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was arguably the Roman's favourite condiment. Made from rotted, fermented fish guts, it was a type of fish sauce produced across the empire to meet wide demand.

Ancient sources describe the different types of and how it was made. The written sources are complemented by evidence from Pompeii. The archaeological evidence shows what types of were particularly popular — and how lucrative the trade in was.



The basic method of making garum was to ferment fish guts steeped in salt in large terracotta pots called amphorae. There were several variations in this process. Most commonly, the salted fish were left to mature in the sun before being placed in a woven basket in the sun and finally pressed.

While most garum was made professionally in workshops, it could be produced at home by boiling the fish in concentrated brine. Mackerel was the most popular fish type used in garum production, although recipes also record anchovies and tuna being used. Various herbs and spices could be added to vary the flavour, as could wine or vinegar.

Garum was the generic term for fish sauce, but there were different types of varying quality. Garum was the term applied to the liquid fish sauce produced after sieving the fermented garum. This was sold as a quality product. The remains could also be sold as a poor quality by-product called garum.

These unprocessed dregs were initially sold as a cheaper version of fish sauce. But by the late first century AD, garum was being produced as a product in itself. It was most commonly made from small anchovies, although a luxury version was produced from sea urchins, anemones or mullet livers.

The highest grade garum was known as garum made from tuna, rather than the standard mackerel-based garum most commonly produced in Pompeii.





Pompeii was a major centre for the production and distribution of . It was a profitable business in the town, with the best quality sauce selling for 1000 sesterces per 12 pints.

Inscriptions on \_\_\_\_\_ have helped identify the dominant producer of fish sauce in Pompeii. His name was Aulus Umbricius Scarus. Over 50 containers bearing his name have been found in inns and kitchens around Pompeii and at the agricultural villas at Boscoreale. Thirty per cent of the fish sauce containers in Campania also came from his workshops, indicating the scale and size of his business.

The evidence suggests that Scarus owned and ran several different workshops across the town. His business concerns were so significant that he delegated the responsibility of running his workshops to many of his freedmen and, in one case, a freedwoman, Umbricia Fortunata.

Scarus rated the quality of his product highly, with jars containing his \_\_\_\_\_ declaring it the “finest fish sauce” or “finest mackerel sauce.”

Scarus’s house in Pompeii has been identified by a mosaic around the \_\_\_\_\_ in the atrium depicting four black and white \_\_\_\_\_ bearing Scarus’s promotional descriptions.

The house itself was impressive. It overlooked the sea and amongst its luxuries was a private bath suite. It is a testament to the wealth Scarus acquired from making the Roman’s favourite condiment.

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