

# LAST SUPPER IN POMPEII

Hi, I'm **Didymus the dormouse**,

your guide to feasting in ancient Roman times. I may look cute, but I'm a brave adventurer. I once lived in the ancient Italian town of Pompeii. My owners kept me in a pot, and were planning to stuff, roast and eat me. Desplicable! It was lucky that I managed to escape, because when a huge volcano erupted, I was super speedy and got away. My owners weren't so lucky.

AD 79 was a very sad year. Many people and animals died. I'd like to show you some of the things that archaeologists have found under the ash and rocks, and tell you about the wonderful feasts in Pompeii.



**1**

**Find this statue of Bacchus, the god of wine.**

Bacchus usually has the following things. Tick the box when you find them.

- ☐ Pet panther
- ☐ Wine cup
- ☐ Sacred staff (called a thyrsus)



My owners loved a party and so left offerings to Bacchus, asking him to watch over their feasts and provide plentiful wine.



2

Find some large urns.



I love a lie down. Dormice sleep loads you know! My owners loved to lie down too, not only for sleeping, but also for feasting.



This urn shows someone lying down to feast. How do you think lying on a couch to eat and drink would feel?

(Circle best words)

comfortable

uncomfortable

relaxing

messy

tricky

lazy

luxurious

clumsy

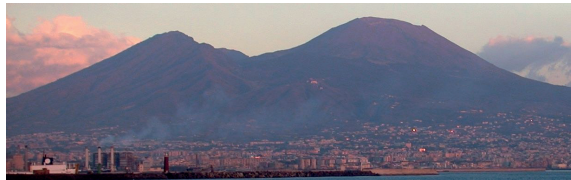
Ancient Romans lay on their left side to eat. We now know this aids digestion. It also kept their right hand free for eating.



3

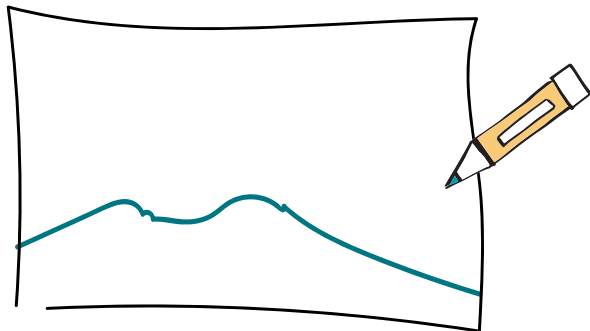
Find this ancient painting showing the god Bacchus pouring wine for his pet panther beside Mount Vesuvius.

Look at the picture of how Mount Vesuvius looks today. Compare it to the ancient picture.



Complete the shape of Mount Vesuvius in ancient Roman times before the volcano erupted.

Bacchus watch out! Mount Vesuvius will soon erupt in a huge explosion.



## 4 Find this pig from Pompeii.

When Mount Vesuvius erupted, the rocks and hot ash rained down burying the entire town. Over time, bodies of the dead rotted away, but the hard shell of ash which buried them remained. Archaeologists poured plaster of paris into the empty spaces in the ash, and when this hardened they dug away the ash to reveal casts of the animals or people who died there, just like this poor pig.



**Chat with your family:** imagine what it was like during the volcano's eruption. Perhaps this pig was running away. Would you have run away too? Or stayed in the city and tried to hide?

## 5 Find this mosaic showing a pot of 'garum', a strong sauce made from the fermented insides of fish.

I'm an omnivore so I love most foods. I sneak under the couch and nibble up all yummy bits which fall on the floor. Once my owners spilled some garum. I tried it but it was sooooo yucky!



The people of Pompeii **loved** garum fish sauce. The sauce maker Scaurus sold so much he became one of the richest men in Pompei, and built a huge mansion. This mosaic is from his house. He was very proud of his sauce.

Time to practice your acting skills. Pretend to pour garum over your food, like ketchup. Imagine how it tasted. Make a face to show what you think. Maybe you would like it as much as the ancient Romans? Take turns with your family.

Now think of a weird and wonderful sauce and write your ingredients here. It just might make you rich!



Go to the next room



6

Can you spot this loaf of bread?



Now find a similar loaf of bread in the painting next to it.

When they felt hungry, the people of Pompeii would pop to the shops (called *tabernae*), or get a takeaway, just like we do today.



The picture seems to show a bread shop, but in fact, the man is giving away the bread during an election to persuade people to vote for him.

7

Find this tortoise fountain in the garden.

My owners often had their meals outside in their beautiful garden, relaxing in the sunshine. They were very proud of their fancy fountain, made possible due to piped water, brought to Pompeii by the Emperor Augustus in around 10BC.



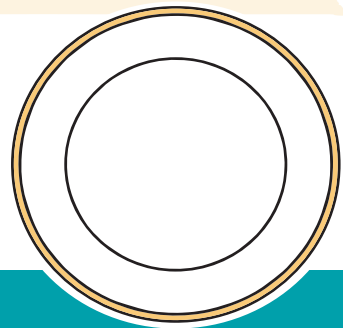
Can you see where the water came out of the tortoise fountain? Circle it on the picture above.

Notice the sights and sounds in the garden. What can you see and hear?



If you could have a picnic in the garden, what foods would you choose?

Draw them on your plate:



## 8 Go to the dining room area to find the table.

This is a timed memory challenge. Ask your family or friend to time you. Have a good look at the table for 30 seconds, then turn your back on it. Can you remember the answers to these questions?

- 1 Are the glass jugs blue or orange?
- 2 Are there any forks on the table?
- 3 What's the biggest plate on the table made out of?

Check your answers below

Some people ate on the street but fancy feasts took place in the triclinium (dining room). My owners had the very best silver dining ware. When they weren't looking, I enjoyed eating off all the fancy plates too.

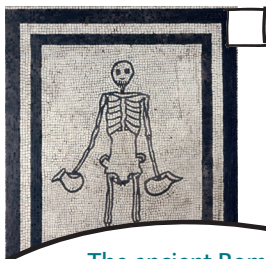
## 9 Find this potty in the case about slaves.

I once fell off the table into this potty when it was full of wee. I smelled disgusting! During a feast my owners didn't like visiting the stinky toilet in the kitchen, so the slaves brought a potty to their couch for them to use. The poor slaves had to empty these out. Yuck!

What do you think the life of a slave would be like in ancient Pompeii?



## 10 Find the skeleton mosaic nearby.



The ancient Romans believed in living life to the full, and of course, feasting. This skeleton mosaic is bringing wine to a feast and saying 'carpe diem' which means 'seize the day' because, as the skeleton knows, life doesn't last forever.

If you were following the skeleton's advice to 'seize the day' or live for the moment, which three top things would most like to do?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Answers: 1) blue 2) to 'No, the Romans mostly ate with knives and spoons.' Answer to question 3 is: 'Pottery'

11

Go in to the kitchen room,  
to find this pot.

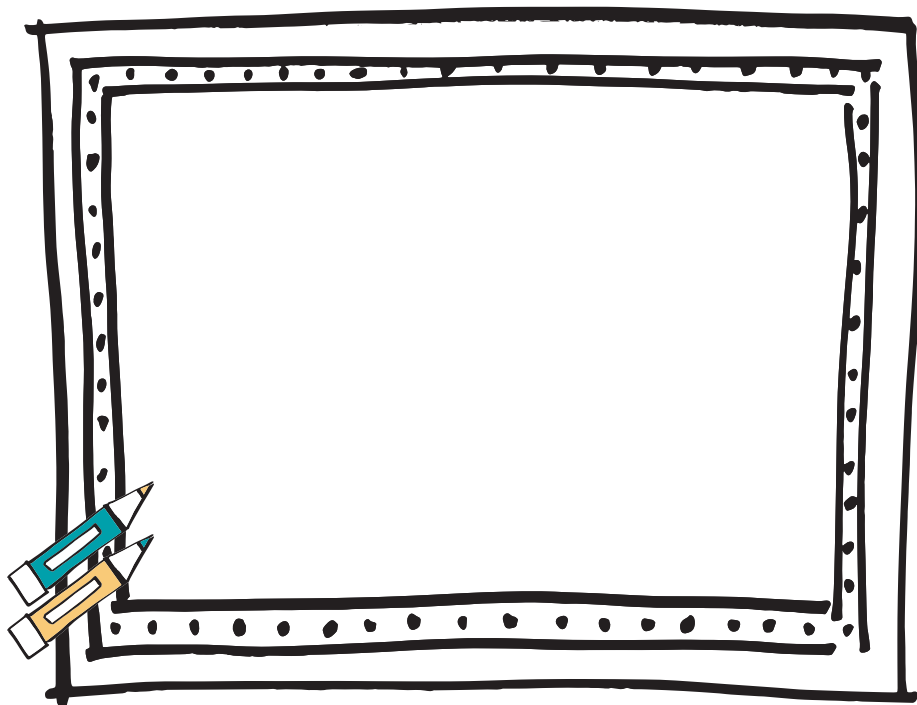


This is the dormouse pot  
(glirarium) which my owners once kept  
me in. The ridges inside were designed  
so that I could run up to get my water  
and acorns, and there were air holes  
so I could breathe. Very kind of them,

except they were  
**PLANNING TO EAT ME!**  
How do you think I escaped?



Imagine Didymus was your pet (not your next meal).  
Design a house for him.



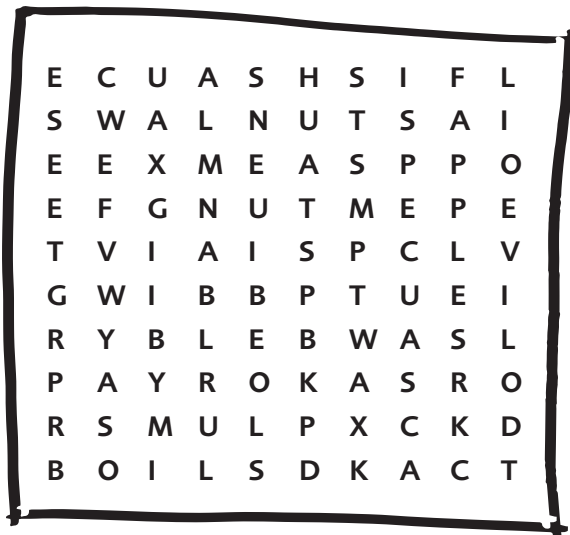
Go through to  
the last gallery



12

Complete this word search to discover some of the new foods introduced to Britain by the Romans.

Did you know that apples were brought to Britain by the ancient Romans? The ancient Romans invaded Britain in AD 43, bringing new foods from across the Empire.



FISH SAUCE

WALNUTS

CABBAGES

OLIVE OIL

RABBITS

WINE

PLUMS

PEPPER

APPLES

MUSTARD

Are there any of these foods you'd rather the Romans hadn't introduced to Britain?

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13

Find this mortarium.



Archaeologists have found lots of evidence of the ancient Romans living around Oxford. This bowl, called a mortarium, was made in Rose Hill, just up the road from here.



Can you guess what a mortarium was used for?  
Choose the likeliest option:

- 1 For bathing dormice
- 2 For grinding up spices and herbs
- 3 Part of a fountain for a garden





# 14

## Find some stone tombs.



The ancient Romans believed that fun and feasting would continue in the afterlife, as shown on these tombs.

Can you work out which tomb belonged to which person?  
Using the clues below, match the right name to the right tomb.  
We've done one for you.

**Curatia Dinyisia, a woman named after Dionysus, god of wine.**

Clue: sipping a glass of wine

**Aurelius Lucius, a cavalryman (soldier).**

Clue: Look out for his sword and helmet.

**Callimorphus, maybe an ex-slave.**

Clue: He was very fond of his little son, or nephew.



# 15

**Here is a photo of an archaeologist uncovering a statue of the god Apollo from a house in Pompeii, in 1978.**

The statue would have held a tray for food or wine.

How would you feel to be an archaeologist discovering Pompeii under the ash?

Chat with your family.



Well done! I've enjoyed my journey with you, discovering ancient Roman life, as well as the sad destruction of Pompeii. I hope that the Romans are now enjoying the afterlife. Next time you sit down to a meal, think of the wonderful feasts in Pompeii, so long ago.

**Bye!**



**Hungry?** Why not visit the Roman style Taberna cafe, on the lower ground floor

**Well done**

You've completed the  
'Last Supper in Pompeii'  
exhibition trail.