



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD  
EACHDRAIDHEIL  
ALBA

PART 2 TEACHERS' NOTES

# GO ROMAN

## THEME 4: FOOD AND COOKING

LET'S  
INVESTIGATE  
NOTES AND  
OBJECT  
CHECKLIST



THE  
ANTONINE WALL  
FRONTIERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE



## GO ROMAN THEME 4: FOOD AND COOKING



Ordinary soldiers lived in groups of around eight men. They shared a barrack room and probably took it in turns to cook their daily rations. They probably served themselves using the multi-purposed metal bowl known as a *patera*.

Sewage from the communal latrines at the fort in Bearsden has revealed a surprisingly wide-ranging and mostly vegetarian diet: wheat, barley, beans, figs, dill, coriander, raspberries, brambles, strawberries, blueberries and nuts. Traces of shellfish have been found including oysters, mussels and whelks. Some items such as wine or olive oil were imported from overseas. The soldiers' daily ration when on

the march included wheat, often in the form of 'hardtack' biscuits known as *bucellatum*, olive oil, wine and meat.

The officers would have had slaves to cook for them, and would have eaten off more sophisticated pottery and glassware, imported from Gaul (modern day France).

The Go Roman game shows a day in the life of a slave girl preparing a feast at Bar Hill fort. Participants have to help her collect and prepare the things she needs. Some of the items in the box feature in the game.

The box contains the following replica objects on this theme:

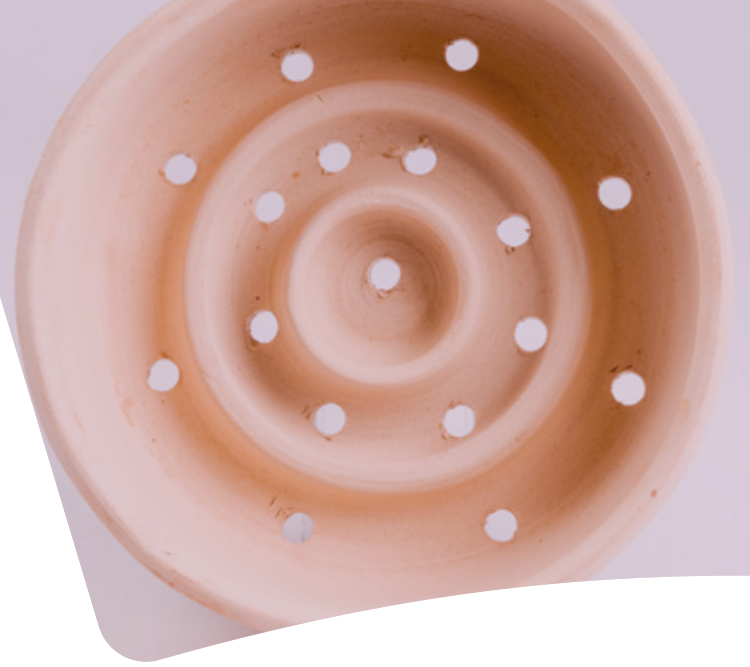
- Cooking pot
- Mortar and wooden pestle
- Red pottery dishes - platter and bowl
- Storage jar
- Cheese press
- Pottery beaker
- Metal pot used by soldiers

### FURTHER RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

This website includes Roman recipes to try: <http://www.passthegarum.co.uk>



## ACTIVITIES



### ACTIVITY 1: A ROMAN FEAST

Find out more about Roman food. Make serving plates and crockery from clay or papier mâché, based on those in the handling collection and paint and decorate them. Organise a feast, using real or toy food made from play-doh. Some pupils could be servants or slaves, serving the food, while others are the officers who can lounge back and enjoy the meal. Get pupils to freeze, so that you can take photographs of the tableau.

### ACTIVITY 2: MAKING CHEESE

It's surprisingly easy to make a simple cheese. You need:

- 4 cups of full fat milk
  - 2 tablespoons of white vinegar
  - 2 teaspoons of salt.
1. Heat the milk in a pan, stirring constantly until nearly boiling. Remove from the heat and allow to cool for 5 minutes.
  2. Stir in the vinegar until the milk completely curdles (turns lumpy). You should see fluffy white solids - curds, and a pale yellow liquid - whey.
  3. Allow the curds to settle for 30 minutes, then pour the entire contents of the pan through a cotton cloth (e.g. a tea towel) to drain off the liquid. Wring the contents of the cloth to squeeze the liquid out. Mix the salt in with the solids. You could also add some chopped herbs.

You can use the cheese as it is, like cottage cheese or ricotta.  
Or you can press it so that it lasts a bit longer.

4. Place the curds in a sieve or colander, so that the liquid can continue to drain. Place a weight on top (e.g. a container filled with water) to force excess liquid out. Leave it overnight. It should by now have formed a block of cheese, similar in appearance to feta cheese.
5. Then soak the block in water for around 24 hours, changing the water several times.
6. Then it is ready to enjoy!



## ACTIVITIES



### ACTIVITY 3: MAKING *MORETUM*: CHEESE AND HERB SPREAD

Try making this herby spread, known by the Romans as *moretum*. You'll need:

- a clove of garlic
- half a stick of celery, with the leafy bit
- a small bunch of flat leaf parsley (or any other leafy herb, for example basil)
- 1 tablespoon of coriander seeds
- a pinch of salt
- some soft cheese, such as feta
- 1 teaspoon of olive oil
- a splash of vinegar

1. Peel the garlic cloves, and crush them with a mortar and pestle (or similar).
2. Add the salt, cheese and celery and mash them up, mixing everything together.
3. Then add coriander seeds, parsley, oil and vinegar.
4. Spread on flat bread (e.g. pitta bread) and enjoy!



The Roman poet Virgil wrote a long poem describing how to make *moretum* with bread. You can read it here (translated into English)

<http://www.virgil.org/appendix/moretum.htm>

Other recipes which may be of interest, including a recipe for *bucellatum* – Roman Army ‘hardtack’ biscuits – can also be found at

<http://www.passthegarum.co.uk>

HANDLING BOX  
OBJECT CHECKLIST  
RECEIVED AND  
RETURNED



## FOOD AND COOKING

Object	Quantity	Tick received	Tick returned
1. Cooking pot	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Mortar and Pestle	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Red Samian ware dish	1 x platter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Red Samian ware dish	1 x bowl	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Storage jar	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Cheese press	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Pottery beaker with handle	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Metal pot	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Received

Returned

# LET'S INVESTIGATE!



1

Some of these objects were used for preparing food. Some of them were used for serving and eating off. Can you sort them into two groups – cooking and serving?

2

Do you know what the Romans ate? Share your knowledge. Which of these objects would they have used to prepare and eat these foods?

3

Now look at the objects, and talk about the things on the question cards

4

Choose one of the objects and make a sketch of it as a record.

5

Finally, act it out! Mime a scene showing a Roman feast. Please don't use the real objects – just mime using them. Take a photograph to record your scene.

## GO ROMAN THEME 4: FOOD AND COOKING

Ordinary soldiers lived in groups of around eight men. They shared a barracks room and probably took it in turns to cook their daily rations. The daily food ration included bread, olive oil, meat and wine.

In the remains of Roman toilets, archaeologists have found evidence of wheat, barley, beans, figs, dill, coriander, raspberries, brambles, strawberries, blueberries and nuts. Shellfish or olive oil were imported from overseas.

The officers would have had slaves to cook for them, and would have eaten off more sophisticated pottery and glassware.

# COOKING POT

## TAKE A LOOK

- Look carefully at the size and shape of the pot
- Look at the material it is made from
- Think about how it is different from or the same as the pots people cook with today
- Look at the decoration on the outside

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What kind of food could be cooked in this pot?
- How do you think the food was heated up in this pot?
- How many people could you feed with food from a pot like this?
- The pot would have got really hot. How do you think it would have been lifted on and off the heat?

Write notes and ideas from your discussions in the notes section below

## NOTES

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GO ROMAN THEME 4:  
FOOD AND COOKING

# COOKING POT

## INFORMATION

This clay cooking pot would have been used by cooks to prepare food for officers in charge.

The decoration on the outside shows it would have more expensive than a simple pot.

It would have been placed on a metal rack over a fire, a bit like a barbecue grill today.

It might have been used for cooking soup, stew or porridge.

Ordinary soldiers cooked in groups using big metal pots.



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GO ROMAN THEME 4:  
FOOD AND COOKING



# MORTAR AND PESTLE



## TAKE A LOOK

- Look at the materials that this dish and tool are made from
- Look at the size and shape of the dish
- Look closely at the top of the dish

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What do you think the wooden tool was used for?
- What do you think the dish was used for?
- Why do you think there were knobbly bits on the dish?

Write notes and ideas from your discussions in the notes section below

## NOTES

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## MORTAR AND PESTLE

This flat dish  
is a *mortarium*  
and the  
wooden tool is  
a *pestle*.

The *mortarium*  
and *pestle* were  
used to bash up  
herbs such as basil  
to make a  
delicious dressing  
or spread.

The knobbly  
bits helped  
grind up the  
herbs.



# SAMIAN WARE DISHES

## TAKE A LOOK

- Look at the material these dishes are made of
- Look closely at the decorations on the bowl
- Touch the dishes to find out if they feel rough or smooth

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- Do you think these dishes were used for cooking or serving?
- Do you think they were used by officers or ordinary soldiers?
- How do you think the patterns were made on the bowl?
- Which do you like best?

Write notes and ideas from your discussions in the notes section below

## NOTES

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GO ROMAN THEME 4:  
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## SAMIAN WARE DISHES



This red pottery is called 'Samian' ware.

It was for serving food at table.

It came all the way from France, or Gaul, as the Romans called it.

It was very expensive, and was used by the officers in charge.

It was made by pressing clay into a mould to get the patterns.

# POTTERY JAR

## TAKE A LOOK

- Look at the material this pot is made from
- Look at the shape
- Feel if it is rough or smooth

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What do you think it was used for?
- Do you think it had a lid?

Write notes and ideas from your discussions in the notes section below

## NOTES

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GO ROMAN THEME 4:  
FOOD AND COOKING

# INFORMATION

## POTTERY JAR



This jar might have been used for storing food such as *garum*, a fish stew.

It probably had a lid on top.



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# CHEESE PRESS



## TAKE A LOOK

- Look at the material this object is made from.
- Touch it to feel if it is rough or smooth
- Look carefully to see what makes it different from a normal dish

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What do you think the holes were for?
- The Romans must have had milk to make cheese. What kind of animals do you think they milked? Do you think they had their own flocks?

Write notes and ideas from your discussions in the notes section below

## NOTES

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# INFORMATION

## CHEESE PRESS

This is a cheese press made of clay. It was used by the Romans for making cheese.

Milk was cooked with vinegar and then poured into the press. Some of the milk drained away, and the lumpy bits were squashed together and pressed to make cheese.

They would have used milk from cows, sheep or goats.





# POTTERY BEAKER



## TAKE A LOOK

- Look at the material this object is made from
- Think about the size and shape and what this means it was used for
- Look at the handle and how it is attached

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- Do you think they really needed the handle?
- Why did they add it?
- What was this object used for?

Write notes and ideas from your discussions in the notes section below

## NOTES

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## POTTERY BEAKER



This is a kind of cup called a beaker.

Officers would drink wine from beakers.

Ordinary soldiers would drink beer from beakers.

# METAL POT



## TAKE A LOOK

- Look at the material this object is made from
- Look at the handle and the hole in it
- Look at the shape and size of the bowl
- Pick it up to feel how heavy it is

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- Do you think this was used for serving or for cooking food - or both?
- Why do you think it has a hole in the handle?

Write notes and ideas from your discussions in the notes section below

## NOTES

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GO ROMAN THEME 4:  
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# INFORMATION

## METAL POT



This is a kind of Roman saucepan, called a *patera*.

Ordinary soldiers in each barrack cooked their food together.

A *patera* was used by soldiers for dishing out their own portion of food from the big shared pot.

They used metal cooking pots hung over open fires.

They could also use it like a saucepan to cook over a fire if they needed to.

The hole in the handle let them hang it from their pack when on the march.



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GO ROMAN THEME 4:  
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# OBJECT INFORMATION

## 1. COOKING POT

- This clay cooking pot would have been used by cooks to prepare food for officers in charge.
- The decoration on the outside shows it would have more expensive than a simple pot.
- It might have been used for cooking soup, stew or porridge.
- It would have been placed on a metal rack over a fire, a bit like a barbecue grill today.
- Ordinary soldiers cooked in groups using big metal pots.

## 3. SAMIAN WARE DISHES

- This red pottery is called 'Samian' ware.
- It was for serving food at table.
- It came all the way from France, or Gaul, as the Romans called it.
- It was very expensive, and was used by the officers in charge.
- It was made by pressing clay into a mould to get the patterns.

## 5. CHEESE PRESS

- This is a cheese press made of clay. It was used by the Romans for making cheese.
- They would have used milk from cows, sheep or goats.
- Milk was cooked with vinegar and then poured into the press. Some of the milk drained away, and the lumpy bits were squashed together and pressed to make cheese.

## 7. METAL POT

- This is a kind of Roman saucepan, called a *patera*.
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- They used metal cooking pots hung over open fires.
- A *patera* was used by soldiers for dishing out their own portion of food from the big shared pot.
- They could also use it like a saucepan to cook over a fire if they needed to.
- The hole in the handle let them hang it from their pack when on the march.

## 2. MORTAR AND PESTLE

- This flat dish is a *mortarium* and the wooden tool is a *pestle*.
- The *mortarium* and *pestle* were used to bash up herbs such as basil to make a delicious dressing or spread.
- The knobbly bits helped grind up the herbs.

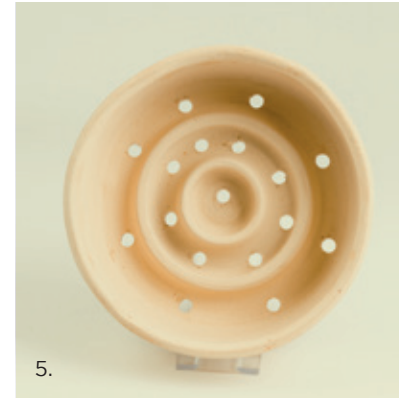
## 4. POTTERY JAR

- This jar might have been used for storing food such as *garum*, a fish stew.
- It probably had a lid on top.

## 6. POTTERY BEAKER

- This is a kind of cup called a beaker.
- Officers would drink wine from beakers.
- Ordinary soldiers would drink beer from beakers.

# WHAT'S IN THE BOX



- 1. Cooking pot
- 2. Mortar
- 3. Samian ware dishes
- 4. Pottery jar
- 5. Cheese press
- 6. Pottery beaker
- 7. Metal pot



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