

# History: the four voyages of christopher columbus critical thinking

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



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## **Introduction**

Christopher Columbus is the most prominent explorer. He was born in Italy in the year of 1451. Christopher discovered the sea at fourteen and experienced shipwreck at fifteen. Columbus established his family in Portugal with a wealthy woman who later passed on in 1480 immediately after their first son Diego. Columbus later on took his son to Spain. Columbus was one of the knowledgeable men who shared in the theory that the world was round. Columbus voyages were influenced by the prevailing contests over the world map. Most of the contestants over the map of the earth made erroneous conclusions over the locations of various places. For example, Marco Polo erroneously established Japan to be about 2, 400 (km) to the east of China. Ptolemy, on the other hand, underestimated the circumference of the earth and overestimated the size of Eurasian landmass. Columbus desired to reach the land by sailing to the west. The Christians from the West were denied access to the East by the Muslims who controlled

the land routes to the Orient. Moreover, the desert heat, sandstorms and the bandits together with other hazard made the only alternate land route, Europe, risky and expensive. The only other possible route to the East was by the sea that most elite men could not correctly predict.

## **The first voyage**

Columbus beseeched Portuguese king and Spanish monarchs to allow him explore possible trade routes leading to the west. They denied him permission because they were in the process of conquering the Muslim controlled territories in the late 13th century. Spanish Christian kingdoms of Castile and Aragon were successful in their conquests. These two kingdoms merged in 1479 because of intermarriage between the two kingdoms. After being denied chance many times, Columbus decided to relocate his enterprise to France. King Ferdinand realized Columbus intentions and reconsidered his requests. On top of keeping his enterprise in Spain, Columbus also promised to pay him gold, spices and silk from his dealings. He also promised to spread Christianity and champion expedition to China. The royal family did not finance the expedition to China. Instead it was financed by seven rich Genovese bankers who managed the funds of Lorenzo di Pier Francesco de Medici. The ships used in the expedition were built by the Pinzon family from Palos. The Pinzons also owned an eighth share of the expedition worth.

The first voyage was made by a group of ninety men all of whom came from Palos Spain. The number of explorers was limited because the ships used were comparatively smaller in capacity. Three ships were used: the Santa

Maria that transported forty men with Columbus as the captain, the Pinta that had twenty six men aboard with Vicente Yanez and the Nina that transported twenty four men with Martin Alonzo Pinzon as the captain. This crew discovered the first land on October the same year, thirty-three days after they left Canary Islands, and named it San Salvador. They then advanced to Cuba that was named Juana by Columbus. They also discovered Espanola, now called Hispaniola that is shared by the Dominican Republic of Haiti.

En route to their destination, Martin Pinzon defied Columbus orders and they fall out. As a captain of the ship Nina, he parted ways with the rest of the crew off the Cuban coast and headed for the island of Osabeque. Martin became the first to discover Haiti where he earned his name the honor of the River of Martin Alonso, where he first landed. He was later joined on January 6, 1493 by the rest of the crew under Columbus authority. Columbus later forced Martin to give back the slaves he captured from Haiti. Columbus crew travelled at the rate of 150 miles per day. Columbus extensively engaged his extinct, experience, navigational instruments, intuition, guesswork and experience to conduct the voyage.

## **The second voyage**

After the end of a successful first voyage except for a few differences with the crew members and the wreckage of Santa Maria, the group, except for thirty-nine members who remained in Haiti, made it safely back to Spain. Columbus prepared the second voyage that involved more men having been successful in the first. The second voyage begun on September 25, 1493 and

involved seventeen vessels with over 1, 200 men. It was referred to as the Grand Fleet. The aim of the second voyage was to establish a Spanish colony in the new lands. They discovered wealth in the new lands in their first voyage that was used as a test voyage to determine the possibility of settlement away from Spain.

### **The Third voyage**

After third dreadful experience on the second voyage, Columbus reduced the number of fleet on the third voyage made on May 30, 1498. The number of ships involved was six. He reached Canary Islands on June from where he left on the 19th. The group divided itself into two: the first subgroup was to sail to Hispaniola to take the supplies to their earlier colonists and the other three to explore further south. The latter group experienced huddles with the doldrums in the equatorial region of Africa. They later arrived in West Indies from where they discovered Trinidad, named because it composed of three hills. They also became the first Europeans to discover the continent of South America. This crew included women colonialists who were recruited in the ratio of one woman in every ten people.

The experience of Columbus gained in these voyages modified his interpretation of the shape of the earth to a pear like shape. He had discovered the bulge at the equator. He regarded this bulge as “ Terrestrial Paradise” also known as the Garden of Eden under the guard of God.

Columbus headed back to Santo Domingo, Hispaniola, on August 19, 1498 where his continued rule earned him hostility with the natives. The dispute between Columbus administration and the locals was resolved by Francisco

de Bobadilla who was sent by King Ferdinand as a commissioner. Bobadilla sent Columbus and some of his men back to Spain.

## **The fourth voyage**

The fourth voyage was to take Columbus to the Americas and was made in 1502. From his past four voyages, Columbus became confident and efficient in his voyages. He could cover around 3, 500 miles within three weeks. He used Santo Domingo as on his route to the Americas. He arrived on June 29, 1502. However, he was not welcome. His fleet of five ships was denied entry and resort. Apart from these challenges, more challenges faced him on his way to the Americas. These included oily water upwelling from the southeast, abnormal tide, arthritis, low cirrus clouds, heaviness in air and a looming hurricane.

He lost over five hundred men, all the ships except one and the gold fortunes he had collected. He later on wrote a journal expressing his frustration with the authority of Bobadilla that denied him residence in Santo Domingo on his way to Americas.

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