

# Roman Baths



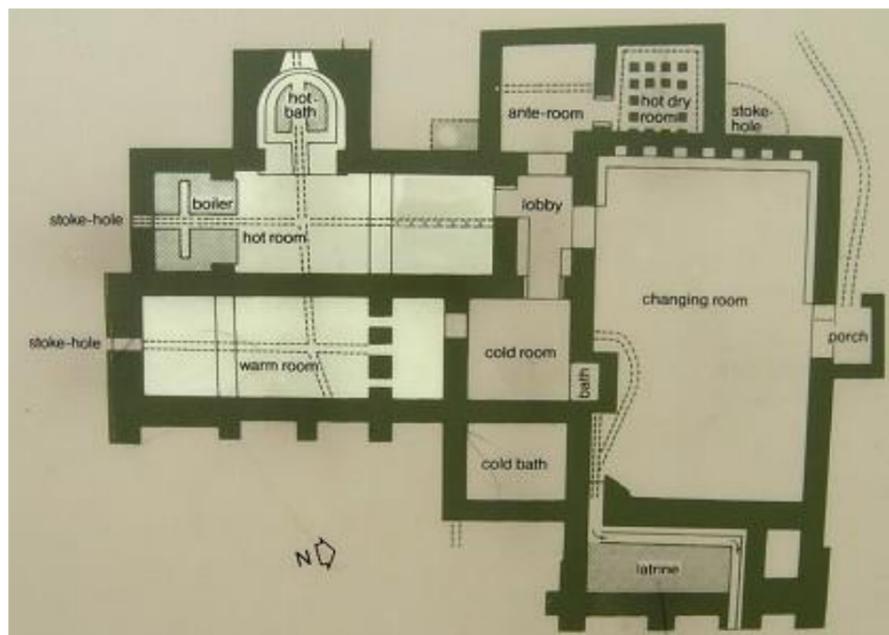
During the reign of the Romans, every town had its own bath complex (like a large swimming pool). There were 170 baths in Augustus and by 300 A.D that number had increased to over 900 baths.

The Romans loved washing and bathing and, rather than it being done in private, the Romans built magnificent public bath houses in towns across their empire. Rich villa owners would have had their own baths in their homes.

You can see remains of a Roman bath in the city of Bath, in Somerset, in the picture above.

## Baths were not only places for washing

People went to the public baths for entertainment, healing or just to get clean. Some people went to the public baths to meet friends and spend their spare time there. Large bath houses had restaurants, games rooms, snack bars and even libraries.



Plan of Bath House at the Roman town of Chester.

## The Layout of a Roman Bath

A public bath was built around three principal rooms:

- a warm one called the tepidarium
- a hot one called the caldarium, where slaves would rub their masters all over with perfumed oil and then scrape it off with a knife called a strigil
- a big cold bath called the frigidarium to swim in



### A Strigil

A strigil was a small, curved, metal tool used to scrape dirt and sweat from the body. First perfumed oil was applied to the skin, and then it would be scraped off, along with the dirt.



Remains of part of the Bath House in the Roman town of Chester

The baths were very luxurious.

The average bath house would have mirrors covering the walls, ceilings were buried in glass and the pools were lined with rich marble and complicated mosaics covered the floors.

### Visiting a Roman Bath

First you would take off your clothes in the changing room. Then you would relax in the warm room (called the Tepidarium). After the Tepidarium you would go into the hot room (called the Calarium). The steam in the room would make you sweat.

In the next room a slave would scrape off the sweat and dirt with a strigil. You would then jump into the cold bath (called the Frigidarium). There were separate baths for men and women.