



Ostia was the ancient port of Rome and it was also a thriving town. The coastline and course of the river Tiber have both changed since Classical times, and this site is no longer on the coast. Author Caroline Lawrence has written a guide to Ostia <http://www.romanmysteries.com/day-ostia>

The town was sacked by pirates in 68BC and this led to the general Pompey being given a mandate to clear the Mediterranean of pirates. It was rebuilt under Cicero's instructions and Julius Caesar improved the grain supply to Rome by building a canal and making improvements to the harbour. During the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD the Emperor Tiberius built a Forum (town square) and successive emperors constructed a hexagonal harbour called Portus. Safeguarding the grain supply to Rome was very important as the emperors needed to keep the people content.



Ostia itself was provided with all the services a town of the time could require; in particular, a famous lighthouse. 18 shrines to the Persian god Mithras have been discovered as well as temples to the Roman gods and goddesses. The public toilets are well-preserved. In addition, Ostia had a large theatre, many public baths, numerous taverns and inns and a firefighting service. Ostia also has the earliest synagogue yet identified in Europe.