

Christopher Columbus

Early life



Christopher Columbus was born in 1451 in Genoa, Italy. His father wanted him to take over the family wool weaving business but he wanted to be a sailor. He began working on ships when he was a teenager.

He moved to Portugal and worked as a mapmaker with his brother. He got married and had a son.

Where was Christopher Columbus born?

How old was he when he began working on ships?

What job did he do in Portugal?



Before the first voyage



Image from: Getty Images/Julio donoso

Christopher Columbus wanted to be rich and famous. He knew he could make money by selling gold, silk and spices from India, China and Japan. These three countries were called the Indies.

He thought he could find a quicker way to the Indies. Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain wanted some of this money too. They paid for his first voyage.

Why did Christopher Columbus want to go to the Indies?

How did he think he could make money?

Who paid for his voyage?



The first voyage



It took a long time to prepare for the voyage. Christopher Columbus set sail in August 1492 when he was 41 years old. He took three ships called the *Niña*, *Pinta* and *Santa Maria*. They sailed west across the Atlantic Ocean. The journey took more than two months.

Christopher Columbus thought he had arrived in the Indies but he was really in the Americas. He took back some things that no one in Europe had seen before, such as pineapples and tobacco.

Where did Columbus land?

What were the names of his ships?

What did he take back to Europe?



Later life



Christopher Columbus became rich and was a hero. He was made the leader of the new lands he had found. He went on three more voyages to the Americas and brought back some more new things, such as parrots, corn and chocolate

He took Christian priests to talk to the people who already lived in the Americas. These people were called the Taíno. He also brought back some of the Taíno to sell as slaves. This did not make him very popular. He died in 1506.

Was Christopher Columbus rich and famous after his first voyage?

How many voyages to the Americas did Christopher Columbus make?

Why was he unpopular at the end of his life?



Impact



Image from: Getty Images/Wolfgang Kaehler

Christopher Columbus' voyages had a huge impact on the rest of the world. He found a way from Europe to the Americas, which became known as the New World. He was called 'The Discoverer of the New World' even though the Vikings and the Taíno had been there before him.

He started a time of exploration that lasted for centuries. Many Europeans went to live in the Americas. Many of the people living in Central and South America today would not live there without Christopher Columbus making that first voyage.

What was Christopher Columbus' nickname?

Why is this nickname not true?

Why was Christopher Columbus a significant explorer?

