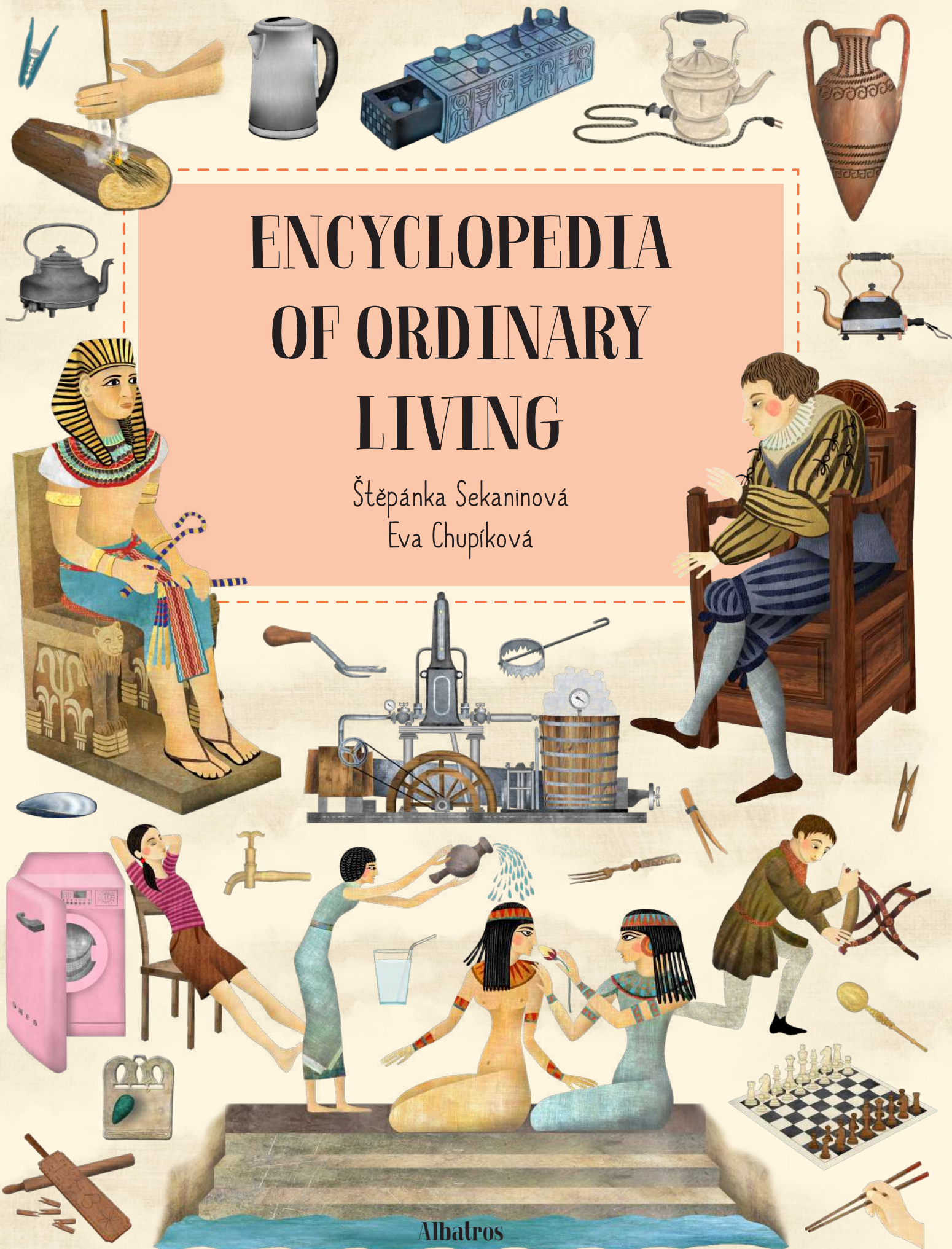




Štěpánka Sekaninová ♦ Eva Chupíková

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ORDINARY LIVING



PREHISTORY
3 million BCE – 3500 BCE



MESOPOTAMIA
c. 3100 BCE – 539 BCE

ANCIENT EGYPT
The end of the 4th millennium BCE – 332 BCE

ANCIENT GREECE
c. 1200 BCE – 6th century BCE

ANTIQUITY
8th century BCE – 476 BCE

ANCIENT ROME
753 BCE – 6th century AD

EARLY MIDDLE AGES
6th – 11th century

HIGH MIDDLE AGES
11th – 14th century

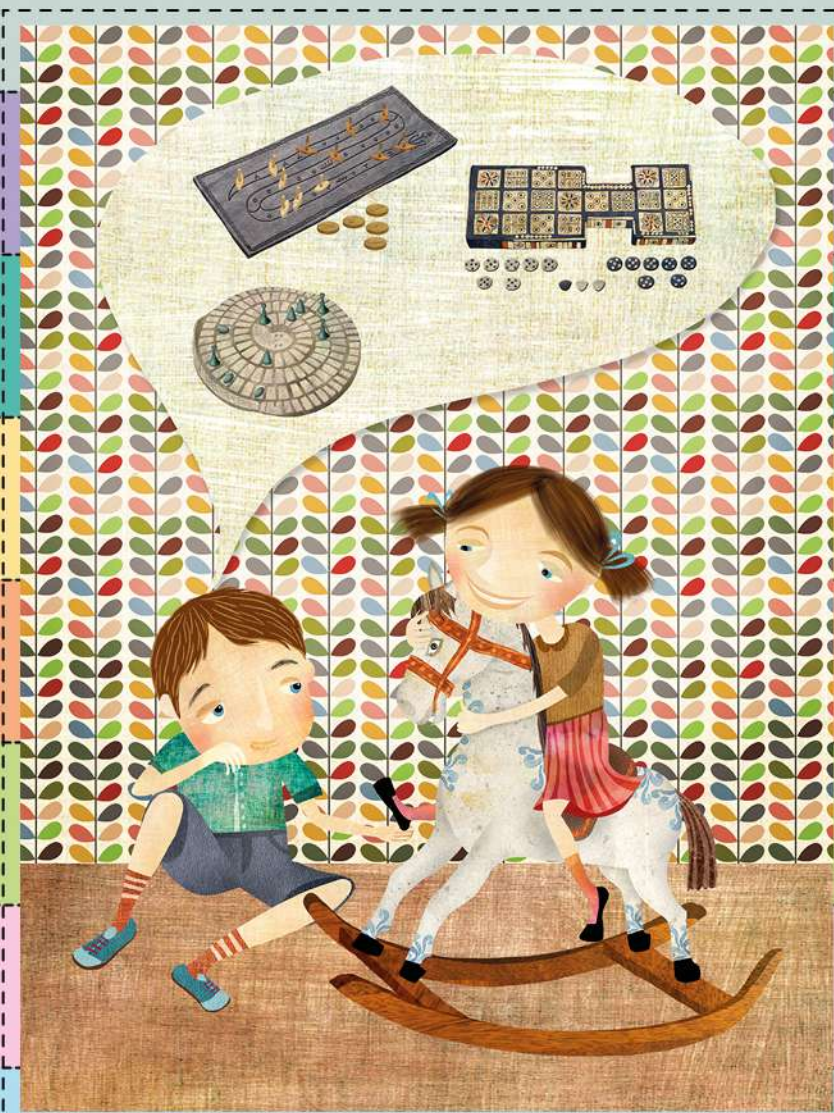
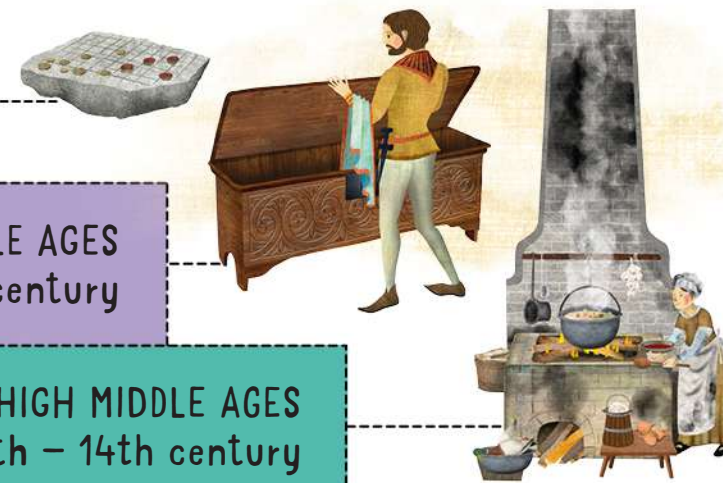
LATE MIDDLE AGES
13th – 15th century

THE RENAISSANCE
14th – 16th century

EARLY MODERN PERIOD
The end of the 15th century – 1648

MODERN PERIOD
1648–1918

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY
1918 – the present day



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ORDINARY LIVING

Written by Štěpánka Sekaninová
Illustrations by Eva Chupíková



Albatros



TABLE OF CONTENTS

BATHROOM ... 4

WASHING MACHINE ... 12

KITCHEN ... 20

COOKER ... 24

REFRIGERATOR ... 30

CUTLERY ... 38

LIVING ROOM ... 44

FURNITURE ... 50

WALLPAPER ... 62

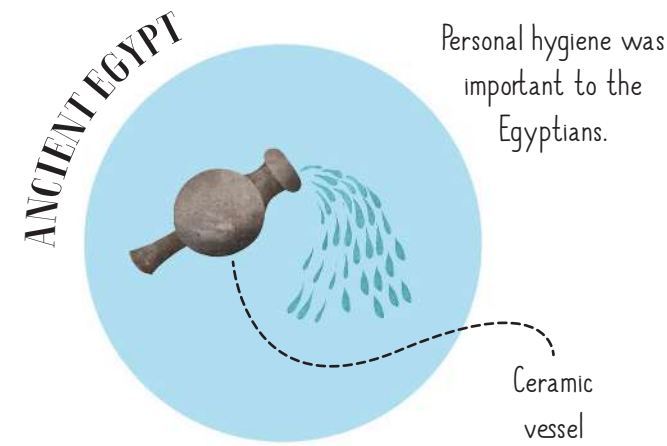
BOARD GAMES ... 68

BEDROOM ... 76

DOORS AND LOCKS ... 82

BATHROOM

After several days on the road, you are dusty, bedraggled, and dreadfully dirty. But what's the problem? Just hop in the shower or fill the tub and add bubble bath or special fragrant salts. Before you know it, you will be spanking clean and fresh as a daisy. But people didn't always have a bathroom for their immediate use at home, as we do now.



Personal hygiene was important to the Egyptians.

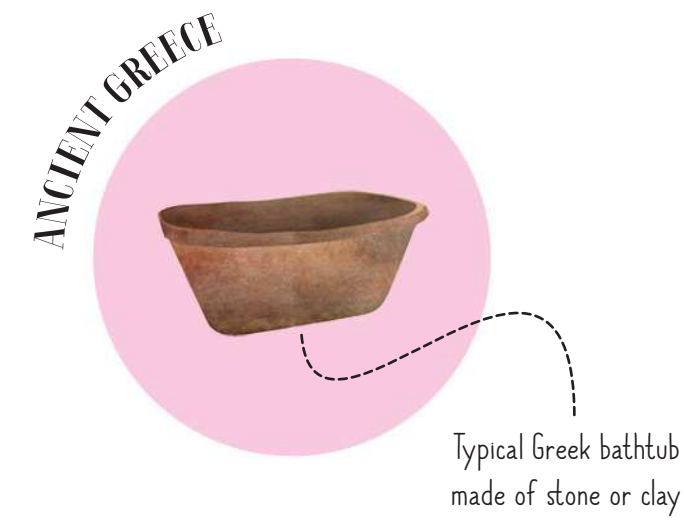
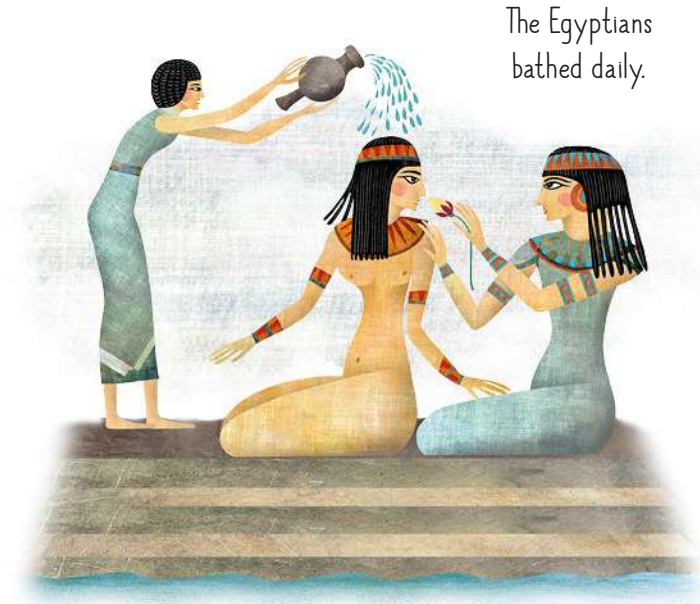
The good old bathtub

Egyptian nobility had bathtubs in their palaces, which they would use several times a day. **Warm water, supplemented with goat milk or donkey milk and scented with herbs,** was great for the skin. Rituals connected with bathing were the order of the day. Egyptians would bathe before retiring for the night, and even before meals, in the belief that the cleaner they were, the closer they were to the gods. When there was no time for a bath, a shower would do.



Washing in the open air

So, how did our ancestors wash? Well, they used the provisions of nature. They ducked into a cold river, pool, or stream—or the sea, if it was nearby. The luckiest among them enjoyed a refreshing shower in a sparkling waterfall. All this to a soundtrack of birdsong and the murmur of the forest, and with a warm breeze brushing their cheeks. Pretty romantic, you must admit.



Greek bathrooms

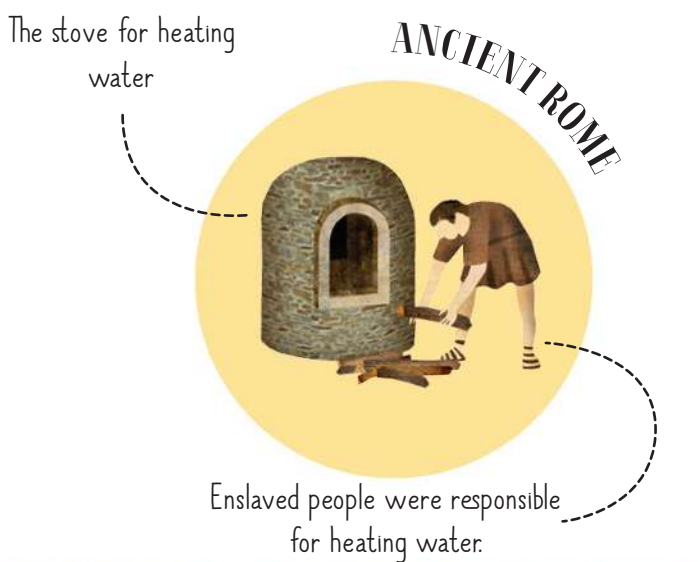
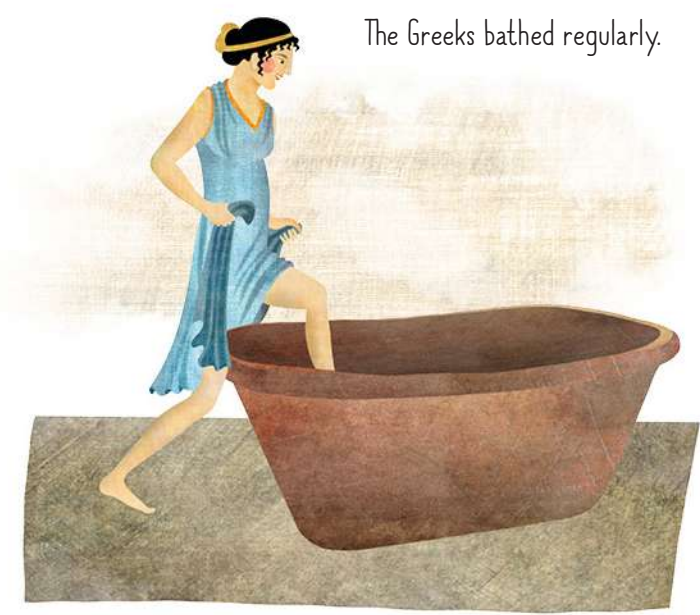
The Ancient Greeks, too, knew that **cleanliness was next to godliness**. Whereas the poorest of the poor maintained their personal hygiene by filling pots with water, the wealthy bathed and washed in special palace rooms containing **clay bathtubs and an ingenious system of drainage**. We might say that these were the first proper bathrooms.

Natural sources

Public baths were fed from the natural source of numerous hot springs. If there didn't happen to be such a spring in the vicinity, no problem: the Romans used aqueducts to transport warm saltwater from distant places to their baths.

Hurray for the baths!

The Romans' approach to cleanliness was similar to that of the Greeks. So it should come as no surprise that **public baths** were very popular in Ancient Rome. For people of the upper classes, regular visits to the baths were practically an obligation. A communal bath was an important social occasion. Men bathed separately from women, of course.



Timeline →

PREHISTORIC TIMES	ANCIENT EGYPT	ANCIENT GREECE	ANCIENT ROME	THE MIDDLE EAST	THE MIDDLE AGES	16 TH CENTURY	18 TH CENTURY	19 TH CENTURY	20 TH CENTURY
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Palace bathroom

Archaeologists have found that in many Ancient Roman palaces, the wealthy had bathing pools and bathtubs with a hot-water supply. This doesn't mean, however, that these people gave up bathing in public in favor of home bathing. As we said, **public bathing was a social must**.

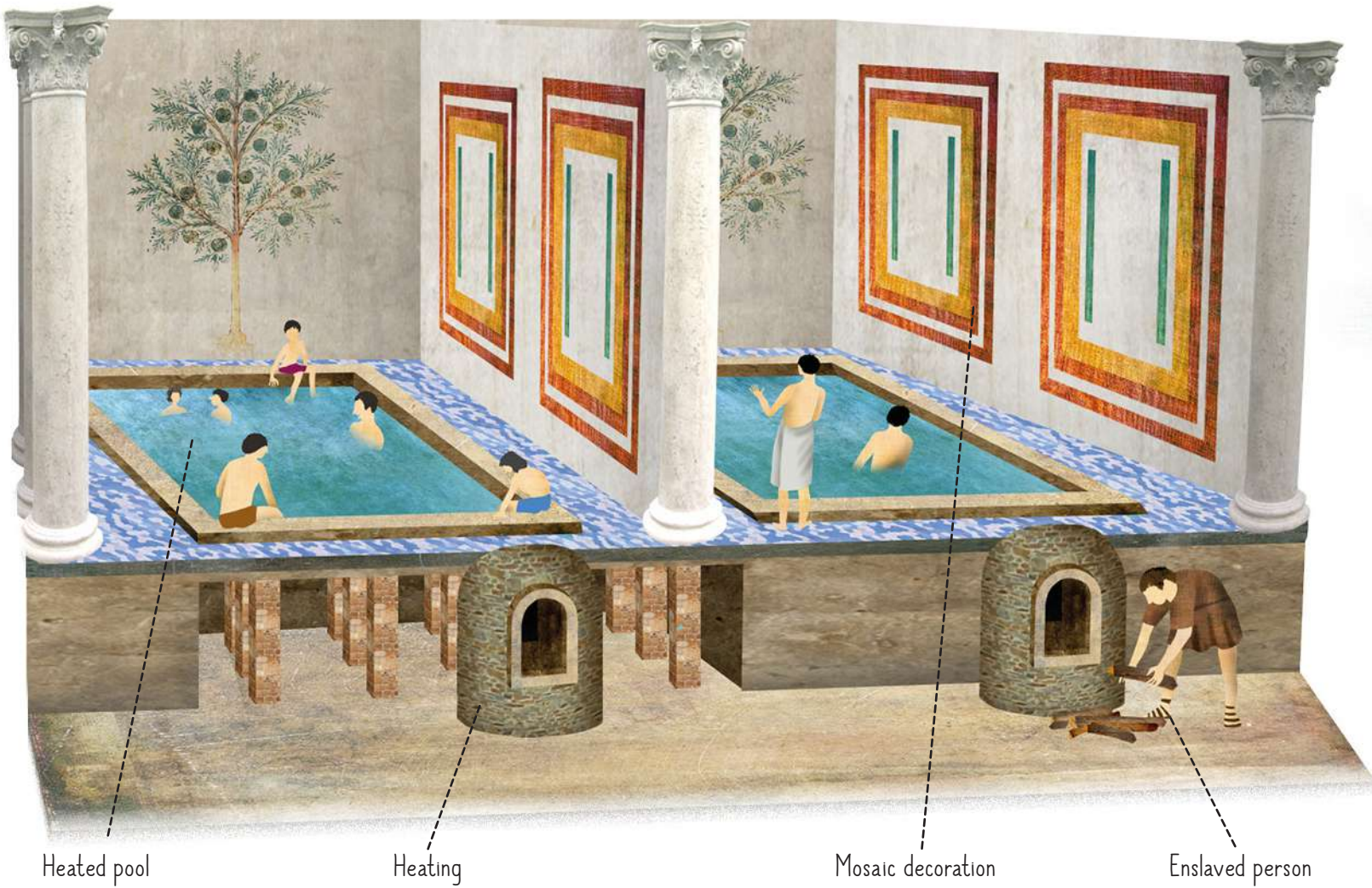
Bathing in the Middle East

Although the popularity and use of public baths in Ancient Rome eventually waned to nothing, the practice was copied in the Middle East and continued to flourish there. In Ancient Baghdad alone, there were around **60,000 public washrooms**.



Timeline →

PREHISTORIC TIMES	ANCIENT EGYPT	ANCIENT GREECE	ANCIENT ROME	THE MIDDLE AGES	THE MIDDLE AGES	16 TH CENTURY	18 TH CENTURY	19 TH CENTURY	20 TH CENTURY
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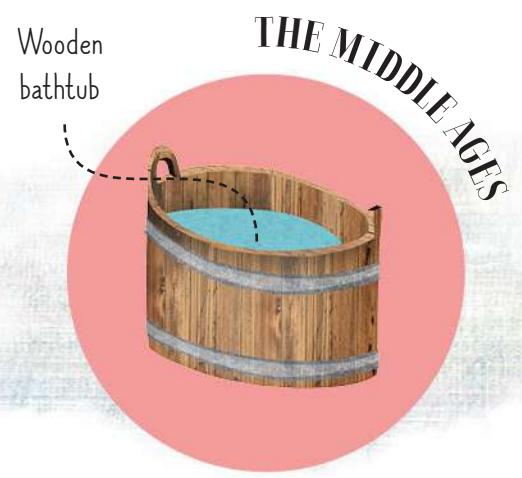


In the Middle Ages, people ate at the spa as they bathed.



Dinner in the bath

If you thought the Middle Ages were a time of dirt, think again! In the early Middle Ages, for a small fee, bathers could use **public washrooms**. There, they would discuss the matters of the day; sometimes they would even have **lunch** or **dinner**. Whereas in ancient times men bathed separately from women, in the Middle Ages everyone bathed together.



Home bathing

What were private bathrooms like in the Middle Ages? Well, that's just it—there weren't any. Home bathing was done in the bedroom. It was enough to bring in a large wooden tub and fill it with water—which was great if you wished to hop into bed nice and clean!



Perfume instead of water

Owing to the ban on public bathing and the fear of the plague, people in the Middle Ages lost their desire to wash and to build home bathrooms. They believed that **clean underwear kept the body clean**, so women did an awful lot of laundry. To improve their scent, they smeared perfumed oils on themselves.

Prototype of the shower:
Mr. Feetham's idea was made real
by French physician François
Merry Delabost.



Timeline →

PREHISTORIC TIMES	ANCIENT EGYPT	ANCIENT GREECE	ANCIENT ROME	THE MIDDLE AGES	THE MIDDLE AGES	16 TH CENTURY	18 TH CENTURY	19 TH CENTURY	20 TH CENTURY
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Hygiene was replaced
by clean linen.

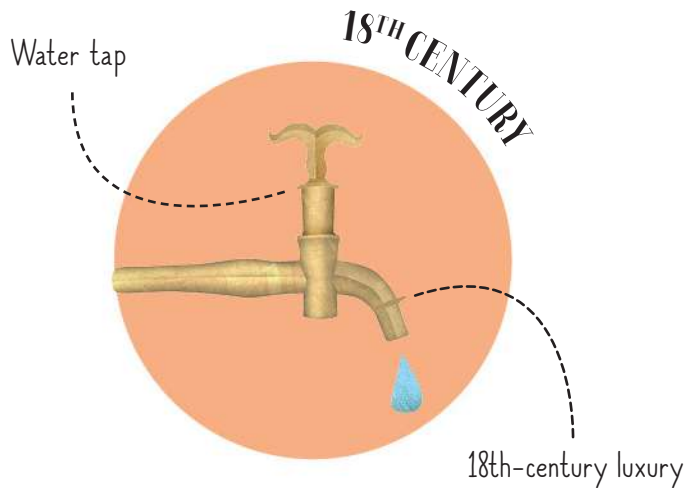


Long live the shower!

You may wish to make note of the year 1767. This was when an Englishman named **William Feetham** invented the world's first mechanical shower. Water was pumped into a tank suspended from the ceiling. Then all you had to do was pull on a chain for a stream of water to fall on your head and gush over your body, a cue for you to burst into song. In the history of personal hygiene, this was a giant stride indeed!

The miracle of the tap

The custom of keeping one's body away from water persisted through the 17th century and into the 18th. Then came the first **sewage systems** in big cities, providing the wealthy with a **supply of fresh water** to their homes. Turn on the tap and hurray! There's running water to wash with!



To the bathroom or the bedroom?

All the things we perform in the bathroom today were done in the 18th-century **bedroom**. Hands and feet would be washed in a basin on a stand in a corner of the same room where make-up was applied and hair was combed and brushed at a dressing table. All this could be done in the presence of friends and miscellaneous visitors—for what is privacy after all?

KITCHEN-EXTRAS

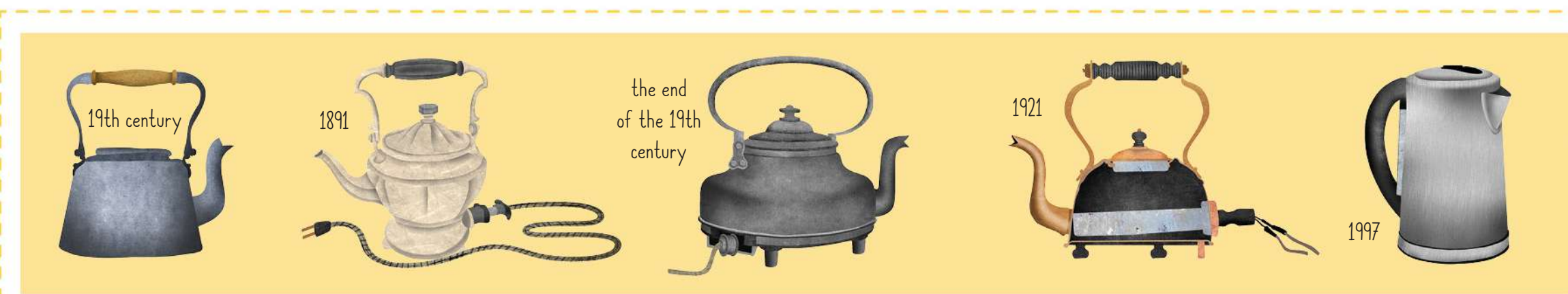
In the beginning was the can

For the invention of the tin-can opener, the invention of the tin can itself had to come first. It was the end of the 18th century and war was raging in Europe. The brilliant French military commander Napoleon was trying to figure out how to achieve a ready supply of good, fresh food to his large army. It took 15 years to find the answer. It was provided by a Parisian confectioner named Nicolas Appert, who simply put a cooked lunch in a glass jar and stoppered it with a cork. England, France's enemy, responded to the culinary challenge, however. In the very same year, the workshop of **Peter Durand** replaced glass with the first tin cans.



Back to the opener

So now we had the cans. But the question remained: how to crack them open. Hungry soldiers attacked them with knives, stones, bayonets, and—if nothing else would do the trick—they would shoot off the lid. When your tummy is rumbling, there is no time for niceties. In 1858, **Ezra Warner** of America invented the first truly practical can opener. A tool whose tip had a curved blade performed the job with aplomb. But there was a problem: it could be terribly hard on the fingers. In 1870, a somewhat safer can opener first saw the light of day; invented by **William Lyman**, it replaced the sharp blade with a little wheel.



The pressure cooker is a thick-walled container that boils at pressures above the existing atmospheric pressure. This high pressure makes it possible to achieve temperatures within the container of up to 260 °F, so that food can be cooked or stewed more quickly. Foods prepared in a pressure cooker have a more distinctive taste.



A pressure cooker and an enthusiastic inventor

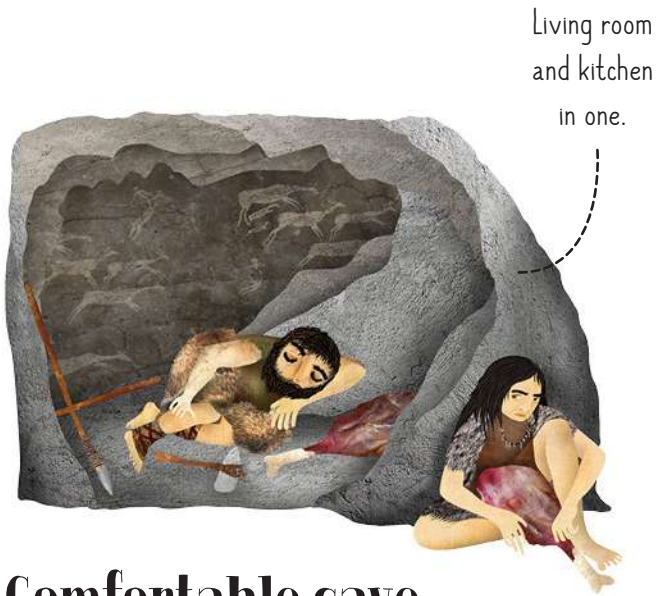
These days, many households contain a pressure cooker, a little device that comes to a boil super-fast and whose high pressure works wonders ... But did you know that the very first pressure cooker was designed as a steam engine to supply one of Louis XIV's fountains with fresh water? That's right—this is what inventor **Denis Papin** came up with in the 17th century. In the process, he also invented the type of pressurized pot that no modern cook can do without. Papin discovered that the higher the pressure in the pot, the sooner the food within it is cooked, while retaining all its taste and nutrients. To think, all this began as a commission for King Louis XIV!

Electric kettle

I need a cup of hot tea right now! Just as well, then, that I have an electric kettle, which will boil the water for the tea in the blink of an eye. Can you believe that **the first attempts to boil water at high speed were made in ancient times**, in Mesopotamia? It was in this region that archaeologists discovered a receptacle resembling a kettle from the period between 3,500 BCE and 2,000 BCE. But let us move on to 17th-century England, where the beautiful silver teapot first appeared at tea parties. The electric kettle did not begin its era of dominance until the late 19th century, however. And—let us be honest—the first ones were anything but fast; indeed, the water in them took 12 minutes to reach a boil. Not until 1922 was a heating element built into the kettle, thus accelerating the boiling process. The technology of the electric kettle truly came into its own in the 1950s.

LIVING ROOM

Let us go into the living room to watch our favorite children's TV show. The living room is the place for playing board games and chatting all afternoon with guests over tea and cakes. The living room is the beating heart of every home. It is also where Dad lies on the sofa to catch 40 winks and ends up catching hundreds. But what about our ancestors? Did they, too, have living rooms in their homes?



Living room and kitchen in one.

Comfortable cave

One cave with one fireplace, around which the whole gang is gathered. As we know, the prehistoric cave was **the kitchen, living room, storeroom, and bedroom** all rolled into one. Does that mean that our distant ancestors had no privacy? Well, why wouldn't they? They spent most of their time outside, where there is room enough to be alone.



Egyptian living

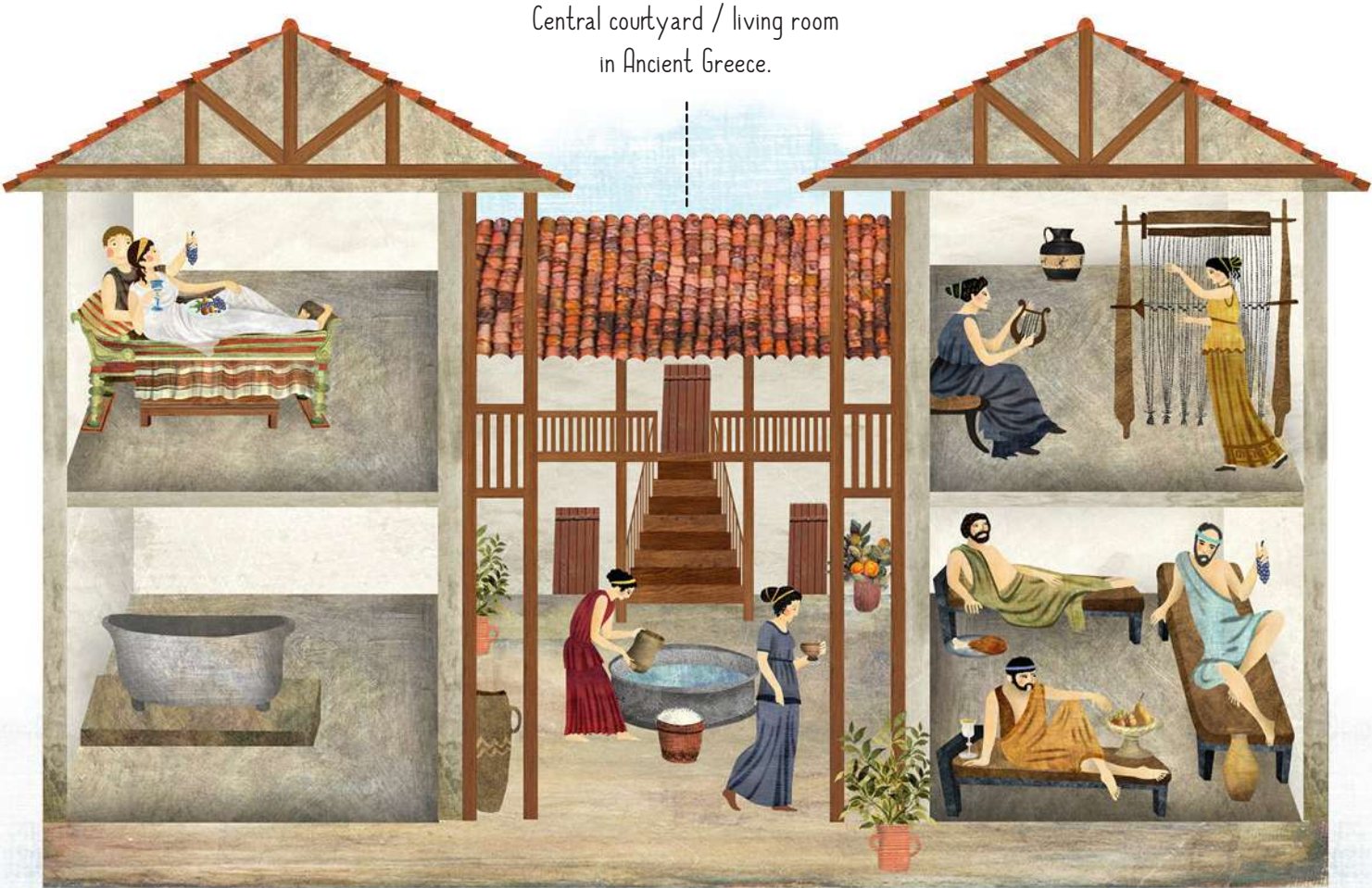
Wealthy Egyptians painted the brick walls of their houses white, so as not to attract the sun. These houses contained up to 30 rooms. Although most were storage rooms, there were also nurseries, bathrooms, bedrooms, and yes, living rooms. The Egyptian living room was at the very **center** of the house, surrounded by all the other rooms, thus ensuring that it remained nice and cool in summer and plenty warm enough in winter. The floor of the living room—where all socializing in the house was done—was on a **slightly higher level**, a protection against the desert sand, which got everywhere. No one likes the constant crunch of grains of sand under their feet.

The chair—an integral part of living rooms.



Greek comfort

And how about the Ancient Greeks? Did they, too, have living rooms? In their comfortable homes, everything was concentrated around a **central courtyard**. Without the permission of their husbands, women could not go about outdoors as they pleased, so they would sit in this yard, chatting and enjoying the fresh air. Otherwise, they would spend their time in areas of the house designated for their use, while the men were in the dining rooms.

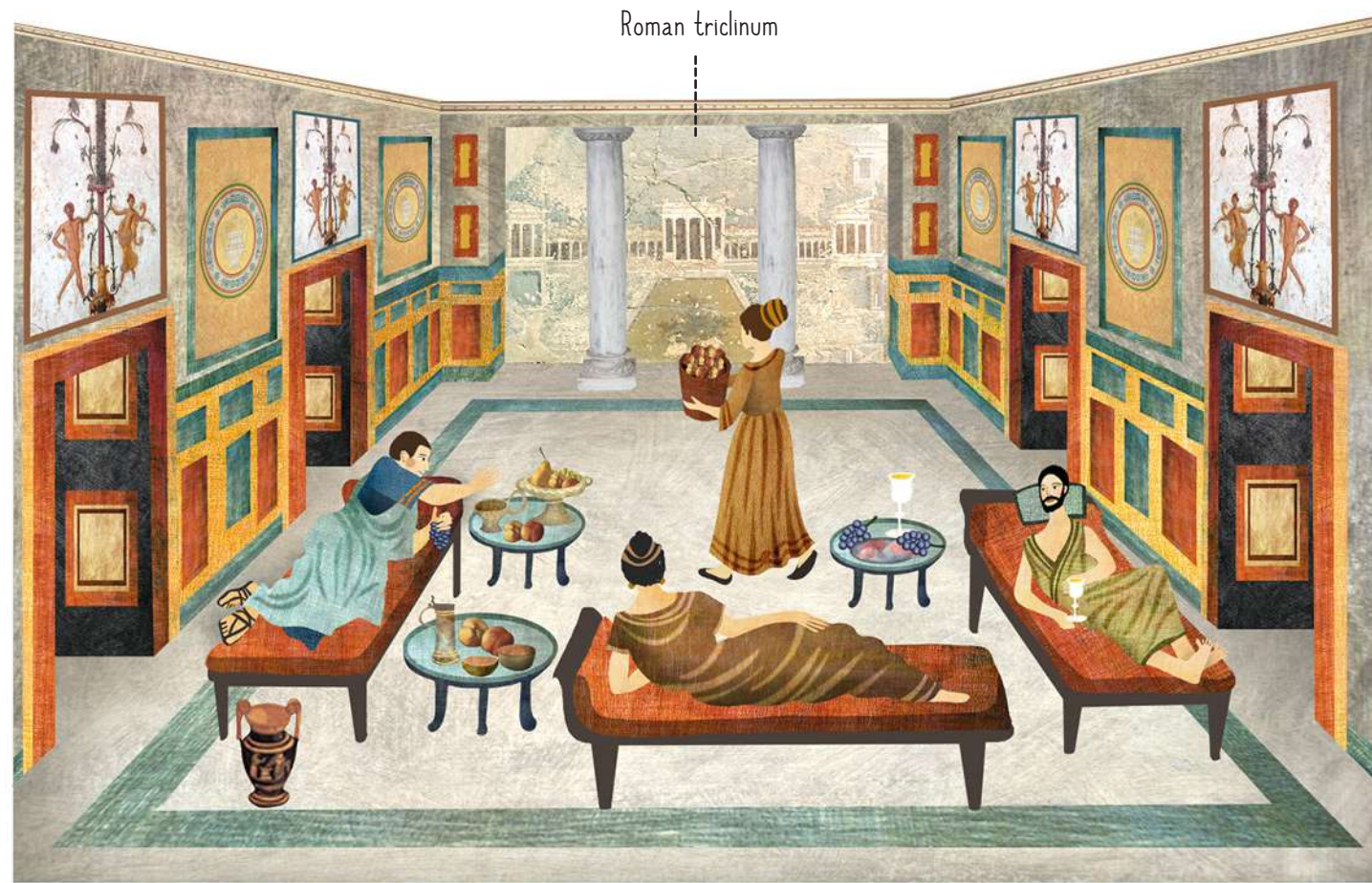


Central courtyard / living room in Ancient Greece.

Timeline →

PREHISTORIC TIMES	ANCIENT EGYPT	ANCIENT GREECE	ANCIENT ROME	THE MIDDLE AGES	17 TH - 18 TH CENTURY	19 TH CENTURY	20 TH CENTURY
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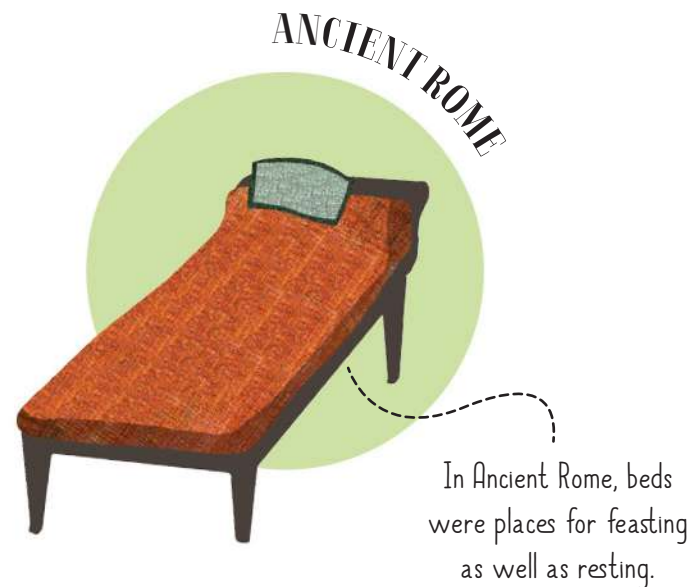




Roman triclinium

Tablinum and triclinium

Wealthy Romans lived in luxury in beautiful villas. The Roman living room equivalent was a space known as the **tablinum**. It was connected to a roofed courtyard known as an **atrium**, which was where guests were received. Sometimes the tablinum would function as the office of the master of the house. The most presentable room in the house was the dining room, known as the **triclinium**. This contained couches on which hosts and guests would recline as they dined and conversed.



ANCIENT ROME

In Ancient Rome, beds were places for feasting as well as resting.

Timeline →

PREHISTORIC TIMES

ANCIENT EGYPT

ANCIENT GREECE

ANCIENT ROME

THE MIDDLE AGES

17TH - 18TH CENTURY

19TH CENTURY

20TH CENTURY



Posh armchair

In the Middle Ages, too, the rich had their living rooms. These were places not only for relaxing but also for showing off wealth and power. In early medieval times, the main focus of the living room was an armchair in which the master of the house would sit in proud comfort while his servants busied themselves around him or sat on low stools waiting for his instructions. **The master would also sit in his high armchair when he received guests.** It wasn't difficult to understand what he meant this to show: Look at me! See how high and mighty I am!



A luxurious room of the 17th century.



Showing off your living room

In the 17th century, living rooms became **showcases of family life**, rather than special places for receiving guests, thus allowing proud homeowners to demonstrate that they had many rooms. These new living rooms were adorned with expensive art and equipped with the best furniture; if the family was a noble one, a coat of arms would be displayed. All important events in the life of the family—most notably weddings, birthdays, and wakes—would be celebrated in the living room.



Children not allowed

Today, families **come together** in the living room. In the late 19th century, however, it was known as the drawing room and used only to receive guests. Children were not even allowed in; after all, who would wish to risk damage to their precious furniture, patterned carpets, and expensive china? The family came together in other rooms of the house. Not only would homeowners receive visitors in their **finest room**, but they would do so in their best clothes.

Drawing rooms for the dead

Many people died in battle in the First World War. Many more died shortly thereafter, as a result of a terrible flu pandemic. For a time, the drawing room

became the place where the body of the departed was laid out for other members of the family to mourn. Only once the reverberations of war and deadly disease had faded did drawing rooms resume their social function. Before long, they became known as **living rooms**.



Timeline →

PREHISTORIC TIMES	ANCIENT EGYPT	ANCIENT GREECE	ANCIENT ROME	THE MIDDLE AGES	17 TH - 18 TH CENTURY	19 TH CENTURY	20 TH CENTURY
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48

LIVING ROOM

49

FURNITURE

Can you imagine a room without furniture? I mean any room—a living room, nursery, dining room, bedroom, study room, guest room, you name it. All rooms are dominated by furniture, most notably cupboards, chairs, tables, and desks. These might be modern, designer, retro, new, or hand-me-down from beloved grandparents ... But do we know how furniture originated, or how it has developed over time? Let us take a closer look.

Stone Age

Even in the age when former hunter-gatherers settled into a life of agriculture, primitive dwellings were improved with furniture. Naturally, it was made of stone, for this was the Stone Age. The benches, chests, cupboards, and beds made in a Scottish village on the Orkney Islands between 3,100—2,450 BCE were all made of stone (as discovered by archaeologists).



Pharaoh's throne

As for the Egyptian pharaoh, he would sit in comfortable splendor on a throne, with a stool under his feet. Only the most important Egyptians sat in a chair like this. The royal footstool was decorated with pictures of Egypt's enemies, so that the pharaoh could step on them, at least symbolically.

Portable furniture

Paintings and engravings on walls provide us with clear evidence that the Ancient Egyptians enjoyed the luxury of furniture. Their **beds, stools, chairs, small tables, and chests** were all characterized by subtle simplicity, lightness, and ease of storage. The Egyptians had no fondness for heavy, bulky pieces—not only for aesthetic reasons but because a shortage of good-quality wood for sturdy furniture meant that it had to be imported from further afield. Egyptian cabinetmakers deftly adorned their pieces with ivory, glass, gold leaf, silver leaf, and precious stones.

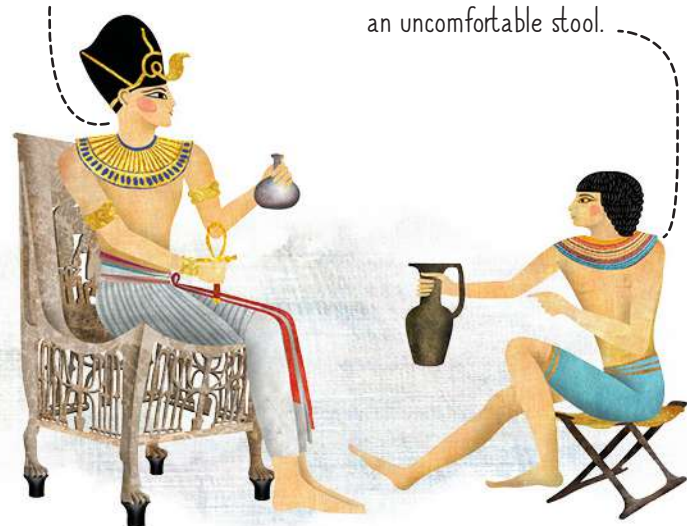


Timeline →



Egyptian aristocrat
in a comfortable chair.

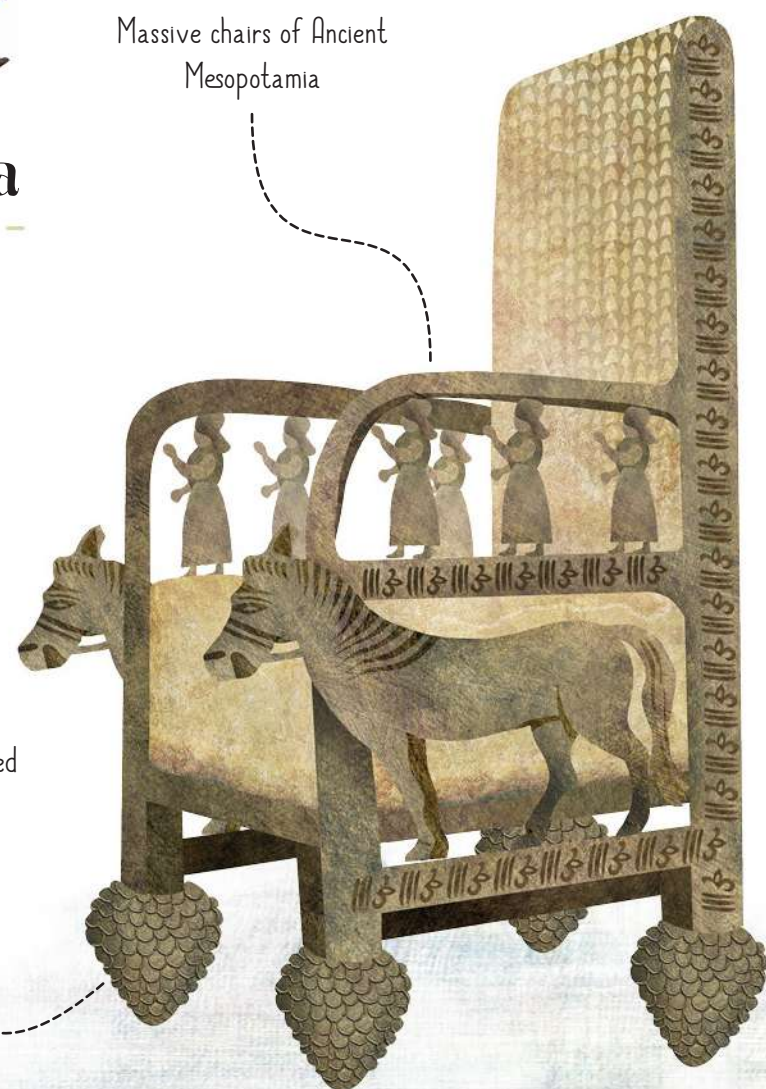
Poor Egyptian on
an uncomfortable stool.



Rich man, poor man

While the Egyptian poor had to make do with **storage chests** made of **reeds**, their rich compatriots, who liked to show off their wealth, filled their homes with chests with splendid painted decorations, ornate armchairs whose four legs were carved in animal designs (commonly lion's paws), low tables of expensive ebony or sycamore wood, round dining tables, and high-backed chairs.

Massive chairs of Ancient
Mesopotamia



Detail of carved
ornament

MESOPOTAMIA



Timeline →

PREHISTORIC
TIMES

ANCIENT
EGYPT

MESOPOTAMIA

ANCIENT
GREECE

ANCIENT
ROME

THE MIDDLE
AGES

14TH - 15TH
CENTURY

16TH CENTURY

THE BAROQUE
PERIOD

18TH CENTURY

19TH - 20TH
CENTURY

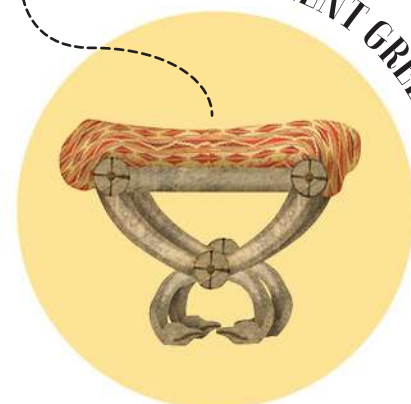
PRESENT DAY



Marble chairs?

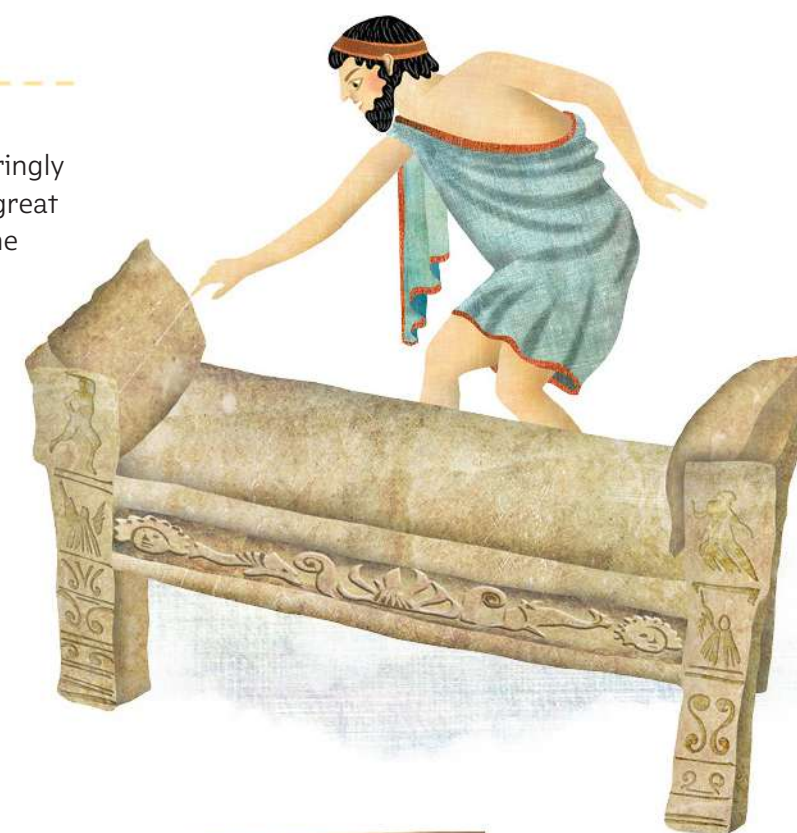
The houses of the Ancient Greeks were lightly furnished. As with Egypt, Greece used wood sparingly in the making of furniture, as it didn't possess a great deal of it. It is perhaps no wonder, then, that some Greek chairs were made of **marble** or **bronze**.

A light stool
diphros



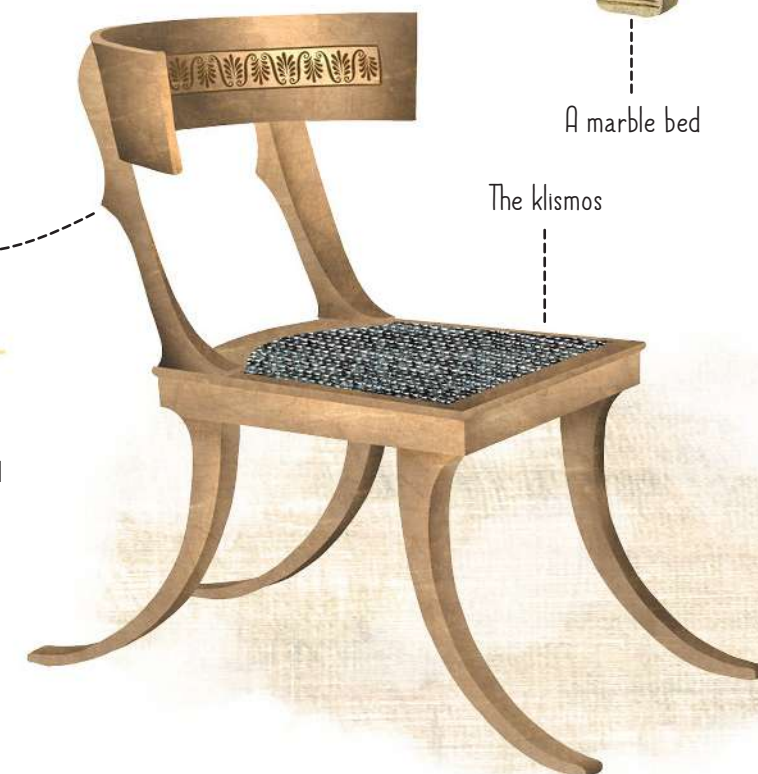
ANCIENT GREECE

Comfortable
curved backrest



A marble bed

The klismos



Seats galore!

The simple, straight-backed chair was a Greek invention, and every household surely had at least one. The same could be said of the **diphros**: a light, four-legged stool with multiple uses, serving craftsmen as they worked, students in school lessons, and musicians as they played their instrument. The **klismos**—a chair with tapering, out-curved legs and a curved backrest—was no less popular as a comfortable seat.

Oh, lie and eat ...

Today it is difficult to imagine eating lunch or dinner while lying down, but for the Ancient Greeks it was the most natural thing in the world. For this reason, all houses had dining couches, called **klinai**, for use at every dinner party. These were of ornate design and without a back—or armrests. At their narrowest point was a raised part for the head. Later klinai had a backrest, making them more like a modern-day sofa.



A well-deserved armchair

Magnificent armchairs and thrones were found only at the homes of the most important Greeks.

The joy of sitting

Sofas, chairs with and without arms, as well as backrests, stools, tables, **storage chests**, the first cupboards—if you visited an Ancient Roman family, you could admire all this. A bronze stool with an upholstered seat and a low base was a basic, very common item. The high chair known as the **cathedra** was used not only by teachers; it was common in the home too.



Timeline \longrightarrow

PREHISTORIC TIMES



54

ANCIENT EGYPT



MESOPOTAMIA



ANCIENT GREECE



ANCIENT ROME



THE MIDDLE AGES



14TH - 15TH
CENTURY



16TH CENTURY



THE BAROQUE PERIOD



18TH CENTURY



19TH - 20TH CENTURY



PRESENT DAY



FURNITURE

55

Plus a table, of course

Now for the table. The tables used by the Romans were commonly round or rectangular, on three or four armrests. Atlegs carved to resemble an animal's. The most popular materials were citrus wood and slate, although a **marble** table was nothing out of the ordinary and often found in gardens.



Chests, coffers, and cupboards

Although Romans stored much of their property in a cupboard known as an **armarium**, for the storing of their tunics, togas, and valuables they preferred **chests** and **coffers**. You could tell that a coffer was filled with treasures by the locks and metal mountings on it; some such coffers were firmly fixed to a stone base. As you can see, thieves didn't get much change out of wealthy Romans.



Medieval = heavy

Unlike the furniture of ancient times, that of the early Middle Ages was **bulky** and **heavy**. In this period, furniture was sparse, and only the **most basic kinds** were used. Very little pre-14th-century furniture survives, owing to the rotting of wood and the fact that furniture was made in very small numbers.

A single chair—is that all there is?

Nothing but a fireplace, a table, a single chair (for the master), some benches and stools, and a few multi-functional packing cases—many a medieval room



would have looked just like this. In this period, packing cases were a godsend. **First, they served as storage space; second, you could push a few of them together to make a bed and thus get a good night's sleep.** Oak was the basic material for furniture.

Voila! How practical!

Time passed and rich people extended their activities to include more than one house, thus creating a need for more furniture of different kinds. When nobles moved from their summer residence to their winter residence and vice versa, they took everything they had with them, including their furniture. This explains the popularity at that time of **folding chairs** and **stools** and **tables** and **cupboards** with **detachable panels**.



Packing case as a storage space



Packing case as a chair

The unbeatable packing case

“You can’t beat the good old packing case!” So went an adage of the Middle Ages, when cabinetmakers knocked out one packing case after another. The packing case was the true foundation of medieval furniture, serving as **coffer, cupboard, seat, or table**, depending on the need. By the end of the 15th century, however, it was losing ground to the newfangled wardrobe.



Packing case as a bed

Timeline →



Hand-me-down chairs

As in earlier times, in the 16th century furniture was a luxury item, so it was **passed down through the generations**. Although chairs were now quite common in the home, these chairs were nothing special. Typically, there were only three of them: one for the master of the house, one for his wife, and a third for their esteemed guest. Everyone else sat on a stool, or even on the floor.



Bombast or sobriety?

Forget about the Middle Ages and their limited range of furniture. Two styles run through the furniture of the 18th century: the highly **ornamental Rococo** and sober **Neoclassicism**. The progressive 18th century also saw the first **catalogues**, from which connoisseurs could choose furniture for their apartments and houses. This was when the history of named furniture-makers began. All this was of interest only to the wealthier classes, of course; the poor continued to take good care of the basic furniture handed down to them.

Timeline →



A flavor of the Orient

Seventeenth-century furniture fell for the **ornate style of the Baroque**. Bulky cupboards and commodes were varnished and—now that sea travel to Asia was the coming thing—adorned with **Oriental motifs**. Exotic woods such as mahogany and ebony began to compete with oak as the basic production material. At this time, chairs became a common item in every household. The 17th century came up with new pieces of furniture, notably the **bookcase**, the **commode**, and **impressive clocks**.

Thanks to catalogues, customers could choose new furniture from the comfort of home.



Glass cabinet with decorative items



Living room in Biedermeier style

Biedermeier

The 19th century brought the calm, conservative **Biedermeier** style of furniture to the homes of wealthy townspeople. Rooms carefully and tastefully furnished and fitted for the reception of guests were complemented by rooms in which the family would spend most of their time. These contained mahogany couches for relaxation, comfortable winged armchairs, round, one-legged tables, round-backed chairs, plus a new item of furniture known as a **cabinet**, where china, glass, and other decorative pieces were stored.

PREHISTORIC TIMES	ANCIENT EGYPT	MESOPOTAMIA	ANCIENT GREECE	ANCIENT ROME	THE MIDDLE AGES	14 TH - 15 TH CENTURY	16 TH CENTURY	THE BAROQUE PERIOD	18 TH CENTURY	19 TH - 20 TH CENTURY	PRESENT DAY
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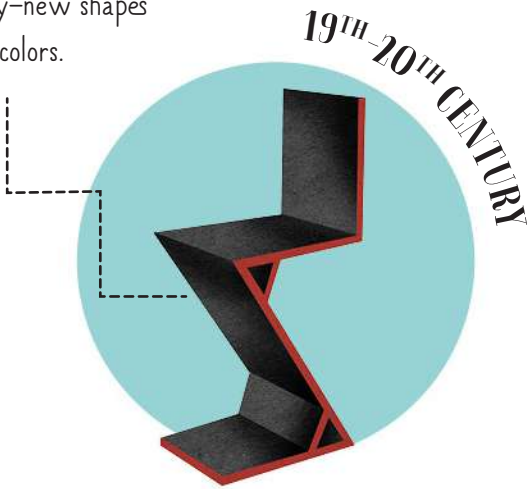
De Stijl

From 1917 to 1931, a Dutch movement called De Stijl brought **abstract motifs** to furniture-making. Members of the movement **admired Cubism**, so unsurprisingly De Stijl's blue, yellow, and red armchairs look as though they have jumped from a Cubist painting. The furniture had clear, clean lines and a cheerful, unambiguous functionality.



Cheerful De Stijl armchair

20th century—new shapes and colors.



Art deco

Art deco is a style of visual arts from the first half of the 20th century that saw the creation of elegant furniture marked by **geometric simplicity** and playful use of color. Practitioners of art deco combined varnished wood (ordinary or Oriental) with gleaming chrome.



Ecodesign

If we want to be kind to nature, we shouldn't cut down trees to make chairs. This attitude marks a 21st-century trend in furniture-making. So which materials are used instead? One is cotton, as it is more considerate toward nature and the **atmosphere**. There was a time when the only things we inflated were swim rings and balloons. Today, **inflatable furniture** is trendy. Please take a seat at the world's most comfortable chair.



Timeline →

PREHISTORIC TIMES	ANCIENT EGYPT	MESOPOTAMIA	ANCIENT GREECE	ANCIENT ROME	THE MIDDLE AGES	14 TH - 15 TH CENTURY	16 TH CENTURY	THE BAROQUE PERIOD	18 TH CENTURY	19 TH - 20 TH CENTURY	PRESENT DAY
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BEDROOM

A room whose centerpiece is a bed or multiple beds is known, of course, as a bedroom. Adults tend to like this part of their home, because for some reason they have no objection to sleep, and some of them may even enjoy it. Many children, however, are no fans of the bedroom—although some have a liking for their parents’ big bed, not least for its use as a trampoline when Mom and Dad are out.



Ancient Egypt

There were a great many rooms in the multifunctional houses of the Ancient Egyptians, but none would put us in mind of the kind of bedroom we know today. **Everything**—reception of visitors, business deals, meetings, and gatherings—**went on everywhere**. In some places, there simply happened to be a bed or two.

Timeline →

ANCIENT EGYPT	ANCIENT GREECE	ANCIENT ROME	THE MIDDLE AGES	16 TH CENTURY	17 TH CENTURY	18 TH –19 TH CENTURY	20 TH CENTURY
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Ancient Greek bedrooms

The Ancient Greeks had bedrooms in their houses. They contained couch-like beds and simple cupboards or chests for clothes. Close to women’s bedrooms were the sleeping rooms of their servants, which were without beds; servants slept on the floor. The master’s bedroom, too, was surrounded by the sleeping rooms of his servants. **Bedrooms were usually on the second floor of the house**.



Cubicula

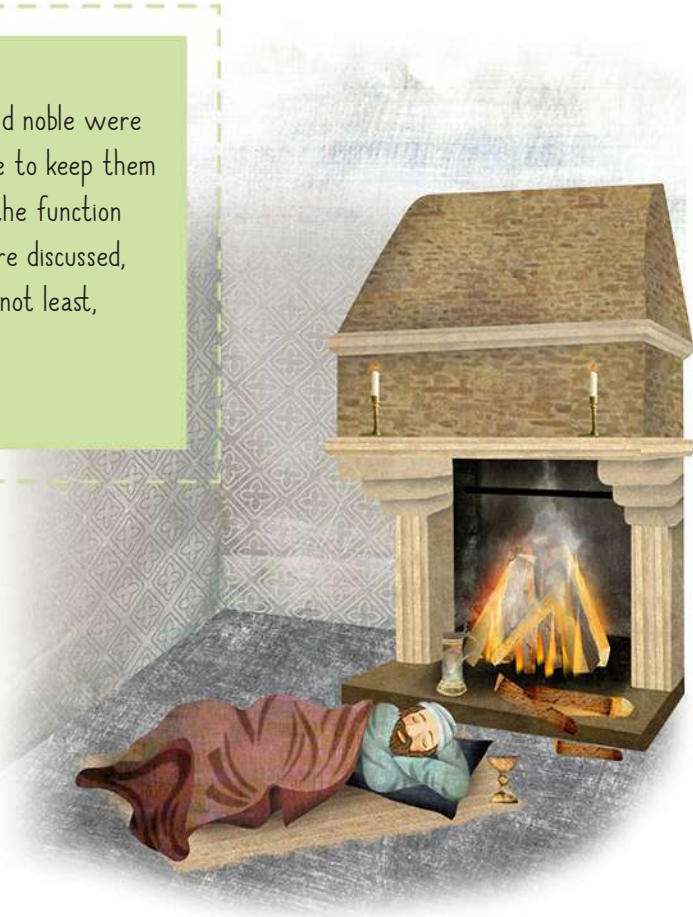
The Roman bedroom—known as the **cubiculum**—was simply a place to lie down in of an evening and leave on waking in the morning. As a result, it was very small and sparsely furnished, even in the opulent homes of Rome’s wealthiest. A bedroom known as **the cubiculum diurnum** served only for the midday siesta, so it was placed in the coolest part of the house. The Romans had a third type of bedroom too—**the cubiculum nocturnum**; this tended to be on the second floor in the west wing of the house, so that its occupants would be woken by the first light of day.



In the Middle Ages, not even the bedrooms of the wealthy and noble were strictly places of sleep. Located on the second floor of the house to keep them away from the hustle and bustle of the place, they served the function of VIP common room. Here, important events of the day were discussed, advantageous business deals were concluded, and last but not least, sleep was taken when tiredness set in.

Crowded bedrooms

As the Middle Ages weren’t big on privacy, it will come as no surprise that there was no such thing as a private bedroom. **Everything took place in the house’s main room, where the fireplace provided warmth**. It was here that people were born and died, where they feasted and mourned. Come evening, they would lie down on the ground, with a sack of hay as their bed and the warmth of the flames as their blanket.



16TH CENTURY



16th-century bedrooms were fully utilized.

Let's meet in the bedroom

The 16th century didn't change the way people regarded the bedroom. Although it contained a bed and clothing chest, **it was still a place for society**. Even in elevated royal circles, many important things happened in the bedchamber. Servants fought each other tooth and nail for positions in these rooms, for they were among the most privileged.



As well as sleeping in their bed, people dealt with important matters there.

Timeline →

ANCIENT EGYPT

ANCIENT GREECE

ANCIENT ROME

THE MIDDLE AGES

16TH CENTURY

17TH CENTURY

18TH-19TH CENTURY

20TH CENTURY



BEDROOM

Room for one more!

The bedroom of the 17th century was still very different from the bedroom of today. For one thing, it teemed with visitors and life. You might say it was bursting at the seams. Just imagine your bedroom as the place where you receive your **whole family**, plus various servants!



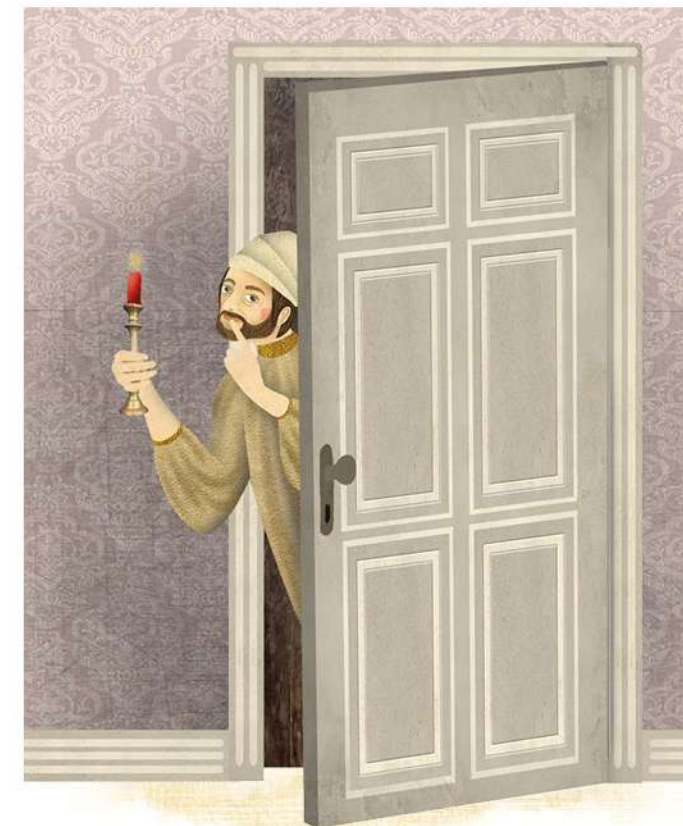
18TH-19TH CENTURY



Dressing table

Privacy at last!

Not until the 18th century did calmness and privacy enter the bedroom. **At last the bedroom was given its own door**, so that now it was a passageway no longer. Servants no longer lay at the foot of their masters' and mistresses' beds; now there were sleeping quarters for servants on the ground floor of the house. Tumultuous negotiations, contracts, and important political decisions left the bedroom—for the first parliaments, for instance.



We poor have
but one room

Poor people of the day could only envy the luxury of the private bedroom. The many members of the family lived in a single room, where they had no choice but to cook, wash, work, and sleep.

A ban on work in the bedroom

Complete privacy came to the bedroom in the 19th century. Each member of the household had his or her own bedroom: there was one for the mistress, one for the master, separate bedrooms for the children, even bedrooms for servants. Industrial progress and reductions in the cost of materials were reflected in the decoration of bedrooms—in the form of embroidered covers, heavy drapes at windows, modern furniture, and super-modern blinds. A washbasin and a dressing table still stood in the corner of the room.



Hollywood

The 1920s were marked by industrial development, economic progress, and the magic of the first Hollywood movies. With the coming of revolutionary new technologies, life became simpler, and people had more time for themselves. This time is marked, too, by **the final separation of bedroom and bathroom**, with the result that the bedroom became a charming place for rest and sleep only. Just to think that a few years earlier, the decisions of government had been made in it!



Beauty in simplicity

There is beauty in simplicity, the 1960s screamed. Homemakers threw the counterpanes, blankets, and eiderdowns from their beds and replaced them with a modern Scandinavian invention—a one-piece quilt that made bed-making an effort-free task. **The acceptance of simplicity, comfort, and individuality would go on to inspire other new bedroom trends.**

Timeline →

ANCIENT
EGYPT

ANCIENT
GREECE

ANCIENT
ROME

THE MIDDLE
AGES

16TH CENTURY

17TH CENTURY

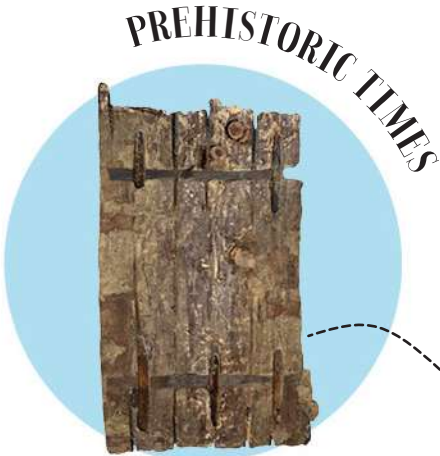
18TH-19TH
CENTURY

20TH CENTURY



DOORS AND LOCKS

All living rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, and chambers in a home, be they large or small, are protected by a door with a proper lock. There is no chance of any uninvited, undesirable stranger getting in to enjoy your possessions. But what were the first doors and the first locks like? How did our ancestors protect their privacy?



The oldest wooden door in Europe was discovered in the Swiss city of Zurich; it originated around 5,000 BCE.

Egyptian barrier

The first lockable door was in Ancient Egypt. Although it was nothing sophisticated, its **ingenious mechanism of various latches** served its purpose to excellent effect—for only the owner of the key could open it. This key was a wooden bar whose pins fitted perfectly in their respective holes. Click, and the door was locked. The lock-and-key system is beautifully simple indeed! While the Egyptians toiled away with their wooden bars, the Chinese were opening their dwellings with real keys in real locks as early as 6,000 BCE!

Timeline →

In prehistoric times, an animal skin was hung over the mouth of a cave to make a door.



Doors of leather

At the dawn of human history, a hut was protected against uninvited guests by a primitive “door” made of **animal skin** and some other **tough material**. The privacy of a dead Ancient Egyptian pharaoh was protected by an **impregnable stone door**; once this door was closed, no one would ever get it open again. A little later, the Ancient Greeks and Romans protected their dwellings with doors of **wood, bronze, or marble**. Wood has been the most popular material for doors for a very, very long time.



Only the owner of the right key could open this wooden bar, whose pins fitted snugly in their holes.

Hero of Alexandria

This brilliant Ancient Greek thinker came up with the first **automatic door**, an event that dates all the way back to the 1st century AD. This was not the door to a private home, however, but the spectacular entrance to a temple. Imagine the amazed faces of the faithful when the doors opened on their own, right in front of them! The mechanism of the automatic door was a simple one. It consisted of a hydraulic system that displaced water, thus mysteriously opening twin doors. **Hero**, who lived from 10 – 70 CE, was very much more than the inventor of the automatic door; he was also a mathematician, the director of the Musaeum at Alexandria, and an expert on mechanics and optics.

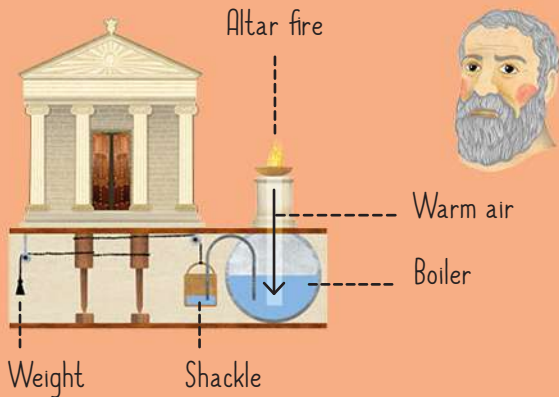
Robert Barron with his tumbler lock



Joseph Bramah



Hero of Alexandria's automatic door



The warm air from the altar fire pushed part of the water from the boiler into the shackle, which opened the door with its weight. After extinguishing the sacrificial fire, the air cooled and the water flowed from the shackle back into the boiler by the action of a vacuum. The weight raised the shackle to its original height when closing the door.

Barron and Bramah

In 1778, Englishman **Robert Barron** invented and **patented the tumbler lock**. Six years later, his compatriot **Joseph Bramah** patented an improved lock on the same principle. In 1790, a challenge was declared: whosoever got Bramah's lock open would win a prize of 200 guineas. Sixty years would pass before the lock was defeated—by a clever American locksmith called **Alfred Hobbs**, with a picklock of his own design. Even so, the cracking of the lock took Hobbs 51 hours of work spread over 16 days. **Bramah's invention marks the beginning of the modern era of security locks.**

PREHISTORIC TIMES

ANCIENT EGYPT

ANCIENT GREECE

18TH CENTURY





ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ORDINARY LIVING

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PREHISTORY
3 million BCE – 3500 BCE



MESOPOTAMIA
c. 3100 BCE – 539 BCE

ANCIENT EGYPT
The end of the 4th millennium BCE – 332 BCE

ANCIENT GREECE
c. 1200 BCE – 6th century BCE

ANTIQUITY
8th century BCE – 476 BCE

ANCIENT ROME
753 BCE – 6th century BCE

EARLY MIDDLE AGES
6th – 11th century

HIGH MIDDLE AGES
11th – 14th century

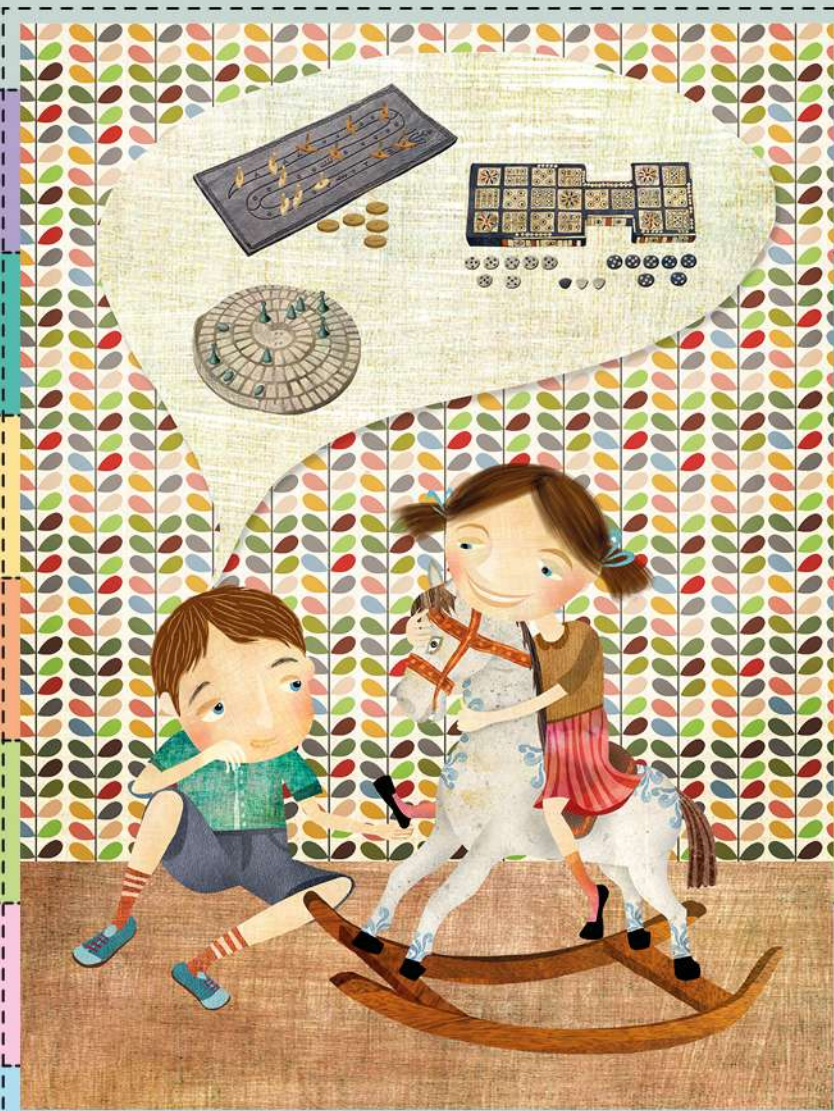
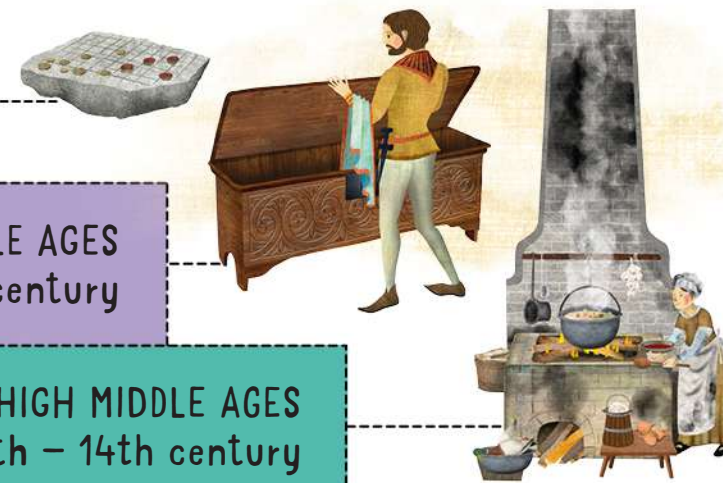
LATE MIDDLE AGES
13th – 15th century

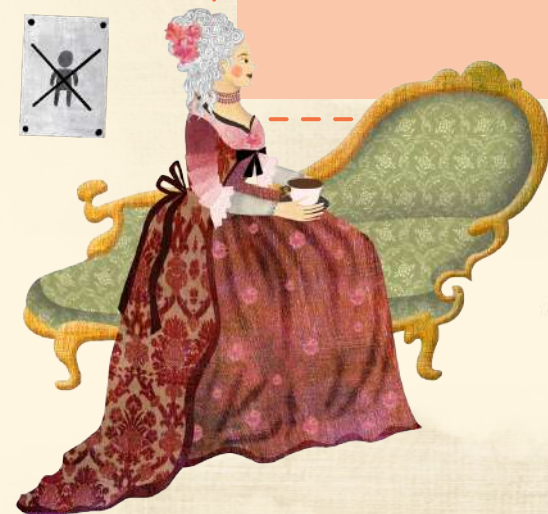
THE RENAISSANCE
14th – 16th century

EARLY MODERN PERIOD
The end of the 15th century – 1648

MODERN PERIOD
1648–1918

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY
1918 – the present day





Written by Štěpánka Sekaninová
Illustrations by Eva Chupíková

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ORDINARY LIVING

We live in our houses, cook in our kitchens, relax in our living rooms. But how did people live before the invention of the bathroom? What was the bedroom like in ancient times? Did our ancestors use wallpaper? How was prehistoric laundry done, and when did people first cook on a real stove? Inquisitive readers large and small will find reliable answers to these questions and many more in this very book, so pull back the curtain on the history of the ordinary house and the things inside it.

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of Ordinary Things



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