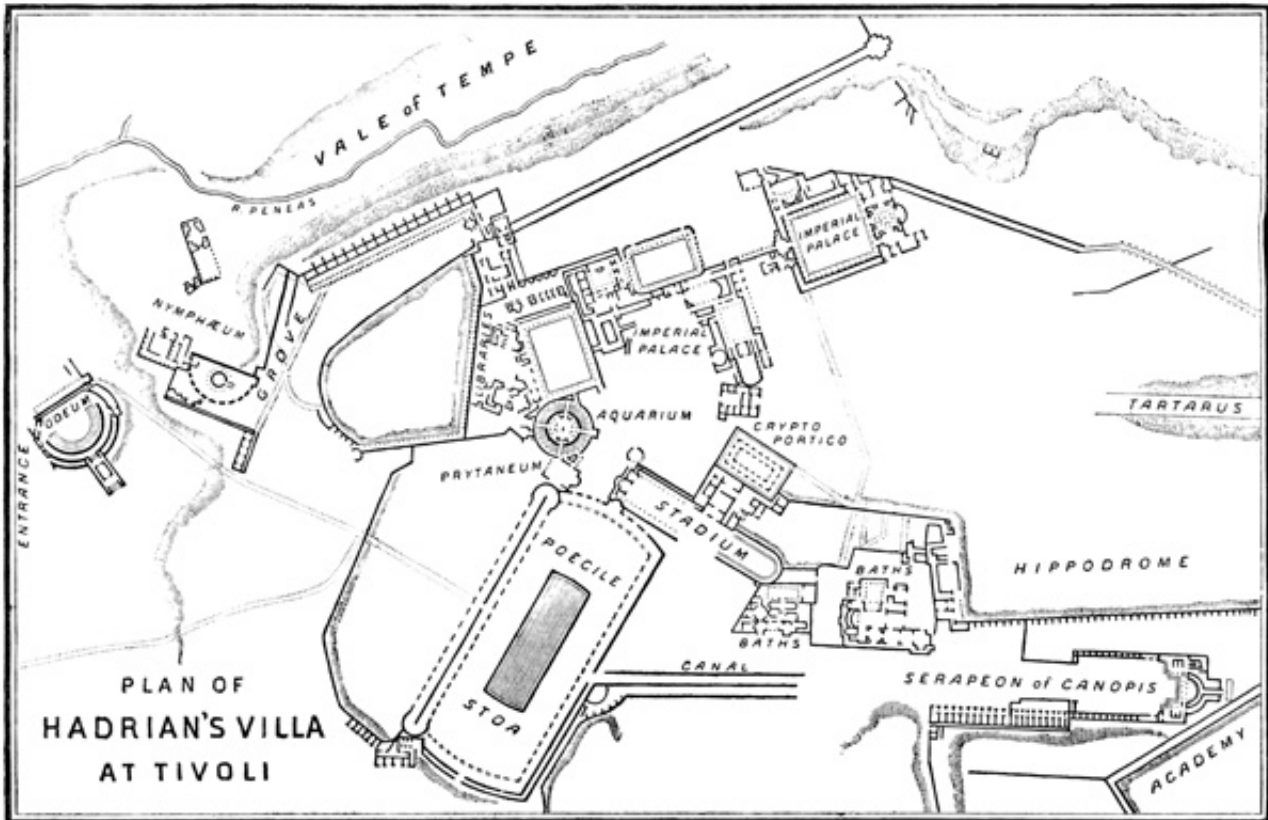


HADRIAN'S VILLA AT TIVOLI (ancient Tibur)

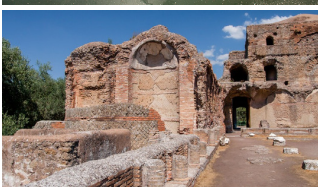
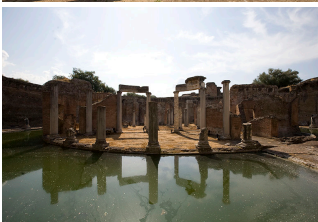


Tivoli has been a popular summer resort since the days of the Roman Republic. Among the famous men who owned villas here were the poets Catullus and Horace, Caesar's assassins Brutus and Cassius, and the Emperors Trajan and Hadrian.

Hadrian's villa was started in 117AD and at end of his reign he governed the empire from here. It comprises over 30 buildings covering around 296 acres and includes palaces, thermae's (spas), theatres, temples, libraries and slaves' quarters. In 2013 a network of underground tunnels was discovered for slaves to go about their work unseen by the important residents.



During the Renaissance Tivoli again became popular with those who could afford it. Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, son of Lucrezia Borgia, took many of the villa's art treasures for the Villa d'Este and embellished its gardens with spectacular waterfalls and fountains designed by Ligorio and Giacomo della Porta and later added to by Bernini. That villa is also worth a visit.



The grounds of the villa were filled with full-scale reproductions of the Emperor's favourite buildings from Greece and Egypt. The most famous is probably the Canopus, a beautiful lake surrounded by sculptures, with a dining area at one end. Here you can see a group of students reclining as if for an open-air banquet. Tasty dishes would float around the table to keep the contents cool and of course the Emperor's guests would not have been lying on cold stone benches, but sumptuously upholstered couches!

The Poecile is a huge garden surrounded by an arcade with a swimming pool. This area was built so that one could take walks whether it was winter or summer.

The Grande Terme and Piccole Terme are large and small spa-baths complexes, one with a sauna.

Some of the best preserved areas of the villa are the accademia, the stadio or arena, the Imperial Palace, the Philosophers' Room, the Greek Theatre and the Piazza d'oro, a majestic square.

The splendid Teatro Maritimo (Maritime Theatre) is an island decorated with a colonnade and surrounded by a canal.

In 1998 archaeologists thought they had discovered the monumental Tomb of Antinous or a temple to him after he had been deified, but this is not certain.

Hadrian's Villa is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and important cultural and archaeological site. It is also a major tourist destination along with the nearby Villa d'Este and the town of Tivoli. The Academy of the villa was placed on the 100 Most Endangered Sites 2006 list of the World Monuments Watch because of the rapid deterioration of the ruins.



Several of the beautiful artefacts found at the villa are now displayed in the Capitoline Museums, so when you go there look out for the mosaics of doves and theatre masks, and the statues of the *Wounded Amazon*, two *Fauns*, a *Discobolos*, a *Crouching Venus* and statues of Hadrian's young lover, Antinous.