

GREAT MOMENTS IN

SWIMMING POOL HISTORY





Ancient writings and hieroglyphics are full of images of people swimming... at first in lakes, rivers and seas. But then human ingenuity devised a way to contain water in large, water-tight pools specifically for the purposes of bathing and exercise.



GREAT BATH

▶ **2600 BC**

The first known “pool” for holding water was the Great Bath of Mohenjo-daro in Pakistan, dating from 2600 BC. The pool is 12 meters long, 7 meters wide and 2.4 meters deep in the center, with broad staircases at each end. It is watertight due to tightly fitted bricks set in place with gypsum plaster and then pitched with tar. The pool was probably used for religious ceremonies.



GREEK AND ROMAN TIMES

▶ 400 BC

Pools for swimming (rather than bathing) became popular in ancient Rome and Greece. The philosopher Plato considered swimming to be an important part of the education of elementary age boys, so civilizations as far back as 400 BC added swimming to the basics of a young boy's education (alongside such basics as mathematics, writing and astronomy). In addition, the Greek and Roman militaries used pools to physically train their soldiers for war.





FIRST HEATED POOL

▶ 400 BC

The first heated swimming pool appeared in Rome around the first century BC, built by Gaius Maecenas, one of Augustus Caesar's political advisors and a wealthy patron of the arts and literature. This extravagant pool was heated by a furnace-based central-heating system and fabled to include lush waterfalls and gardens, terraces, villas and other luxuries.



HEATING TILES

▶ **AD 305**

In AD 305, the Romans built an incredible, heated pool that was over 900,000 square feet. Giant fires were kept lit in a basement beneath the pool, and the columns and walls circulated the heat to the pool above.





INDOOR POOLS

▶ 1837

Swimming moved indoors in the mid-19th century; in the early 1800s, competitive swimming had been introduced in Britain by the National Swimming Society, and London had six indoor swimming pools by 1837 to accommodate year-round exercise and swimming competitions.



COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

► 1896

The popularity of swimming pools escalated after the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, where swimming was introduced as a competitive event. Alfred Hajos of Hungary earned gold medals in both the 100 meter and the 1,200 meter freestyle events; both were earned in open-sea swims against teams from three other participating countries: Austria, Greece and the United States.

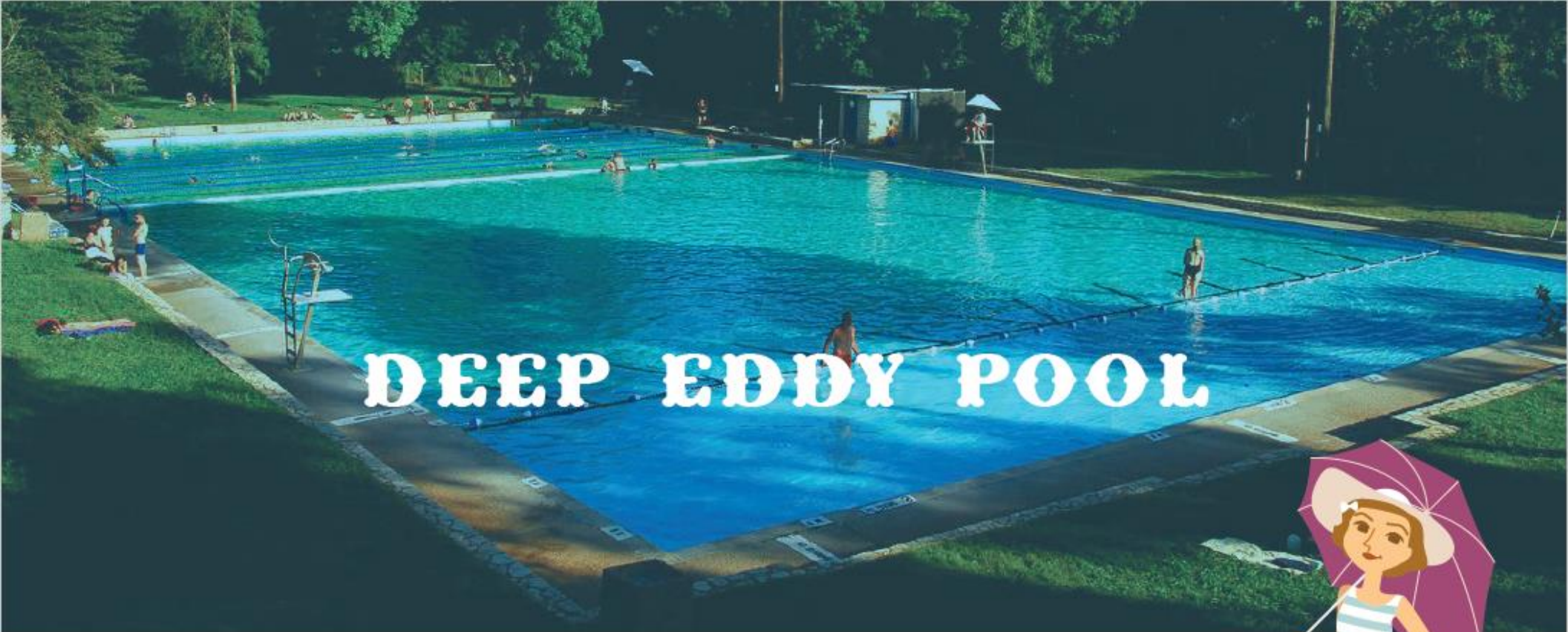




TITANIC HEATED POOL

► 1900s

In the early 1900s, swimming pools were added to ocean liners for the enjoyment of first class passengers. The Titanic was only the second ocean liner to boast a heated swimming pool. Passengers paid extra to use the pool, and men and women could not swim together – they had separate swim times!



DEEP EDDY POOL

► 1915

One of the first concrete swimming pools, the Deep Eddy pool, was built in Austin, Texas in 1915 at the site of a spring-fed swimming hole on the Colorado River. The Deep Eddy pool is still a popular municipal swimming pool today!





SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMERS

► 1950s

Swimming pools exploded in popularity in America after World War II. Thanks to elaborate movie musicals starring synchronized swimmer and Olympic champion Esther Williams, swimming pools were soon seen as glamorous and desirable, fueling America's appetite for home swimming pools.



► 1975

An avid swimmer, President Gerald Ford had an outdoor pool installed near the West Wing at the White House in 1975. He even conducted press conferences while swimming laps! The White House once contained an indoor pool as well. Franklin Roosevelt had a pool installed in 1933 to use as therapy for his polio. Subsequent presidents also enjoyed the indoor pool, but President Nixon had the pool covered and the room converted to a press room.





BIGGEST SWIMMING POOL IN THE WORLD

▶ 2006

The largest swimming pool in the world, with an area of 19.77 acres, is the San Alfonso del Mar Seawater Pool in Algarrobo, Chile. Boats sail lazily on this giant pool, which is 115 feet deep and abuts the ocean. It holds 66 million gallons of saltwater and is more than a half-mile from end to end!

THE FUTURE

► 2025

What does the future hold? Look for bold ideas and swimming pools being integrated in unusual ways that push all known boundaries... like this proposed glass-bottom pool suspended between two towers of an apartment complex in London.





According to the Association of Pool and Spa Professionals, there were approximately **10.4 million residential** and **309,000 public** swimming pools in the U.S. in 2011.



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