

Early European Explorers



Objectives

- Understand European motivations for exploring the seas.
- Analyze early Portuguese and Spanish explorations.
- Describe European searches for a direct route to Asia.

Terms and People

- **Moluccas** – an island chain in present-day Indonesia; chief source of spices in the 1400s
- **Prince Henry** – Portuguese prince who sponsored technology and map making to send Portuguese mariners around Africa and to Asia
- **cartographer** – a map maker
- **Vasco da Gama** – Portuguese navigator; first to sail around Africa to Asia

Terms and People (continued)

- **Christopher Columbus** – Italian navigator who sailed west across the Atlantic and explored what became known as the Americas
- **Line of Demarcation** – line drawn by the pope dividing the non-European world into two zones split between Spain and Portugal
- **Treaty of Tordesillas** – a 1494 treaty in which Spain and Portugal officially agreed to the Line of Demarcation

Terms and People (continued)

- **Ferdinand Magellan** – Portuguese nobleman who led the first expedition to circumnavigate the globe in 1522
- **circumnavigate** – to sail around



How did the search for spices lead to global exploration?

Throughout history, groups of people—from the ancient Greeks to Muslim Arabs and the Vikings of Scandinavia—had explored the seas, trading and migrating over long distances.

The European sailors of the 1400s began a dramatic new period of exploration.

Europeans desired luxury goods from Asia, especially spices.

- Spices were used to flavor meats, preserve food, and make perfumes and medicines.
- Europeans had been introduced to these goods during the Crusades, but demand had dropped during the Black Death.
- By the 1400s, Europe's population was growing again. Demand for spices rose.

Most spices came from a chain of islands in Southeast Asia called the **Moluccas**.



- Muslim traders carried goods from Asia to the Mediterranean.
- Italian merchants then brought them to European cities.
- Other Europeans realized it could be highly profitable to bypass the Italian city-states and gain direct access to Asia.

As Europeans sought new routes to Asia, they benefited from new or improved technology.

magnetic compass	First used by the Chinese; showed direction
portolan maps	Maps with lines radiating from compasses that showed routes to important ports
astrolabe	An ancient device, adapted for finding latitude and telling time
caravel	A new, lighter, fast ship that could travel long distances

Portugal led the way in exploration. Under **Prince Henry** “The Navigator,” Portuguese expeditions sailed eastward along the coast of Africa.




- Henry gathered **cartographers**, scientists, and other experts.
- They redesigned ships, trained sea captains, and prepared more accurate maps.
- Henry inspired explorers and sponsored voyages.

Portugal hoped to Christianize the Africans and find a route to Asia.

Henry died in 1460, but Portuguese navigators continued his quest.

1488 – Bartholomeu Dias rounded the southern tip of Africa.



1497 – **Vasco de Gama** sailed around Africa and after 10 months reached India.



Vasco de Gama later helped Portugal build a vast trading network around the Indian Ocean.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed westward across the Atlantic with three ships.

Born in the Italian city of Genoa, he had persuaded Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain to sponsor his journey.

He knew the world was round, but underestimated its size. As a result, he sailed for many weeks.

On October 12, he and his crew spotted land.



Columbus explored the islands of the Caribbean, which he believed to be the East Indies.



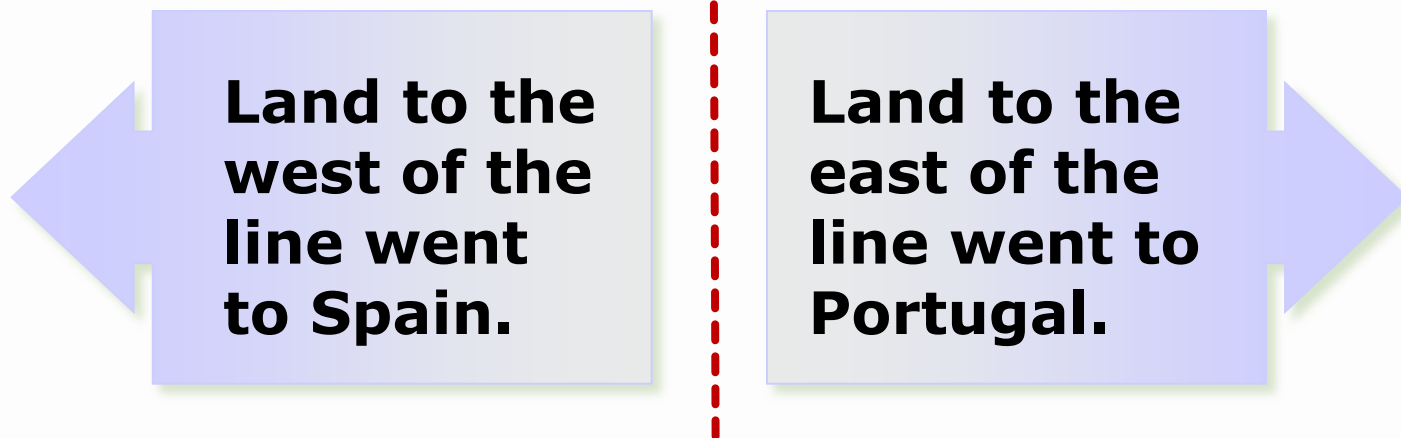
He called the people he met “Indians.”

He returned to Spain a hero.

He led three more voyages but never realized that he had not reached Asia.

In 1493, Ferdinand and Isabella appealed to the pope to support their claim to all land in what Europeans referred to as the “New World.”

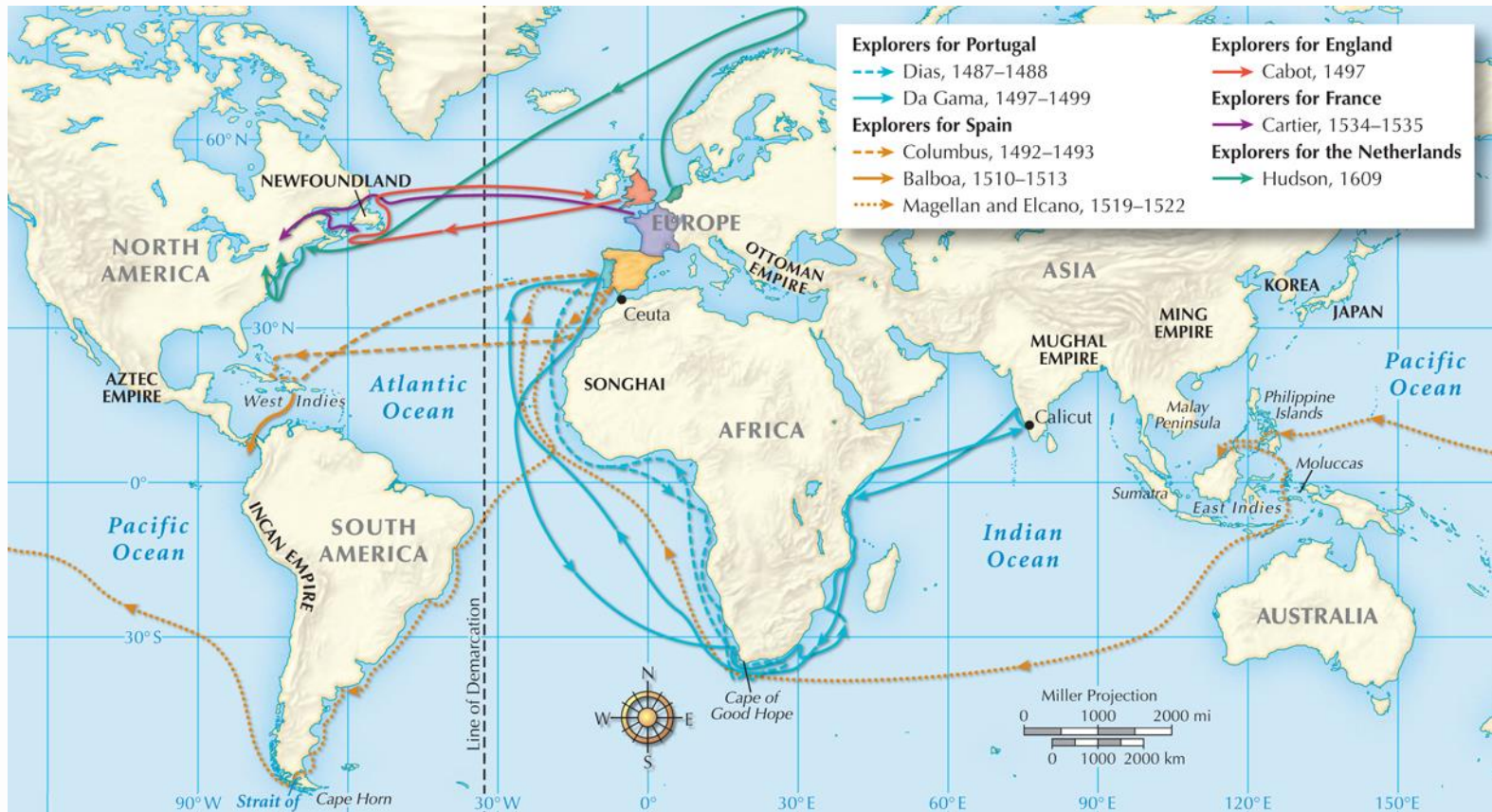
The pope set a **Line of Demarcation** dividing all non-European land between Portugal and Spain.



In the **Treaty of Tordesillas, in 1494, Spain and Portugal agreed to the line set by the pope.**

- The line was very imprecise due to the lack of knowledge of the geography at the time.
- Other European nations were eager to defy what they saw as arrogance on the part of Portugal and Spain.
- As nations scrambled to create their own empires, an age of empire building began.

Early voyages of European explorers, 1487–1609

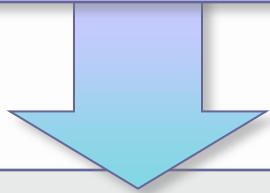


The Western Hemisphere was named “America” in 1507 by German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller.

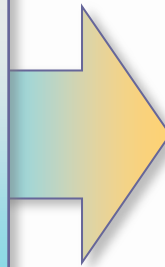
The name came from Italian sea captain Amerigo Vespucci, who wrote about his visit.

The islands Columbus had mistaken for the East Indies became known as the West Indies.

The English, Dutch, and French explored the coast of North America.



They unsuccessfully sought a “northwest passage” to Asia.

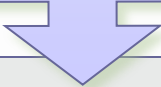


In 1513, Vasco Núñez de Balboa walked across the jungles of Central America and saw the Pacific Ocean, which he called the South Sea.

In 1519, **Ferdinand Magellan** set out to find a passage to the East by sailing south and west.



In 1521, after sailing around South America, he and his crew crossed the Pacific. Magellan himself was killed in the Philippines.



In 1522, one of his ships made it home to Spain, the first to **circumnavigate** the entire globe.

Important European Explorers

Explorer	Accomplishment
Vasco da Gama (Portugal)	Sailed around Cape of Good Hope; established ports on Indian Ocean
Christopher Columbus (Spain)	Sailed west across Atlantic Ocean to Caribbean
Vasco Núñez de Balboa (Spain)	Crossed Panama, reaching Pacific Ocean
Ferdinand Magellan (Spain)	Circumnavigated the globe

European Footholds in the Eastern Hemisphere

Country	Date	Foothold	Reason for Interest
Portugal	1502	Calicut, India	Spices
Portugal	1510	Goa, India	Military and commercial base
Portugal	1511	Malacca, Southeast Asia	Center of sea trade
Spain	1521	The Philippines	Center of sea trade
Portugal	1589	Mombasa, East Africa	Hub of international trade
Netherlands	1652	Cape Town, southern Africa	Strategic port for repairing and resupplying ships
Great Britain	1757	Northeastern India	Spices, trade goods