

# Tour 3: Herculaneum

Welcome to our third virtual tour. This time we visit the **ancient Roman ruins of Herculaneum** near Pompeii in Italy. It's easy...

1. Use **Google Maps Street View** and follow the directions and answer questions to find 12 code numbers **A–M** (there is no “I”). Record these as you go.

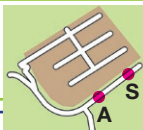
## Notes:

- i. You may need to ‘explore’ a bit at some locations to find the numbers and may need to ‘zoom in’ to read them.
  - ii. Herculaneum is a small place, take little ‘steps’ while in the town to avoid overshooting.
2. This **Google Maps Street View** tour takes you along the streets of Herculaneum. There are also hot-links that take you directly to amazing 360° panoramas **inside** some of the buildings (and even up into the air!). **These are optional, all the clues can be answered ‘on the street’.**
  3. **At the end of the tour there are instructions for how to find the ‘final location’ and how to ‘log’ your find by ‘discovering’ the Herculaneum Virtual Tour trackable (TB8G84E).**

*Good luck!*

## A - Destroyed by Vesuvius

→ Start at **S**, which is at:  
N40 48.337 E14 20.918  
(or <https://tinyurl.com/VTHercA>).



\* The ruins of Herculaneum lie before you. This roman town was destroyed in 79 by the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

While nearby Pompeii was buried by a rain of ash, Herculaneum and many of its inhabitants were overwhelmed by rushing clouds of scorching toxic gas (*pyroclastic flows*). These alternated with torrents of volcanic mud which hardened like rock and buried the town for centuries. It was accidentally rediscovered in 1711 by men digging a well!

For an aerial view of the town, with Vesuvius looming in the distance, go to:

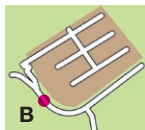
<https://tinyurl.com/VTHercA2>.

→ Walk along the path with the town on your right until you see a **red circle with a black hand** in it.

? How many letters in the **last word** under the circle & hand? This is **A**.

## B - Fleeing inhabitants

→ Carry on, bearing right. Go through the gate (no need for a ticket!). Stop just *before* you reach the group of about 15 tourists.



\* The nearby ruined buildings on the right originally stood on the shore of the Mediterranean. The modern shore-line is now **450m away** (behind you), thanks to Vesuvius!

On the shore below, many hundreds of people from Herculaneum sought shelter in the arched boat sheds on the beach, perhaps hoping for rescue by boat. They were all killed instantly by blasts of super-heated gas.

For a better view of the boat sheds from the outside: <https://tinyurl.com/VTHercB>.

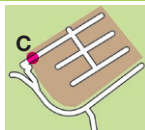
(To see the grisly remains of the victims still in place: <https://tinyurl.com/VTHercB2>).

The palm tree you can see is in the beautiful garden of the *House of the Stags*, one of several luxurious villas here that once enjoyed a view over the sea. Alas, no more.

? On the path - How many ladies in the tour group have **striped 'T-shirts'**? This is **B**.

## C – A wall of hardened mud

→ Go past the tourists, down the ramp on the right, and onto the **grey** metal bridge across the chasm. Stop half-way across the bridge.



\* Look right. Imagine that the grass below you is the blue Mediterranean Sea, overlooked by the town and its villas.

The **20 m-high** 'wall' to the right is unexcavated volcanic mud/rock, showing just how completely the town was buried!

Fortunately for archaeologists and ourselves, the depth of mud preserved many buildings to a considerable height (more so than most of Pompeii).

The speed of the catastrophe also allowed a treasure-trove of artefacts and art (mosaics, wall-paintings, etc) to be preserved.

As we shall see...

? Go back a little and stand underneath the triangle-shaped bridge support. Look straight up. How many cables radiate from the top of the support? This is **C**.

## D - House of Argus

➔ Cross the bridge. Stop at (or near) the **second doorway** on your **left**.



\* This is a doorway into the *House of Argus* which was named after a fresco [wall-painting] of the mythological hundred-eyed giant *Argus* that was found here in the 19th century. The fresco has sadly been lost.

This is just the 'back door', the main entrance still lies buried.

Like many others buildings Herculaneum, this house uses a mixture of thin red bricks laid in narrow bands, rectangular stone blocks and also square blocks arranged in a decorative, typically-Roman, 'diamond' pattern.

The narrow street has a smooth cobbled surface for wheeled traffic and raised pavements to keep the feet of pedestrians clean. The pillars supported balconies or colonades offering shade to those below.

? There are several bands of thin red bricks around the door. Nearly all of these bands contain the **same number of layers** of bricks. **How many layers of red bricks in each band?** This is **D**.

## E - Early excavations on the site

➔ Continue to a crossroads. Look into the street to the left which is cut short by an orange fence and a wall of rock beyond.



\* Here we can get an idea of how the earliest excavations were carried out on the site from 1711 onwards.

The early diggers were more interested in 'treasure' than archaeology and didn't bother to dig away all the rock above the town.

Instead, they dug shafts downwards and then tunnels horizontally, following the lines of walls or streets that they encountered to uncover statues, pictures and mosaics.

At the base of the wall of rock in front of us we can just see the **entrance** to one of these treasure-hunters' tunnels. It followed the street as it carried on into the town.

This is a reminder that the ruins we see today are only a **small fraction** of the original town which extended north, south and east.

? On the orange fence is a sign with a yellow triangle. **How many words** are there under the triangle? This is **E**.

## F - College of the Augustales

→ Carry on along the street until you can go no further.



\* The door ahead on the right leads into the *College of the Augustales*. It is thought that the building was a centre of the cult of the Emperor Augustus (63–14 ).

As befits an emperor, the building is very impressive both in its scale and decoration.

Take a moment to step inside and look around: <https://tinyurl.com/VTHercF>.

The decorated space with an arch at the far end is the *sacellum* (or shrine) to the emperor, who was revered as a god after his death.

→ Back on the street look past the ‘relaxed’ workmen. The little flight of steps led up to the *Decumanus Maximus* – Herculaneum’s main street. We shall see this a bit better later on.

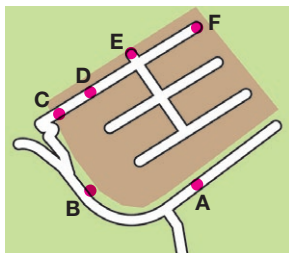
? At the top of the steps is a ‘red’ metal fence made in rectangular sections (each section consists of 4 triangles). How many **rectangular sections** are there? This is **F**.

## How are you doing?

\* **Optional** Here's a 'checksum' so you can check that you have the right numbers so far. If you have them correct, then:

$$A + B + C + D + E + F = 23$$

(this is just a half-way check, not part of the final solution).





## G - The Forum Baths

➔ Turn round and go back to the crossroads (E). Turn left. Go a short way and stop when you are next to the grassy area on your left.



\* The building beyond the grass (with a roofed colonnade of pillars and a 'domed extension') is the *Forum Baths*.

The Romans loved the baths. Every major settlement had at least one bathhouse and people spent an amazing amount of time there, not just getting clean but socialising, being massaged and pampered, doing business and just 'being seen'.

Needless-to-say Herculaneum's baths are very well-preserved with intact barrel-vaulted roofs, and still have amazing mosaics in place.

Pop in to have a look:

<https://tinyurl.com/VTHercG>

? Back on the street - On the wall 'behind' you (facing the baths) is a large, corroded, grey-green, bronze plaque. The date at bottom right is "1G DICEMBRE 1983".

## H - First-floor balcony

→ Carry on (baths to the left, plaque on the right) to the next crossroads. Turn right.



\* Just down this street, on the right-hand side, the houses were substantially preserved right up to the upper floor. With only a little reconstruction, these buildings now give a very rare glimpse into what a typical Roman street would have looked like (though it probably smells better now!).

? How many pillars of red bricks support the 'balcony'. This is **H**.

\* **Optional** As an extra treat, you can 'go' into the *House of the wooden screens*. It's the building to the right of the balcony house - with the blue gates. <https://tinyurl.com/VYHercH2>

The blackened panels here - protected behind glass - were once carved wooden screens dividing the rooms. The hot volcanic ash burned them to charcoal but, in the process, preserved them for us to see.

→ Turn around and go back to the crossroads.

## J - House of the Neptune Mosaic

➔ Go straight across at the crossroads. Stop at the house with the 'exposed' upper floor (when you get there, you might see the tour group that we met up by the boathouses (**B**) waiting outside)



\* Go inside the *House of the Neptune Mosaic*.  
<https://tinyurl.com/VTHercJ>

You are standing in the *atrium* (central courtyard) of this typical Roman house. Beneath your feet is a pool which helped keep this a cool shady place in summer.

Various important rooms led off from the *atrium* including a family shrine to the god Neptune which has an amazing mosaic (you will need to 'zoom in' to see it).

Some of the painted wall plaster remains on the *atrium* walls, giving an idea of how colourful and opulent these town houses could be.

? Back on the street - on the wall opposite the house some bricks make the shape of a letter. Convert the letter to a number (e.g. 'C' would be 3, 'F' would be 6). This gives you number **J**. (NB there isn't a number "I")

## K - Communal water fountain

→ Go back to the crossroads. Turn left. Keep going to the end of the street.



\* On your right is a white stone trough with a sculpted head at one end. Zoom in to see the water-spout in the sculpture's mouth.

Fountains such as this were a typical feature in Roman towns, supplying fresh water freely to the population. Each neighbourhood had its own fountain, and they often had highly-individualistic sculptures to distinguish them.

The Romans were highly-accomplished hydrological engineers, building aqueducts - often many miles long - to bring fresh water to towns.

Although we associate aqueducts with long multi-arched 'viaducts', the water often travelled through underground tunnels or even just along channels set onto hillsides.

? Across the street from the fountain are some tall columns. How many are there? This is **K**.

## L - Thermopolium

→ Turn left. Go just a little way, as far as the building on the right which has round 'basins' set into a stone workbench.



\* This is a *thermopolium* - essentially a Roman fast-food restaurant where hot and cold dishes were available.

The Roman's 'ate out' a lot; particularly since many smaller Roman homes did not have cooking facilities.

On the right you can see a roofed oven, and on the left is the stone workbench with large, pot-bellied jars (*dolia*) set into it, from which the food would have been served.

These establishments likely sold spiced wine, meats and cheese, fish, lentils, nuts and stews. Food was often given added flavour with *garum*, a sauce made of rotted fish guts that was a great favourite in the ancient world.

? How many *dolia* are there in the stone bench? This is **L**.

**Note:** if you counted 7 you are at the **wrong** thermopolium; try again!

## M - The Decumanus Maximus

➔ Carry on along the street until you can go no further.



\* To your left is the *Decumanus Maximus* - the main street of Herculaneum. It's much wider and grander than the streets we have walked so far.

You can see two more water fountains; one here and one at the far end of the street.

Just imagine how much more of the ancient town remains to be uncovered, just 'across the street'. All we need are a few million Euros. Oh, and we'd need to convince the people in the modern houses above to move out!

To your right is an entrance to the *forum*, the 'town square' and the administrative and social heart of any Roman town.

Most of the *forum* is still buried. In fact it was beneath your feet when you started this tour!

*We hope you have enjoyed this trip into the past. There's just this last question and then you can work out the co-ordinates of the 'final location'.*

? On the corner is a grey post with the words "cardo V \_\_\_\_ ? \_\_\_\_". How many letters in the missing word? This is **M**.

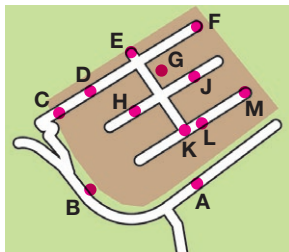
## How are you doing?

\* **Optional** Here's a 'checksum' so you can check that you have the right numbers.

If you have them correct, then:

$$A+B+C+D+E+F+G+H+J+K+L+M = 50$$

(this is just a check, not part of the final solution).



# 'Final location'

➔ On your browser, type in the following web address, inserting the numbers A-M (there isn't an "I"). This takes you to a 360° panorama view of the 'final location'. Have a good look around.

<https://tinyurl.com/vtABCDEFGHIJKLM>

\* **Send a screenshot** (including some of the people) **from the 'final location' to:**

[VirtualHerculaneum@gmail.com](mailto:VirtualHerculaneum@gmail.com)

(make the subject '**Tour 3**')... and we will send you the code for a Geocaching trackable.

**To 'log' the find just use the code to 'discover' the trackable.**

And finally... If you found this tour on Facebook (or whatever) **please leave a brief message there** so as to keep the thread alive

**(but please DON'T include the 'answers').**

*Thanks, C&G* GCZ Team

**Many thanks** to our Geocaching 'play testers': Janechick, poshrule, Flamingo Flurrier, Flamingo chaser, and Ecopuffinparents.

PS please send any comments or questions to [VirtualHerculaneum@gmail.com](mailto:VirtualHerculaneum@gmail.com) (make subject "Tour 3").