

TRAVEL AND TRADE

Travel was vital for the smooth running of the Empire, and every corner of the Roman world was linked to the city of Rome by road, river or sea. Officials came to Rome with reports from distant provinces, important legal cases were brought to the city's courts, and trade goods of every description poured in from all over the empire and beyond.

ON THE ROAD

The main purpose of Roman roads was for official business, such as moving troops and supplies around the empire or carrying messages to and from the emperor and his officials in distant places. But the roads were also used by ordinary citizens. Local traders took goods from town to town, while wealthy Romans made frequent trips to the country or the seaside.

Vehicles ranged from light, two-wheeled carriages to heavy, four-wheeled coaches big enough to carry a whole family. If the nearest town was too far away to reach in one day, people could spend the night at a state-run inn. But the rich often preferred to stay with friends, while some Romans took a tent with them or just slept in their carriage. They could also travel by horse or on foot.



Amber for precious objects, like this ring, came from the Baltic coast.



This map shows the goods that came to Rome from different parts of the empire.

Grain	Metals	Purple dye
Olive oil	Glass	Hunting dogs
Wine	Wood	Cattle
Salt	Marble	Horses
Roman empire	Cloth	Wild animals
Trade route		