

Henry Hudson's Fourth Voyage 1610: The Northwest Passage

Despite his recent arrest for sailing under another nation's flag, Henry Hudson managed to get support from English backers for another voyage, this time in search of a **Northwest Passage**, one he had wanted to pursue almost since the start of his voyages. The main sponsor this time was Sir Thomas Smythe - governor and treasurer of the Virginia Company, and also of the English East India Company. Smythe desperately needed to recoup his losses after a disaster that saw his last fleet to Virginia scattered, with hundreds of men lost. He may not have paid Hudson for his services - rather, it may have been Hudson's payment for Smythe getting Hudson out of house arrest.

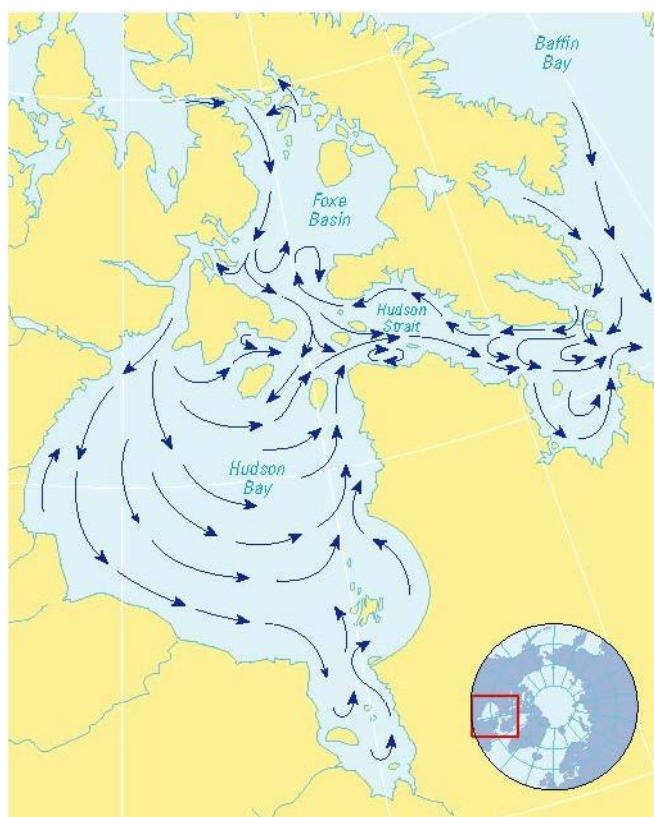


For the third time, Hudson decided to include Robert Juet in the crew, a decision that would eventually cost him his ship and his life. His ship this time was the *Discovery*, formerly sailed by Captain Weymouth. Smythe only provided eight months of provisions for the crew.

The voyage started inauspiciously with a company man put off the ship and another man brought aboard - Henry Greene, a gambler who would prove a partner in trouble with Juet. According to the journal of Abacuck Prickett, Hudson promised to make Greene a member of the Prince's Guard on their return, which speaks to the personal influence Hudson must have had with Henry, Prince of Wales.

Almost from the start there was trouble with the crew. Hudson's ability to manage his crew appears even weaker than in previous voyages. There were fights and almost a mutiny within the first few months, before they even reached the area Hudson intended to explore.

Discovery ended up sailing through the treacherous Arctic waters north of modern Quebec - the Furious Overfall - known today as Hudson's Strait although he did not discover it - and into a large body of water now known as Hudson Bay. The currents in the strait are rapid and turbulent, treacherous to the small ships of Hudson's day. Water from the bay rushes eastward along the south side, while water



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from the Greenland current and Davis Bay rushes west along the north. Ice is torn into large dangerous chunks that whirl around in the current (see map). Careful navigation and a steady hand is required: it is easy to be turned around in the conflicting currents, and the small, high ships of Hudson's day could overturn and capsize in rough waters.

By the fall of the year the crew was stuck hundreds of miles south, unable to go further or to get home. They had to endure a harsh winter in that hostile land, during which one crewman died and most others were sickened by scurvy or lack of food. Again, Hudson's showed his inability to deal with the natives and his own crew during the cold months they spent ashore.

By late next spring, the ship was ready to sail again. Hudson wanted to continue his explorations, but the crew only wanted to head home. Fights broke out over food and Hudson accused some crew members of hoarding. They in turn accused him of the same. Eventually a large number of crew members, led by Juet and Greene, decided to mutiny. They put the captain, his son and others they didn't like into a small shallop and set it adrift while the Discovery sailed away. None of the abandoned crew were ever seen again.



On the way back to England, the ship was piloted by Robert Bylot. Many of the crew, including the lead mutineers, died on the return voyage, some from fights with the natives, others of starvation. When the survivors returned home they were arrested for mutiny, but would all be cleared later.

Bylot would return to the bay several more times over the next years to explore and ostensibly search for survivors. Hudson's successes in both navigation and exploration of this northern area have been overshadowed by the mutiny and his death. Many others would come in the following centuries, searching for the elusive Northwest Passage.

Henry Hudson

- **Occupation:** English Explorer
- **Born:** 1560s or 70s somewhere in England
- **Died:** 1611 or 1612 Hudson Bay, North America
- **Best known for:** Mapping the Hudson River and the North Atlantic



Biography:

Where did Henry Hudson grow up?

Historians know very little of Henry Hudson's youth. He was probably born in or near the city of London sometime between 1560 and 1570. It is likely that his family was wealthy and that his grandfather founded a trading company called the Muscovy Company.

At some point in his life Henry married a woman named Katherine. They had at least three children including three sons named John, Oliver, and Richard. Henry grew up near the end of the [Age of Exploration](#). Much of America was still uncharted.

Northern Passage

Many countries and trading companies at the time were searching for a new route to India. Spices from India were worth a lot of money in Europe, but were very expensive to transport. Ships had to sail all the way around Africa. Many ships and their cargo were sunk or captured by pirates. If someone could find a better trade route, they would be rich.

Henry Hudson wanted to find a northern passage to India. He thought that, since the sun shined most of the summer on the North Pole, the ice there would melt in the summer. Perhaps he could sail right over the top of the world to India. Starting in 1607, Henry headed up four different expeditions searching for the elusive northern passage.

First Expedition

Henry set sail on his first expedition in May of 1607. His boat was called the Hopewell and his crew included his sixteen year-old son John. He sailed north up the coast of Greenland and to an island called Spitsbergen. At Spitsbergen he discovered a bay full of whales. They also saw plenty of seals and walrus. They kept going north until they ran into ice. Hudson searched for over two months to find a passage through the ice, but eventually had to turn back.

Second Expedition

In 1608 Hudson once again took the Hopewell out to sea in hopes of finding a passage to the northeast over [Russia](#). He made it as far as the island of Novaya Zemlya located far to the north of Russia. However, he once again encountered ice which he could not pass no matter how hard he searched.

Third Expedition

Hudson's first two expeditions had been funded by the Muscovy Company. However, they now lost faith that he could find a northern passage. He went to the [Dutch](#) and soon had another ship called the Half Moon financed by the Dutch East India Company. They told Hudson to try to find a way around Russia again going to Novaya Zemlya.

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Henry Hudson meets with Native Americans

Despite clear instructions from the Dutch, Hudson ended up taking a different route. When his crew nearly mutinied because of the cold weather, he turned around and sailed to [North America](#). He first landed and met [Native Americans](#) in Maine. Then he traveled south until he found a river. He explored the river which would later be called Hudson River. This area would later be settled by the Dutch including an area on the tip of Manhattan which would one day become New York City.

Eventually the Half Moon could no longer travel up the river and they had to return home. Upon returning home, the King James I of England was angry with Hudson for sailing for another country. Hudson was put under house arrest and was told never to explore for another country again.

Fourth Expedition

Hudson had many supporters, however. They argued for his release saying that he should be allowed to sail for England. On April 17, 1610 Hudson once again set sail to find the Northwest Passage. This time he was funded by the Virginia Company and sailed the ship Discovery under the English flag.

Hudson took the Discovery to North America sailing further north than he had on his previous expedition. He navigated through a perilous strait (Hudson Strait) and into a large sea (now called Hudson Bay). He was sure that a way to Asia could be found in this sea. However, he never found the way through. His crew began to starve and Hudson did not treat them well. Finally, the crew mutinied against Hudson. They put him and few loyal crew members into a small boat and left them adrift in the bay. Then they returned home to England.

Death

No one is sure what happened to Henry Hudson, but he was never seen from again. It is likely that he quickly starved to death or froze to death in the harsh cold weather of the north.

Interesting Facts about Henry Hudson

- In one of Hudson's journal entries he describes a mermaid that his men saw swimming alongside their ship.
- A northwest passage was finally discovered by explorer Roald Amundsen in 1906.
- Hudson's discoveries and maps proved valuable to both the Dutch and the English. Both countries established trading posts and settlements based on his explorations.
- Henry Hudson appears as a character in the [Margaret Peterson Haddix](#) book Torn.
- The leaders of the mutiny were Henry Greene and Robert Juet. Neither of them survived the voyage home.

Source: http://www.ducksters.com/biography/explorers/henry_hudson.php

Ferdinand Magellan Biography– First Circumnavigation



MAGELLAN'S CIRCUMNAVIGATION

Early Life

Ferdinand Magellan was born in Sabrosa, Portugal in 1480 into a noble family. After serving as a court page for two years, his adventurous spirit led him to a career as an explorer. In 1506, Magellan went to the Spice Islands (Indonesia) to participate in several military and exploratory expeditions. In 1510, he was promoted to the rank of captain. In 1512, he was stationed in Morocco and made preliminary plans to find a western shortcut to the Spice Islands. Unfortunately, Portugal's king, Emmanuel, refused to finance his journey, and in 1517, he renounced his Portuguese citizenship. He promptly offered his services to King Charles I of Spain. Charles I agreed to finance Magellan's trip in the hopes of becoming the king of the richest nation in the world.

Circumnavigation

On September 20, 1519 Magellan and 237 crew members set sail on five ships from Sanlucar de Barrameda in the hopes of finding a shortcut to the Spice Islands. After three long months of sailing the Atlantic, Magellan and his crew anchored near Rio de Janeiro in the present day South American nation of Brazil. After trading with local natives, Magellan and his men quickly set sail again, ever worried about the threat of Portuguese ships. As the expedition continued, the weather got worse and several crew members were executed for trying to take over the ship. Others were starving or suffering from frostbite. As the ships neared the southern tip of South America, one smashed into the beach and lost all supplies. Nevertheless, in October of 1520, Magellan and his crew crossed the treacherous straits at the tip of South America, which became known as the Straits of Magellan.

Trouble in the Pacific Ocean

As the expedition passed through the straits, they entered the vast Pacific Ocean. Things got worse before they got better. The crew suffered from extreme hunger and were forced to survive by eating rats, sawdust, leather and even maggots. At least 20 men died from disease, particularly Scurvy (caused by a lack of Vitamin C) and starvation. On March 6, the ships finally reached land – the Pacific island of Guam. Nevertheless, the crew members were able to collect clean water and food, despite being on the alert for attacks by the natives. Soon, the crew sailed to the Philippine Islands, where they converted natives to Christianity. During an attempt to convert the native chief, Mactan, to Christianity, Magellan was wounded by an arrow that was driven through his foot by a native warrior. Mactan, who had become upset with Magellan's insistence that he convert, ordered his warriors to attack. They killed Magellan on April 27, 1521. Most of Magellan's crew escaped and set sail.

Return to Spain

With the loss of their leader, Juan Sebastian Del Cano took control of the ship and sailed for Spain. Only two ships and 47 men remained. Portuguese forces captured one of the ships, leaving the Victoria as the only ship left. Severe storms and Portuguese attacks battered the Victoria. As Portuguese forces bore down on the expedition near the Cape Verde Islands, Del Cano was forced to continue toward Spain without supplies or rest. Finally, on September 8, 1522, The Victoria made it back to Spain with only 18 men surviving, hence completing the first circumnavigation of the world.

Ferdinand Magellan



Ferdinand Magellan

- **Occupation:** Explorer
- **Born:** 1480 in Portugal
- **Died:** April 27, 1521 in Cebu, Philippines
- **Best known for:** First to circumnavigate the globe

Biography:

Ferdinand Magellan led the first expedition to sail all the way around the world. He also discovered a passage from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean that is today called the Straits of Magellan.

Growing Up

Ferdinand Magellan was born in 1480 in northern [Portugal](#). He grew up in a wealthy family and served as a page in the royal court. He enjoyed sailing and exploring and sailed for Portugal for many years.

Magellan had traveled to India by sailing around [Africa](#), but he had the idea that there may be another route by traveling west and around the Americas. The King of Portugal did not agree and argued with Magellan. Finally, Magellan went to the King Charles V of Spain who agreed to fund the voyage.

Setting Sail

In September of 1519 Magellan set sail in his attempt to find another route to Eastern Asia. There were over 270 men and five ships under his command. The ships were named the Trinidad, the Santiago, the Victoria, the Concepcion, and the San Antonio.

They first sailed across the Atlantic and to the Canary Islands. From there they sailed south to [Brazil](#) and the coast of [South America](#).

Mutiny

As Magellan's ships sailed south the weather turned bad and cold. On top of that, they had not brought enough food. Some of the sailors decided to mutiny and tried to steal three of the ships. Magellan fought back, however, and had the leaders executed.



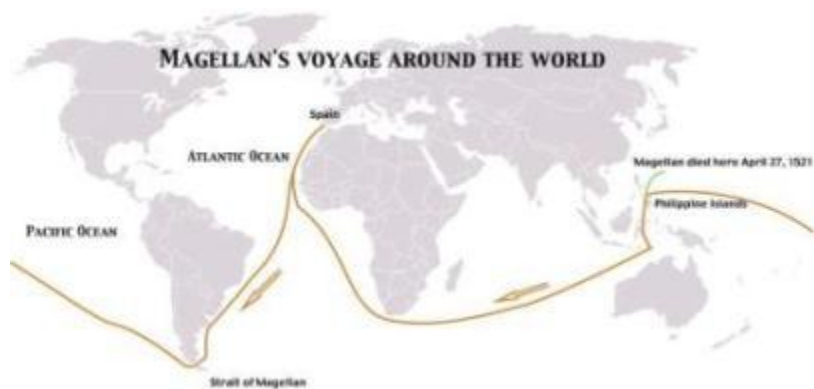
Finding the Passage

Magellan continued to sail south. Soon he found the passage he was seeking. He called the passage the All Saints' Channel. Today it is called the Straits of Magellan. Finally he entered into a new ocean on the other side of the new world. He called the ocean the Pacifico, meaning peaceful.

Now that they were on the other side of South America, the ships sailed for China. There were only three ships left at this point as the Santiago had sunk and the San Antonio had disappeared.

Magellan thought it would only take a few days to cross the Pacific Ocean. He was wrong. It took nearly four months for the ships to make it to the Mariana Islands. They barely made it and nearly starved during the voyage.

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Route taken by Magellan

Magellan Dies

After stocking up on supplies, the ships headed to the Philippines. Magellan became involved in an argument between local tribes. He and around 40 of his men were killed in a battle. Unfortunately, Magellan would not see the end of his historic journey.

Returning to Spain

Only one of the original five ships made it back to Spain. It was the Victoria captained by Juan Sebastian del Cano. It returned in September of 1522, three years after first leaving. There were only 18 surviving sailors, but they had made the first trip around the world.

Pigafetta

One of the survivors was a sailor and scholar named Antonio Pigafetta. He wrote detailed journals throughout the voyage recording all that happened. Much of what we know about Magellan's travels comes from his journals. He told of the exotic animals and fish they saw as well as the terrible conditions they endured.

Fun Facts about Magellan

- The ship that Magellan commanded was the Trinidad.
- The total distance traveled by the Victoria was over 42,000 miles.
- Magellan's knee was wounded in battle, causing him to walk with a limp.
- Many of the sailors were Spanish and did not trust Magellan because he was Portuguese.
- The King of Portugal, King Manuel I, sent ships to stop Magellan, but was unsuccessful.
- On the long journey across the Pacific the sailors ate rats and sawdust to survive.

Source: http://www.ducksters.com/biography/explorers/ferdinand_magellan.php



Vasco da Gama

- **Occupation:** Explorer
- **Born:** 1460 in Sines, Portugal
- **Died:** December 23, 1524 in Kochi, India
- **Best known for:** The first European to sail from Europe to India around Africa

Biography:

Vasco da Gama (1460 - 1524) was a Portuguese explorer. He led the first expedition that traveled from Europe to India by sailing around Africa.

Where did Vasco da Gama grow up?

Vasco da Gama was born in a small coastal town in [Portugal](#) named Sines. His father was a [knight](#) and an explorer. He followed in his father's footsteps and soon commanded ships in the king's name.

A Trade Route to India

Spices from [India](#) were very popular in Europe, however, the only way to travel from Europe to India was over land. This was a long and expensive trip. The King of Portugal figured if he could find a way to get to India by sailing on the ocean, he would become rich trading spices in Europe.

An explorer by the name of Bartolemeu Dias had discovered the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of Africa. It was thought that there may be a way around the Cape and to the northeast towards India. However, many were skeptical and thought that the Indian Ocean did not connect with the Atlantic Ocean.

Vasco da Gama was given a fleet of ships by the king and told to find a trade route around Africa to India. He was also told to find any other trading opportunities along the way.

The First Voyage

Vasco da Gama left on his first voyage from Lisbon, Portugal on July 8, 1497. He had 170 men and 4 ships: the Sao Gabriel, Sao Rafael, the Berrio, and a fourth ship unnamed and used for storage.

The expedition rounded the southern tip of Africa at the Cape of Good Hope on November 22. They then headed north up the coast of Africa. They stopped at trading ports along the way including Mombasa and Malindi. At Malindi they gained a local navigator who knew the direction to India. With the help of a Monsoon wind they were able to cross the Indian Ocean and arrive in Calicut, India in less than a month.

At Calicut, Vasco ran into issues when trying to trade. He had brought little of value in his ships.



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This made the local traders suspicious. Soon he had to leave. The voyage back was disastrous. Around half of his crew died from scurvy as the trip back took much longer. However, when he returned home, he was a hero. He had found the much needed trade route to India.

Later Voyages

Vasco da Gama commanded two more fleets to India. The second voyage was more of a military expedition where he captured Arab ships and tried to show the might of the Portuguese navy.

On the third voyage Vasco was to take over as Viceroy of Portuguese India. However, he died of malaria shortly after arriving.

Fun Facts about Vasco da Gama

- Originally Vasco's father, Estevao, was going to be given the command of the exploration fleet, but the trip was delayed for many years. Eventually, the command was given to his son Vasco instead.
- There is a crater named Vasco da Gama on the Moon.
- His fleet on the second voyage consisted of 20 armed ships.
- He had six sons and one daughter. His second son became governor of Portuguese India.

Vasco da Gama Biography



DA GAMA ROUTE MAP: 1497-1498

Introduction

Vasco da Gama was born in 1460 to a wealthy Portuguese family in Sines, Portugal. Vasco's father was an also an explorer and was supposed to make the epic journey from Portugal to India that would eventually make his son famous. He died, however, before he could successfully complete the journey. In the late 1400's, Portugal was desperately trying to find a sea route to [Asia](#) so they could obtain spices for cheap prices. [Explorers](#) such as Bartholomew Dias had made some progress in making the journey, but none had been able to sail around the southern tip of [Africa](#) at the Cape of Good Hope (where the Atlantic and Indian Ocean meet) and into the Indian Ocean.

Sailing to India

In 1497, Portuguese King Manuel I financed a voyage led by Vasco da Gama. Many, however, still believed the trip to be impossible, because they did not think the Atlantic Ocean connected with the Indian Ocean. Da Gama believed it was possible and left Lisbon, Portugal on July 8, 1497, with four ships full of criminals and set sail on the Atlantic. After five months on the Atlantic, da Gama and his crew successfully sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and into the Indian Ocean on November 22. After making several stops along ports in the eastern African nations of Kenya, Mozambique and others, and after struggling with Muslim traders in the Indian Ocean who did not take kindly to interference with their trade routes, da Gama reached Calicut, India on May 20, 1498.

Back to Portugal

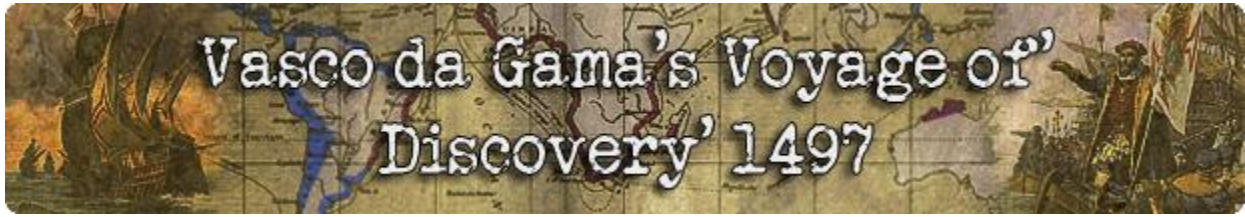
In India, da Gama traded extensively for Asian products and spices. Although he was initially well-received in India, he eventually wore out his welcome. Da Gama left India in August of 1498, after he was told to pay a heavy tax and to leave the goods he traded for. Da Gama refused to leave the goods, and only left India after taking Indian hostages. By the time Da Gama returned to Lisbon in 1499, many of his crew members had died of scurvy (a disease caused by a lack of vitamin-C), and he had become a hero. King Manuel I made him an admiral.

The Tyrant

In 1502, King Manuel sent da Gama back to India. This time, however, da Gama came with 20 armed ships to prevent problems with Muslim traders. In one case, da Gama ordered the massacre of a Muslim vessel with 380 people on board. When he reached India, he brutally murdered many Muslims to demonstrate his power, and bombarded Calicut to force the Portuguese will on Asian trading markets. Da Gama's conquests paved the way for future conquests in [Asia](#).

Da Gama returned to Portugal in 1503. He died in India in 1524 from an illness.

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Vasco da Gama carried out 2 expeditions between 1497 and 1502. This feature focuses on the first, as it was during this expedition that Vasco da Gama's crew landed in South Africa.

The reason for putting "discovery" in inverted commas is because the land was not, as so many explorers argue, discovered by them. The land was already occupied and was being used by the inhabitants. The reason why groups often state their arrival on some foreign land as a "discovery" is because, according

to the primitive 'finders keepers' rule, this lends support to any claim they make to "owning" the land. For an unpacking of this mystification of the history of exploration.

The First Expedition

The Portuguese expedition set off from the Tagus River on 8 July 1497 with a crew of 148 men in a squadron of three square-riggers, the Sao Gabriel, the Sao Raphael, the Berrio, and a supply ship. The commander-in-chief, Vasco da Gama embarked on the Sao Gabriel accompanied by his pilot, Pedro de Alenquer. Vasco's brother, Paulo, captained the Sao Raphael. For almost four months they sailed across the Atlantic without sight of land until, on *4 November 1497, they reached a bay (current day St Helena). Vasco da Gama named the bay Bahai da Santa Elena (St Helena Bay), after the Religious Mother of Constantine the Great. Close to, or near the mouth of the Berg River, the explorers set in to make repairs, look for water, and check their position. It was here that they had their first encounter with the Khoikhoi. A misunderstanding arose between them, and fearing attack, the Khoikhoi threw spears, wounding Da Gama in the thigh.

The Cape

In the teeth of a gale, the Portuguese squadron rounded the Cape on 22 November, and three days later, the battered ships sailed into Santa Bras (Mossel Bay), sighting islands thick with noisy birds. They unloaded their damaged store ship and then burnt it, while da Gama traded gifts with the Khoikhoi. However, they offended the Khoikhoi when they took fresh water without asking the chief's permission, and the Khoikhoi began to assemble in an armed mass. The sailors hurriedly took to their boats while a couple of cannon blasts dispersed the Khoikhoi.

The east coast

By Christmas, the squadron was off the hazardous coast of Pondoland, which they named Natal. Three days later, they were enjoying good fishing off a point they called Ponta de Pescaria (Durban bluff). Head winds blew them out to sea and when they managed to reach the coast again, they anchored off Inharrime on the coast of Mozambique. They replenished their water barrels and, finding the iron-working ancestors of the Tsonga friendly and generous, they named the area Terra da Boa Gente ('land of the good people').

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At Mozambique Island, they forcefully engaged two Arab pilots and when the Muslim inhabitants realized the explorers were Christians, they grew hostile. To keep them at bay, da Gama bombarded the town and then sailed away. On 7 April, Da Gama anchored off Mombasa. The sultan generously sent them sheep, fresh vegetables and fruit; but when one of the Arab pilots jumped overboard as they were entering the harbour, the Portuguese became suspicious of the sultan's intentions. Da Gama forced some Muslims on board, tortured them with boiling oil, and learned of a plot to avenge the Portuguese attack on Mozambique. Thus forewarned, they were able to stave off an attack and continued on their way. Nearing Malindi (near Mombasa), they found the sultan much more friendly and helpful. He provided them with an expert pilot to steer them to India, thus laying the foundation of a long and mutually profitable alliance.

India

From Malindi the ships sailed for Calicut in India and anchored on the Malabar Coast on 20 May 1498. There, Muslim traders swayed the Hindu ruler against the Christian explorers, who again narrowly escaped death. The Portuguese squadron sailed from India on 20 September 1498, but on the return voyage, disaster overtook them. First, they were becalmed for many days, and then, contrary winds and currents dragged out their crossing. Thirty men died. The survivors arrived at Malindi on 7 January 1499. Here, they erected a *padrão* (stone cross), which still exists. Lacking able-bodied men to sail all the ships, da Gama burned the *Sao Raphael*.

On 20 March 1499, the two remaining ships rounded the Cape and sailed on for the Portuguese outpost on the Azores where da Gama delayed sailing because his brother Paulo had died. The *Berrio* sailed on to Portugal, where it dropped anchor at the Tagus on 10 July 1499. When Da Gama arrived at Lisbon about three weeks later, the Portuguese gave him a hero's welcome. The king awarded him the grand title, 'Lord of the Conquest, Navigation and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India', and 'Admiral of the Indian Sea', with the rank of Dom, and many other rewards. Soon afterwards, he married Catherina de Ataide with whom he had six sons and a daughter.

The Second Expedition

In order to impose a monopoly on the spice trade, da Gama sailed with a fleet from Portugal in 1502, bound for Mozambique and Sofala. There, he obtained some gold; established trading rights, and forced the new Sultan of Mozambique to pay homage to the King of Portugal with an annual tribute of gold. In India, da Gama attacked Calicut, tortured his captives horribly - we are told he cut off their noses and ears and sent them to the Sultan of Calicut - and after preying on Moslem ships, returned to Portugal heavily laden with booty. From then onwards, the Portuguese made regular voyages using Mossel Bay and Mombasa as their main replenishing posts. Oriental silks, satins and spices, and African ivory and gold brought wealth to the Crown and led to Portugal's dominance of the Cape route. In 1524, Jono III commanded Da Gama to return to India as viceroy. He reached Goa on 11 September 1524, but died at Cochin three months later. His remains were eventually returned to Portugal and interred at St Jeronimos in 1880.

Source: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/vasco-da-gamas-voyage-discovery-1497>

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Bartolomeu Dias Biography

Explorer (c. 1450–1500)

Synopsis

Born in 1450, Bartolomeu Dias was sent by Portuguese King John II to explore the coast of Africa and find a way to the Indian Ocean. Dias departed circa August 1487, rounding the southernmost tip of Africa in January, 1488. The Portuguese (possibly Dias himself) named this point of land the Cape of Good Hope. Dias was lost at sea during another expedition around the Cape in 1500.



An ambitious plan

Almost nothing is known about the life of Bartolomeu de Novaes Dias before 1487, except that he was at the court of João II, king of Portugal (1455-1495), and was a superintendent of the royal warehouses. He likely had much more sailing experience than his one recorded stint aboard the warship São Cristóvão. Dias was probably in his mid- to late 30s in 1486 when João appointed him to head an expedition in search of a sea route to India.

João was entranced by the legend of Prester John, a mysterious and probably apocryphal 12th-century leader of a nation of Christians somewhere in Africa. João sent out a pair of explorers, Afonso de Paiva (c. 1460-c. 1490) and Pêro da Covilhã (c. 1450-c. 1526), to search overland for the Christian kingdom in Ethiopia. João also wanted to find a way around the southernmost point of Africa's coastline, so just a few months after dispatching the overland explorers, he sponsored Dias in an African expedition.

In August 1487, Dias' trio of ships departed from the port of Lisbon, Portugal. Dias followed the route of 15th-century Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão (c. 1450-c. 1486), who had followed the coast of Africa as far as present-day Cape Cross, Namibia. Dias' cargo included the standard "padrões," the limestone markers used to stake Portuguese claims on the continent. Padrões were planted at the shoreline and served as guideposts to previous Portuguese explorations of the coast.

Dias' expedition party included six Africans who had been brought to Portugal by earlier explorers. Dias dropped off the Africans at different ports along the coastline of Africa with supplies of gold and silver and messages of goodwill from the Portuguese to the indigenous people. The last two Africans were left at a place the Portuguese sailors called Angra do Salto, probably in modern Angola, and the expedition's supply ship was left there under guard of nine men.

Expedition Around South Africa

In early January 1488, as Dias' two ships sailed off the coast of South Africa, storms blew them away from the coast. Dias is thought to have ordered a turn to the south of about 28 degrees, probably because he had prior knowledge of southeasterly winds that would take him around the tip of Africa and keep his ships from being dashed on the notoriously rocky shoreline. João and his predecessors had obtained navigational intelligence, including a 1460 map from Venice that showed the Indian Ocean on the other side of Africa.

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Dias' decision was risky, but it worked. The crew spotted landfall on February 3, 1488, about 300 miles east of present-day Cape of Good Hope. They found a bay they called São Bras (present-day Mossel Bay) and the much warmer waters of the Indian Ocean. From the shoreline, indigenous Khoikhoi pelted Dias' ships with stones until an arrow fired by either Dias or one of his men felled a tribesman. Dias ventured further along the coastline, but his crew was nervous about the dwindling food supplies and urged him to turn back. As mutiny loomed, Dias appointed a council to decide the matter. The members came to the agreement that they would permit him to sail another three days, then turn back. At Kwaihoek, in present-day Eastern Cape province, they planted a *padrão* on March 12, 1488, which marked the easternmost point of Portuguese exploration.

On the journey back, Dias observed the southernmost point of Africa, later called Cabo das Agulhas, or Cape of Needles. Dias named the rocky second cape Cabo das Tormentas (Cape of Storms) for the tempestuous storms and strong Atlantic-Antarctic currents that made ship travel so perilous.

Back in Angra do Salto, Dias and his crew were aghast to find that only three of the nine men left guarding the food ship had survived repeated attacks by locals; a seventh man died on the journey home. In Lisbon, after 15 months at sea and a journey of nearly 16,000 miles, the returning mariners were met by triumphant crowds. In a private meeting with the king, however, Dias was forced to explain his failure to meet up with Paiva and Covilhã. Despite his immense achievement, Dias was never again put in a position of authority. João ordered that henceforth, maps would show the new name for Cabo das Tormentas--Cabo da Boa Esperança, or Cape of Good Hope.

Advisor to Vasco da Gama

Following his expedition, Dias settled for a time in Guinea in West Africa, where Portugal had established a gold-trading site. João's successor, Manuel I (1469-1521), ordered Dias to serve as a shipbuilding consultant for the expedition of Vasco da Gama (c. 1460-1524).

Dias sailed with the da Gama expedition as far as the Cape Verde Islands, then returned to Guinea. Da Gama's ships reached their goal of India in May 1498, nearly a decade after Dias' historic trip around the tip of Africa.

Afterward, Manuel sent out a massive fleet to India under Pedro Álvares Cabral (c. 1467-c. 1520), and Dias captained four of the ships. They reached Brazil in March 1500, then headed across the Atlantic toward South Africa and, further ahead, the Indian subcontinent. At the feared Cabo das Tormentas, storms struck the fleet of 13 ships. In May 1500, four of the ships were wrecked, including Dias', with all crew lost at sea.

Source: <http://www.biography.com/people/bartolomeu-dias-9273850#advisor-to-vasco-da-gama>

Bartolomeu Dias

Born: c. 1451 in Algarve, Kingdom of Portugal

Died: May 29, 1500 (at age 48-49) in Cape of Good Hope

Nationality: Portuguese

Occupation: Navigator and explorer

Famous For: First European to sail around the southernmost tip of Africa

Bartolomeu Dias was a Portuguese explorer. He was the first man to have sailed around the Cape of Good Hope. Dias did not set out on the journeys which made him famous until he was in his thirties.

Voyage to the Cape

All that is known about Dias's life before his time as an explorer is that he was in charge of some of King João II's warehouses.

Also, he had only made a single voyage aboard a warship.

Sometime in 1486, however, the king tasked him with leading an expedition to discover a route to India by sea. With a small fleet of three ships, Dias set sail in August of the following year. The party at first followed the route discovered a few years earlier by Diogo Cão, which ended at what is now Namibia.

After having stopped at several African ports with gifts of precious metals and assurances of friendship toward the native peoples, Dias's ships were blown out to sea by a storm. However, he had been given a Venetian map by the king that showed that the Indian Ocean lay to the east of Africa, and this encouraged him to turn south. As the party was heading into entirely unknown territory, Dias was effectively betting his men's lives on the course change. Yet, in February, 1488, land was sighted.

The Southern Tip of Africa

Landfall was a few hundred miles east from the Cape, but there was little time to explore as tribesmen attacked with stones. Eventually, one of Dias's men killed a tribesman, after which resistance ceased. Though Dias wanted to push on along the coastline, their food was running out, and the threat of mutiny hung in the air. Eventually, an agreement was reached that a maximum three more days of sailing would be allowed. This brought them to Kwaaihoek in the Eastern Cape, which proved to be the eastern extent of their travels.



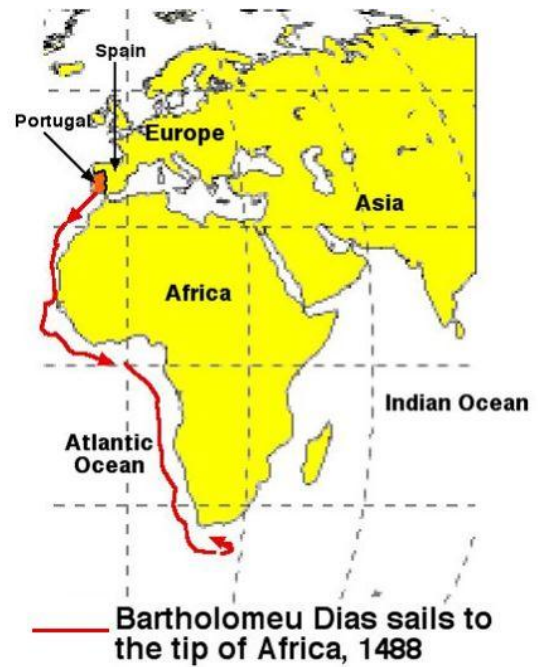
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During the return journey, Dias saw the extreme southernmost tip of Africa. He named it the Cape of Storms. He chose the name for the treacherous mixture of strong currents and frequent storms that combined in the area. Upon arriving home, large crowds greeted the explorers when they got to Lisbon.

Aftermath

Despite Dias's achievements, the king was unhappy that he had not managed to find Pêro da Covilhã, a secret agent stationed in India. He commanded that the cape the explorer had named should instead be referred to as the Cape of Good Hope. Dias himself, now out of favor, lived for a while in the Portuguese trading center of Guinea. After this, the new king, Manuel I, sent him to oversee the shipbuilding for [Vasco da Gama's](#) expedition. Dias accompanied da Gama as far as Cape Verde, and then returned to Guinea.

After the success of da Gama's voyage, Manuel assembled a large fleet and sent it to India under the command of Pedro Álvares Cabral. Dias himself was put in charge of four ships, which traveled first to Brazil, reaching it in March 1500. From there, a course was set for South Africa and then India. Dias, however, was never to see the land he had tried for so long to reach. In May, as the ships rounded the Cape, four of the 13 ships were sunk in a storm, with Dias among those who drowned.



Zheng He



- **Occupation:** Explorer and Fleet Commander
- **Born:** 1371 in Yunnan Province, China
- **Died:** 1433
- **Best known for:** Treasure Ship voyages to India

Biography:

Zheng He (1371 - 1433) was a great [Chinese](#) explorer and fleet commander. He went on seven major expeditions to explore the world for the Chinese emperor and to establish Chinese trade in new areas.

Zheng He's Childhood

When Zheng He was born his given name was Ma He. He was born in the Yunnan Province in 1371. His father and grandfather were Muslim leaders of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. However, when the [Ming Dynasty](#) took over, Chinese soldiers captured Ma He and took him as a slave to one of the Emperor's sons, Prince Zhu Di.

Ma He served the prince well and rose in the ranks of the servants. Soon he was one of the prince's closest advisors. He earned honor and the prince awarded him by changing his name to Zheng He. Later the prince became the Emperor of China as the Yongle Emperor.

Chief Envoy

The Yongle Emperor wanted to show the rest of the world the glory and power of the Chinese Empire. He also wanted to establish trade and relations with other peoples of the world. He named Zheng He Chief Envoy and instructed him to put together a fleet and explore the world.

Fleet of Treasure Ships

Zheng He commanded a large fleet of ships. His first voyage is estimated to have had over 200 total ships and nearly 28,000 men. Some of the ships were large treasure ships estimated to be over 400 feet long and 170 feet wide. That's longer than a football field! They had ships to carry treasure, ships to carry horses and troops, and even special ships to carry fresh water. Certainly the civilizations that

Zheng He visited were amazed at the power and strength of the Chinese Empire when this fleet arrived.

The First Mission

Zheng He's first voyage lasted from 1405 to 1407. He traveled all the way to Calicut, India visiting many towns and ports along the way. They traded and made diplomatic relations at the places they visited. They also battled pirates and even captured one famous pirate leader and brought him back to China with them.



Giraffe brought back to the Emperor

Six More Missions

Zheng He would continue to sail on additional missions over the rest of his life. He traveled to many far away places, going all the way to the African coast and establishing trade relations with over 25 countries. He brought back all sorts of interesting items including animals such a [giraffe](#) and camels. He also brought back diplomats from various countries to meet with the Chinese Emperor.

It is believed that he died during the seventh and final treasure mission.

Fun Facts about Zheng He

- Another translation of his name is Cheng Ho. You will often see him referred to as Cheng Ho. He also went by the name of San Bao (which means Three Jewels) while serving the prince.
- The ships that Zheng He sailed were called "junks". They were much wider and larger than the ships used by the Europeans in their explorations.
- It is thought that some of Zheng He's ships may have rounded Africa at the Cape of Good Hope. They may also have visited [Australia](#).
- He served three different emperors: his first six missions were under the Yongle Emperor, he was a military commander under the Hongxi Emperor, and made his final mission under the Xuande Emperor.