

THE BEGINNINGS OF OUR GLOBAL AGE: EUROPE, AFRICA, AND ASIA

Biography

Although Ferdinand Magellan was born in Portugal, on his most famous voyage he sailed for the king of Spain. On this journey, Magellan led the first expedition to successfully circumnavigate, or sail completely around, the world. ♦ *As you read, think about why people decided to become explorers. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521)

Ferdinand Magellan went to sea for the first time in 1505. He sailed with an illustrious commander named Francisco de Almeida. Their mission was to defeat Muslim sea power in the Indian Ocean and seize control of the trade. For the next several years, Magellan fought in naval battles off the coasts of East Africa and India. In 1511, Magellan took part in the great victory of the Portuguese at Malacca, which gave them control of the Spice Islands in present-day Indonesia.

Magellan returned to Portugal the next year. He wanted to prove that the Spice Islands could be reached by sailing west from Europe. He asked the king for a fleet to take on this journey. By 1516, however, Magellan had fallen out of favor with the Portuguese king. The king denied his request.

Magellan renounced his Portuguese citizenship and turned to Spain. His timing was excellent. According to the Line of Demarcation of 1494, Spain had the right to trade in and explore areas west of the line. Portugal had rights to everything east of the line. By sailing west all the way to the Spice Islands, Magellan could prove that this valuable trading area was on the Spanish, not the

Portuguese, side of the Line of Demarcation. He presented his plan to King Charles I of Spain, who granted his request for ships and men.

Magellan's plan was to sail across the Atlantic, then down the coast of South America. Like many others, he believed there was a strait, or water passageway, around South America that led to the "Sea of the South," which today we call the Pacific Ocean.

The expedition left Spain on September 20, 1519. After months of difficult sailing, in late 1520 Magellan finally reached the passageway, named the Straits of Magellan in his honor.

After emerging in the Pacific, Magellan's ships sailed north, then east. His crew became very unhappy, however, when the food and water supplies on board ran out. They finally landed at the island of Guam, where they found fresh supplies.

This was the expedition's last stroke of good luck. Within two months, Magellan was killed in a fight with natives in the Philippines. Even though Magellan died before finishing the voyage, he is credited with being the leader of the first European expedition to sail around the world.



Ferdinand Magellan

Questions to Think About

1. What happened by 1516 that changed Magellan's life?
2. What was Magellan's goal on his last expedition?
3. **Draw Inferences** What do you think is significant about Magellan's expedition? In what ways did his voyage change the world?