

X is for **xylospogium**, or sponge on a stick.



This ingenious utensil was used by the Romans to clean their bottoms after going to the toilet. It was a simple implement consisting of a wooden stick and a sea sponge but it was one of many clever Roman inventions.

Romans did have public toilets which consisted of stone like benches with multiple openings to sit on. This may of course seem rather lacking in privacy to us nowadays but remember men & women would have also been wearing togas or tunics which would have afforded them some level of decency !



It is thought that going to a public toilet was a dangerous business not only due to the questionable hygiene, the xylopongium was after all a shared bottom wiper, combined with vermin and rats it was likely to have been an unsavoury business. Furthermore there were other strange happenings that have been recorded which would have no doubt made you think twice before visiting a public convenience. It has been noted that certainly in Pompeii, gas explosions have occurred from the dark cess pit toilet holes, causing terror and shock to those unfortunate enough to be sat upon them ! This was a result of the lethal mix of hydrogen sulphide and methane ! The Romans believed that these explosions were caused by demons that inhabited these dark holes which explains why it is common to find The Goddess Fortuna, a sort of guardian angel, on the walls of Roman toilet.

Can you make your own museum of 'X' objects from around your home? Can you make the letter X with everyday objects ?

#AtoZ

#MuseumAtHome

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