



Complete Pompeii

Joanne Berry

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The dramatic story of Pompeii's destruction has been handed down to us by Roman writers, its paintings and mosaics have astonished visitors since their discovery in the eighteenth century, and its houses and public buildings to this day present a vivid picture of life, disaster, and death in a Roman town.

Pompeii is not quite a time capsule, a frozen moment in history, but it is probably the closest we will ever get to one. This up-to-date new survey draws on evidence produced at the cutting edge of modern archaeological research, revealing how the evidence for life in this city was first uncovered, and how archaeologists over the centuries have unpeeled the layers that enable us to reconstruct Pompeii's history.

With its lavish illustrations, covering monumental architecture and inscriptions, shops, graffiti, wall-paintings, and mosaics, plus its numerous box features ranging from theatrical entertainments to water supply, *The Complete Pompeii* is the ultimate resource and inspirational guide to this iconic ancient town.

Among the many topics covered:

- How Pompeii was destroyed in the eruption of AD 79
- What we know of the lives and deaths of its inhabitants
- What the houses tell us about the people who lived in them
- Who was involved in politics
- What can be reconstructed about religious practices

Complete Pompeii Details

Date : Published November 1st 2007 by Thames Hudson

ISBN : 9780500051504

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Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, Archaeology, Ancient History, Anthropology, Art

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From Reader Review Complete Pompeii for online ebook

Pete daPixie says

'The Complete Pompeii', is just what it says on the tin! Published in 2007, and this is the second time I've read this book. The author, Joanne Berry, teaches ancient history and archaeology and she has researched Pompeii for the last fifteen years. It shows in her work here. Complete is the operative word. Including not just Pompeii but Herculaneum and many other sites buried by Vesuvius in 79ad.

The history and archaeology includes the earliest prehistoric evidence of Greek and Etruscan periods onto Samnite and finally Roman occupation in Campania. The writings of Strabo and Pliny the Younger are included to colour the final destruction of the area. The phases of the re-discovery of this, the worlds most amazing time capsule, is expertly described, since the unearthing in 1748.

Of the 250ish pages the book contains 318 lavish illustrations of which 275 are in colour. I would strongly recommend 'The Complete Pompeii' as a great resource, not just to visitors to these sites, but for those interested in Roman history as well.

So, what did the Romans ever do for us? Invented cement. Nah, the Campanians did. Invented hot baths. Nah, the Campanians did. As for the swinging sixties. It was life in an old folks home compared to the attitudes of these first century swingers. Talk about not in front of the children!

Jessica Venner says

This is a fantastic starter for any student or reader wanting an introduction to Pompeii. As a city which epitomises the ancient Roman world through its manner of preservation as an average town, Berry does it justice in this thoroughly researched account and collection of the best parts of this ancient town, in life and death.

Linda Harkins says

What I like best about this book are the excellent illustrations that prepare me for what I will see in Pompeii. Especially illuminating are the sections about the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 and the mystery religions, foreign cults, and household religion.

Christie says

A great introduction book to Pompeii. The book covers many topics, such as homes/life/religion/art, that gives an insight on how Pompeii would have been before Vesuvius erupted. The author goes back to what historians think occurred to when the town was first built so it isn't just focused on what happened 79 AD. Each pages includes illustrations so a visual of what items/buildings/alters/people would have looked like then can be seen. Berry also at the end gives readers a What to Expect if visiting today. Really enjoyed it.

Flora says

I used this book for the excellent pictures of Pompeii when I read the Beard book Fires of Vesuvius.

Steve says

I am doing a slow crawl through this book to capture every detail. I visited Pompeii and Herculaneum for the first time this year, and I am not done with the subject, by far. This book comes highly recommended, and as of page 31, I can say I am impressed. I like that the author chose to quote the ENTIRE text of Pliny the Younger's letters rather than summarizing them. Nice graphics as well.

Tara Lynn says

The story of Pompeii has fascinated me since I first read about it as a child. The text can be a bit dry occasionally, but more than makes up for it with great photographs and descriptions.

Susanna - Censored by GoodReads says

Fascinating and thoroughly illustrated - there are more illustrations than there are pages - and many of the pictures are ones I'd never seen before (and I'm a Roman junkie). Very interesting text, too. Also has a useful map of the excavations, and a useful page at the back for visitors to the site.

Danny says

An ideal introduction. Excellent.

Nisha says

Amazingly detailed. Would love to see an updated version with more recent finds detailed.

Sarah - All The Book Blog Names Are Taken says

If the burning desire to see these magnificent ruins did not already exist in my heart, this book certainly would have ignited it. Beautiful illustrations - both theoretical reconstructions and photographs of the site today, fill the pages. It truly is a complete picture of life in Pompeii, as much as we can know anyway - so much will remain a mystery. Additionally, the author offers travel advice and highlights specific points of interest upon visiting. I can't even imagine what it would be like to stand on a street in Pompeii and see

Vesuvius looming beyond the city walls, but it's an experience I can't wait to have.

Oliver says

What I like best about this book are the excellent illustrations that prepare me for what I will see in Pompeii. Especially illuminating are the sections about the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 and the religions and the Italian cultures.

Joyce says

Attractively-photographed and -written thematic coverage of Pompeii, divided into sections such as economic life, religion, and architecture. Very much not a guidebook, but adds a tremendous amount of background information that helps visitors understand what they saw or will see. Especially strong in giving you a sense of HOW scholars came to agree (or disagree) about the meaning of each building, artifact, and text over the course of the excavations -- and of the many questions which may never be definitively answered.

My favorite part was reading about Wilhelmina Feemster Jashemski (apparently an alumna of mine), who studied the gardens of Pompeii for decades by doing things such as taking plaster casts of rootballs. In this way she developed a truly encyclopedic knowledge of Roman gardens, as well as pioneering the field of botanical archeology.

Kara says

The *Complete Pompeii*?

Yes. Yes it is.

Everything and anything to do with Pompeii, from its earliest settlement to current day excavations – and everything in between – it's all here in tightly packed, brightly illustrated detail. The big picture politics of the empire down to the common daily breads are covered, and all other topics as well – sex, religions, clothes, gladiators, graffiti, taverns, elections, ethnicities, gardens, imports, exports, schooling, etc. It's all here in this wonderfully detailed book.

Highly recommend to anyone interested in Ancient Rome or the History of Archeology (Pompeii was apparently *the* place to visit for Victorians on their Grand Tour.)

I hope the authors update with periodic editions to keep up with the latest technology being utilized to extract as much information as possible from the remains of this fascinating city.

Andreea says

I liked the fact that it has quite a lot of pictures, that made the people of 2000 yrs ago contemporary...and i can understand that this being a comprehensive view of the Pompeii's history, she couldn't stay too much on a subject, but... I would have liked to get into deeper. There are related historical facts, but they are not related, not got around the people...just fine description, few conclusions... I guess my expectations were of some other nature... I mean, I was left with lots of why-s...
