

# Roman Roads

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The Roman road system was quite remarkable in its extent - from throughout Britain in the west, to the Tigris-Euphrates Rivers (today Iraq) in the east, and from the Danube River in central Europe to as far south as North Africa. The total length of hard-surfaced highways constructed by the Romans has been estimated to be well over 50,000 miles (80,000 kilometers), much of which is still visible today after so many centuries.

Some of the most famous Roman Roads right in Italy were the 160 mile (260 kilometers) Via Appia, or Appian Way, which ran southeast from Rome down through Tarentum, then straight to the Adriatic coast; the Via Aurelia, running northwest up to Genoa; the Via Flaminia, that ran northeast to the Adriatic; the Via Aemilia, that crossed the Rubicon; the Via Valeria, eastward from Rome; the Via Latina, that ran southeast. With Rome as the "hub" of the system, came the now-famous saying that "All roads lead to Rome."

The Roman Roads were also noted for the high quality of their construction. Most were straight, solid-surfaced, and cambered for drainage just as modern highways are today. Along with natural stone, they often used a form of concrete made from volcanic ash and lime.

The vast Roman Road system facilitated Roman military conquest. Back then there were of course no transport aircraft or trucks, so the Roman legions traveled primarily on foot. The clear road system enabled troops to move relatively quickly across what was then still the wilderness of Europe. It also made possible the efficient administration of the conquered territories.

The Roman Roads also served Christianity. Although the early Christians often suffered tremendous persecution from the Romans, the Roman Roads permitted the apostles and many of God's people (particularly those who held Roman citizenship) to travel much more easily, while protected by patrolling Roman troops from detachments who were stationed along the way. It's actually quite ironic that the infrastructure of the empire that attempted to destroy Christianity also made possible its spread to the very farthest frontier regions of the then-known world.