

Age Of Explorations

Reasons for Increased Travel

1. To find a route to the Spice Islands. Spices were then used to preserve & flavour food. Previously, spices were brought back from the Great Silk Route. However, the route became dangerous when the Turks took over Constantinople (1453).
2. European rulers & church leaders wanted to defeat the Muslims who lived in North Africa & the Middle East. Legend had it that there was a Christian King called Prester John & if he was found, the Muslims could be defeated.
3. European monarchs wanted to conquer more land. However, they wished to find undiscovered lands and claim them for themselves as it cheaper than fighting wars against other countries.

Advances In Travel

1. Maps: Before the AOE, maps were basic & inaccurate. Cartographers (map-makers) made new maps to help navigators. Portolan Charts were used by the Portugese - these gave details of currents, sea depths & harbours.
2. Navigation: Sailors began to work out their latitude (distance north or south of the equator) using astrolabes & quadrants which used the angle of the sun/north star. A chronometer measured the longitude (degrees east or west the ship is from a fixed geographical point) of the ship.
3. Travelling speed: Measured in knots i.e. a piece of rope with regular intervals would be thrown overboard. A sailor would then count how many knots passed through his hands in 1 min.
4. Water depth ("Fathom"): Weight was thrown into the sea with a knotted rope attached. Depth was measured by how many knots were left.

Ships

1. Clinker-built:

- There were over-lapping boards on the side of the ship
- Square sails
- First used by Portugal & Spain - Atlantic Ocean
- Advantage: Strong
- Disadvantage: Unable to turn quickly



2. Lateen:

- Triangular sails
- First used by Italy - Mediterranean
- Advantage: Allowed quick changes in direction.



3. Caravel:

- Square & triangular sails
- Made by the Portuguese
- Brought the abilities of the clinker-built & lateen ships together i.e. strong & agile



4. Carrack/naos:

- An improvement on the caravel - more room for storage - 1st used = Atlantic

People In History:

Sailor on a ship

- I'm on a caravel ship - strong and agile - suitable for any sea
- Worried about dangers: sea monsters who could eat whole ships, falling off edge of world, sea will boil the further south travelled
- 1 meal per day if lucky.
- Fresh food = eaten at start - has now gone off
- Sometimes, food cannot be eaten as rats & maggots get at it.
- Don't want to drink water - might get typhoid as it is dirty.
- I have scurvy or 'land-sickness', a common sea disease.
- Symptoms = fungus flesh in mouth, severe pain in arms/legs, stomach cramps
- Work = 'watch' - 4 hours & then rest

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Named Explorer - Christopher Columbus

- Born = Genoa, Italy in 1451.
- Read books on explorer Marco Polo and was inspired by him.
- Believed world was round & believed it was smaller than it actually was.
- Queen Isabella (Spain) agreed to sponsor him to sail west to find Asia
- Went in 1492. Ships = Nina, Pinta, Santa Maria
- Stopped in Canary Islands - carried out repairs to ships.
- Crew were fearful so he kept two logbooks - 1 with precise distance & one without
- 1st landed in San Salvador. Met natives who he called Indians. Believed he had reached Asia.
- 1493 = returned to hero's welcome. Brought fruit, natives & some gold.
- Made 3 more voyages - hoped to find Japan & China but could not. Began to mistreat/terrorise natives.
- Arrested & sent back to Spain in disgrace.
- 1506 = died



Why did Portugal lead the way in exploration?

1. They invented the caravel ship, a strong & agile ship.
2. Henry The Navigator set up a navigation school in Sagres in 1420, bringing together the best cartographers, shipbuilders & tradesmen to find a route to the Spice Islands. There were exploratory missions & all explorers mapped the coastline & left padres (large stone pillars) for next explorers.
3. Bartholomew Diaz: Set off to find the southern Cape of Africa. Blown off course by storm & accidentally found it. Named it the Cape Of Storms. Later renamed to Cape Of Good Hope by King John 2nd - hoped it was a route to the Spice Islands & wanted to encourage other sailors to try it
4. Vasco da Gama: Sailed to the Cape Of Good Hope. Landed on Christmas Day in a place they called Natal. Travelled to Mozambique. Ibn Majid told him of the route to the east & he went there. Portugal had found a route to the east!

Spanish conquest of Mexico

- It was said that a mighty civilisation called the Aztecs existed in Mexico - very advanced, could read & write
- 1519 = Hernando Cortés landed in Mexico with 500 men & 16 horses. He burned his ships to show that there was no returning.
- Found a city called Tenochtitlan - 250,000 people
- Aztecs = very religious. King Montezuma greeted Cortés as their god (Quetzalcoatl). This was successful until the army began to steal gold.
- Aztecs killed the king and threw the Spanish out.
- 1521 = Cortés returned with 100,000 men. Aztecs were defeated. Mexico was now known as New Spain. Cortés was made governor. Tenochtitlan was rebuilt as Mexico City.



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Spanish Conquest of Peru

- The Incas of Peru were thought to be an advanced civilisation - even more advanced than the Aztecs. Also: very peaceful
- Francisco Pizarro = set sail for Peru with 180 men and 27 horses.
- He defeated the Incas as they were very peaceful.
- He also captured the leader, Atahualpa, known as 'the Inca'.
- The Incas offered to fill a room with gold & silver as a ransom but Pizarro killed him anyway.
- Pizarro established a new capital at Lima. The Spanish later found gold and silver in the Andes Mountains.



Other important facts:

Ferdinand Magellan: 1) He was Portuguese - Sponsored by King Charles V of Spain. 2) Ships = Santiago, Victoria, Concepcion, San Antonio & Trinidad. 3) Led the first circumnavigation of the world. 4) Tension between him and Spanish soldiers & attempted mutiny.

Treaty of Tordesillas: 1494. An agreement between Portugal and Spain which divided up the world. Land found west = Spanish. East = Portuguese

Results

1. European countries were inspired to discover new lands. Over the next 300 years, the majority of the world was mapped & colonised.
2. Many European countries became extremely wealthy from trading tobacco, spices, silks, gold, silver and more..
3. Slavery: 10-12 million Africans were sold in slavery
4. Native languages died out.
5. Countries in the Mediterranean lost importance as the Atlantic-facing countries gained power and wealth.

Spain's contribution to the Age Of Exploration:

- Christopher Columbus = an Italian explorer who worked for Spain. He discovered a new continent previously unknown to Europe. The continent was later named America after America Vespucci.
- Following the discovery of America, Spain & Portugal came into conflict. Pope Alexander VI wanted to avoid war so the Treaty of Tordesillas was drawn up - divided world, land west = Spanish, east = Portuguese. Led to new discoveries.
- Ferdinand Magellan = another Portuguese explorer who worked for Spain. He led the first circumnavigation of the world. Proved the world was round and NOT flat.
- Hernando Cortés = A Spanish conquistador who conquered the advanced Aztec civilisation (1521) Mexico was then known as new Spain.
- Francisco Pizarro = Spanish conquistador who conquered the Inca civilisation. Gold & silver was found in the Andes mountains, making Spain extremely wealthy.