

Once upon a time in **ROME**

Imagine traveling back in time more than 2,000 years to ancient Rome. And yet you only have to enter the Museum's Roman art galleries! While in ancient Rome, take your time and look carefully. You will see many objects that are unusual, but you will also recognize many that we still use today.

Enter the Leon Levy and Shelby White Court, and you will find yourself in a grand space that brings to mind an ancient Roman courtyard. It is filled with sculptures of emperors and gods and goddesses—and people like you! You'll have no trouble finding them as you explore the space.

Starting from the middle of the courtyard, turn left.

Straight ahead you will see a bedroom (*cubiculum nocturnum*) from a Roman villa. Look at the wall paintings—what stories do you think they tell? Can you imagine if they were in *your* bedroom? Open up this guide to find a poster of this room—for your room at home!

Now turn right into the gallery titled "Art of Augustan Rome."

Fresco with seated woman playing a kithara (lyre).
Roman, Late Republican, ca. 40–30 B.C. From the villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale, main reception hall. Rogers Fund, 1903 (03.14.15)



Made in Ancient Rome... and Still Used Today

You are cordially invited to an ancient Roman dinner party—but what eating utensils will you bring?

Many of the things that we use today were also used in ancient Rome. Find the set of silver spoons (*cochlearia*) in the “Roman Luxury Tableware” display case. Do you think they look like spoons we eat with today? How many other objects can you identify that we still use? What materials are they made of? Are these the same as or different from the ones we use?

The spoons and other items in this case are certainly very old, but there are other reasons why they are in a museum. Much as we do today, the ancient Romans enjoyed daily objects that were not only useful but also beautiful and made of costly materials.

Did You Know?

The ancient Romans had racing tracks, plumbing, glass bottles, medical instruments, musical instruments, writing utensils, scales, toys, games, and many other things that we still use today.



Tableware from the Tivoli Hoard. Roman, Late Republican, mid 1st century B.C. Silver. Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.49.2–9, .11, .12)

Continue through this gallery and turn right to return to the Leon Levy and Shelby White Court. Turn left and as you head toward the windows you will come face-to-face with a marble portrait of the emperor Caracalla.



Stone Made to Look Like Flesh

What the Roman artists saw with their eyes and touched with their hands thousands of years ago you can “touch” with your eyes today. You can tell if the surface of a sculpture is rough or smooth simply by examining it closely. Look at the rough surface of Caracalla’s trimmed beard, the smoothness of his skin, and the textured patterns of the hair on his head. Slowly walk around the sculpture. The artist carefully observed Caracalla and created a very realistic portrait of this powerful emperor. In what direction are Caracalla’s eyes looking? Look at his expression—what do you think he is thinking?

Portrait of the emperor Caracalla. Roman, Severan, A.D. 212–217. Marble. Samuel D. Lee Fund, 1940 (40.11.1a)

Money in Your Pocket

Facing the windows, turn right and head toward the far right corner, where you will find several cases containing Roman coins.

Look closely at the coins. What do they have in common? Do you have any money in your pockets? If you do, take it out and carefully examine the coins (or bills). Who is on the front (the head side) and what is on the back (the tail side)? Why do you think we put this information on our money? What does this information tell us about important people, places, and events in our history? Like the ancient Romans, we also honor our leaders and commemorate important events on our coins.

Without images in newspapers or on television or the Internet, coins were the best way for the Roman emperors to let their subjects know what they looked like and what powerful leaders they were.

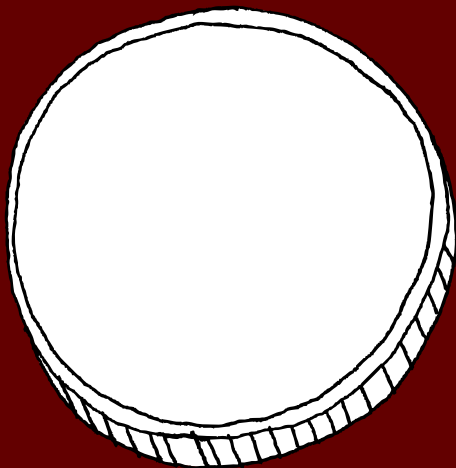


Did you know?

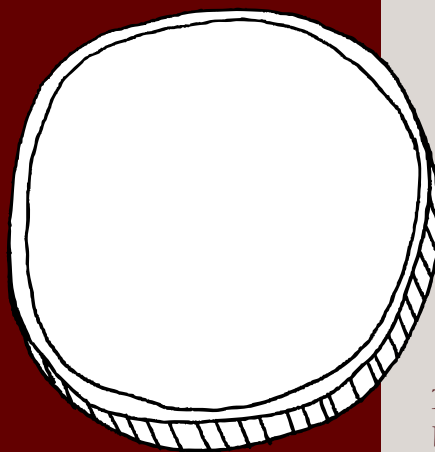
The words *money* and *mint* are derived from the goddess Juno Moneta, whose temple was the first place Roman coins were made.



If you were asked to design a coin what would you put on the front and on the back? Draw your design here.



Heads



Tails

Front and back of Aurei (gold coins) of the Twelve Caesars. Roman, ca. 46 B.C.–A.D. 96. The bracelets were probably assembled in the 19th century. Gold, amethyst. Gift of C. Ruxton Love Jr., 1967 (67.265.7a–f)

Take the elevator or stairs to the mezzanine level. Walk through the gallery of Etruscan art and enter the Greek and Roman Study Collection, which has many display cases to explore.

