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House of the mosaic atrium of Herculaneum

The mosaic atrium house was buried with the rest of the city of Herculaneum during the eruption of Vesuvius on October 24, 79 AD.

A violent, sudden eruption that did not even give its inhabitants time to get to safety.

Herculaneum was hit by mud and a pyroclastic flow, which covered it entirely, preserving it intact for centuries until the causal discovery in 1738.

The structure of the mosaic atrium house

The House of the Mosaic Atrium of [Herculaneum](#) is located in Insula IV. Takes its name from the special mosaic floor of which the entire dwelling was composed. It was one of the largest houses in Herculaneum, with a floor area of 1200 square metres on the lower floor alone and was built on two levels.

The house was probably created by the union of three or four smaller houses.

The entrance to the mosaic atrium house had a floor with a black and white mosaic, colours that were also repopulated in the atrium. Here however the mosaic was made in a characteristic chessboard shape and in the centre, as in all typical Roman houses, was the impluvium.

Today the floor of the atrium has a particular undulation, due to the earthquake tremors caused by the eruption of Vesuvius that caused the floor structure to give way.



Next to it is the tablinum, the owner's office, paved with coloured marble. Unlike the others in the other dwellings, this tablinum consisted of a large hall and two small naves. Probably the owner's intention was to recreate a small basilica inside the house.

The garden of the mosaic atrium house of Herculaneum

Another special feature of the mosaic atrium house was the garden, which was colonnaded on three sides and had a basin in the centre. All around it were a series of rooms, among which was a wooden veranda (still visible) also paved with mosaic and painted with special frescoes depicting mythological scenes.

In the veranda mosaic atrium house, a series of small paintings were also found, some of which were destroyed, as part of the flooring during the Bourbon excavations. From the latter, one then entered the other rooms of the house, painted in the classic Pompeian red colour.

The most beautiful rooms of the mosaic atrium house faced the sea side. These had a beautiful white mosaic floor with a black frame and were painted on a white background with numerous frescoes.

In this part of the house there was also a huge hall that overlooked the Bay of Naples through a large terrace.

