

Roman Bath

When you hear the word “bath,” what comes to mind? A small, private room to wash? Maybe you think about your own bathroom, which probably has a bathtub, shower, toilet, and sink. But baths in ancient Rome were very different. “Bathing” to a Roman meant going to a public building to socialize, relax, exercise, hear a lecture, visit the library, and yes—bathe. Bathhouses were built around three main rooms: The *frigidarium* was the cold room with a cold-water pool; the *tepidarium* is where you went for a lukewarm water bath; the *caldarium* was something like a hot tub or sauna. Hot air from a furnace circulated below the floor of the *caldarium*, keeping the room hot. This is called a hypocaust system, pictured here.

