain just so that they could hunt them.

Have you ever been to a concert? Or maybe a theatre show? These are types of entertainment that people go to watch in their spare time. Well, in Ancient Roman times, there was a slightly more gruesome type of entertainment.

Have you ever heard of a gladiator?

Gladiators were men who were used for entertainment. Lots of people would gather at an amphitheatre to watch a gladiator fight. Sometimes gladiators would fight each other and other times, they fought animals, like lions or bears.

Gladiators often fought until one of them was killed. If, at the end of a fight, a gladiator was still alive, the audience would get to vote on whether or not he was to be killed or allowed to live.



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The Ampitheatre

The amphitheatre is where the gladiators would fight. This is what it looked like:





An amphitheatre is what we now call a theatre - somewhere we go to watch a show or a concert. It was free to go to. There could be thousands of people in the audience at an amphitheatre show.

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The Baths

Going to the baths is something else that Romans did in their spare time.



There are still some Baths left from Roman times in England. They are in a place called ... Bath!

Although visiting the baths was a relaxing activity for Romans, there was also another reason to going there. They went to the baths to get clean!

Whilst at the baths, Romans would do some exercises and some swimming. There were some rooms in the baths, with the temperature turned up very, very high. This was designed to help Romans sweat out dirt. Their skin was then scraped with a metal stick to remove all of the dirt. This stick was called a Strigil, and it looked like this:



"Strigil (scraper) (1960.484)" by [Sarah E. Bond] is licensed under CC BY 2.0

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Questions

- Use part of the question to form your answer.
- Use skimming and scanning to find the information that you are looking for.

1. What have archaeologists found?

2. How much did it cost to go and see a show at the ampitheatre?

3. What did the Romans bring to Britain to hunt?

4. What did the gladiators do?

5. What decision did the audience sometimes have to make at the end of a gladiator fight?

6. As well as relaxing, for what other reason did Romans go to the baths?

7. Why was the temperature in the rooms at the baths so hot?

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