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History of Patio fire pit by Pitsfire

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The patio fire pitis a focal point at modern-day social gatherings. But history shows it played an important part in the development of heating systems, as the first fire vessel used by human beings. Ancient civilizations faced with temperatures developed and indoor version of thepatio fire pit for cooking and heat. It served its purpose, but the fire pit posed serious drawbacks for early man. People had developed only rudimentary ventilation systems in their dwellings, so the risk of smoke inhalation was never far away. A hole cut into the roof was the ancient answer to the modern-day chimney. Though this provided an exit for smoke, there was also a constant risk that flames from the early patio fire pit would spark a fire and burn dwellings down. Imagine all the calls to the Fire Department this would have generated, had Fire Departments existed!

Eventually, the Roman Empire gave birth to a more complex heating system, known as the hypocaust. The aqueduct may be their claim to fame, but the hypocaust also played a vital role in Roman infrastructure. These systems consisted of flue chambers powered by fire pits, which were an offshoot of the indoor fire pit earlier peoples used. Heat generated from a fire pit-style furnace was pumped through chambers beneath the floor and walls of Roman buildings and radiated warmth. In larger buildings, like public bath houses, keeping fire pits burning as people bathed required the work of many men. They stoked the fire pit with wood, favoring twigs over logs, as logs burned too slowly to keep up with the demand. Workers also sought to keep the flames no higher than half the height of the fire pit chamber, to allow for optimal air flow.

Though a modern version of this ancient, the fire pit-powered hypocaust is still used in some parts of the world today, it gave way to the open hearth during the middle ages. The open hearth was an indoor structure optimal for cooking. Its heating power, however, was limited. Only rooms closest to the hearth felt its effects. Smoke rose out a louver attached to the roof, but there was still residual smoke that posed health risks. In the latter part of the Middle Ages, the open fire place developed, offering better warmth through a combination of direct and radiating heat. These systems remained the ruling heating methods through the centuries, and eventually followed European settlers across the Atlantic to America. In the 19th century, the advent of coal spawned the development of the cast-iron stove, which became especially popular as wood was scarce in urban centers. Larger coal-burning furnaces were being built to heat the homes of wealthy Americans by the second half of the 19th century. These furnaces e

ventually became obsolete in the mid-20th century when forced air systems powered by oil, electricity, and natural gas took their place. Energy consumption rose steadily until the energy crisis of the 1970s, when people realized fuel was finite, and began to take interest in renewable energy sources, like solar power.

The early rendition of the patio fire pit may have given way to other more efficient means of home heating over thousands of years, but today theyâ€™re the preferred method for heating and cooking on the backyard patio.

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