

# Columbus the jerk



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Most people know that Christopher Columbus discovered America, but are probably unaware of all the destruction that he caused in doing so.

Columbus had an urge to sail west to the Indies where he ended up finding North America and did not even realize it. In fact, he made four voyages, mainly to the Caribbean and part of the north coast of South America and was sure it had to be the Indies. He was looking for gold and spices that he had read about, but was in the wrong place. His exploration brought so many bad things to people. Enough reason to consider Columbus a jerk. Other than discovering a route that permanently linked the shores of the Atlantic, there was nothing good that came from any of Columbus' voyages. He was deceitful and merciless, stopping at nothing to obtain what he wanted. When Columbus reported to Spain, he exaggerated about the amount of gold that was there, reporting that there was an abundance of gold when there was really very little gold, only scarce amounts in riverbeds. The largest amount of gold he received was on his first arrival and was an accumulation of many years. The natives of the land, the Arawaks, were responsible for collecting a certain amount of gold. If they did not collect enough gold, they were killed. These killings led to more and more. They died from overwork and from new European diseases. They killed themselves. And they took pains to avoid having children. Life was not fit to live, and they stopped living. Columbus was also big in slavery and slave trade. Slavery was going on when he left Spain, but he decided that the Arawaks could be used for trade with other goods. He tried to set up a trade of slaves for cattle, but that wasn't approved. His men rounded up many of the Arawaks to transport as slaves to Spain, since Columbus had to send something in replacement of all the nonexistent gold. He and his crew basically enslaved this whole race of

people, and from the time he first came upon them in 1492 through the year 1542, they had been exterminated. His intent was to go out and find the gold and spices which he would then bring back to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. He had no idea he would come upon a whole race of people in his search for the Indies. Columbus was also a bit delusional, because he believed that he was saving the souls of the natives and granting them eternal life by taking them out of their environment and shipping them back to Spain. This makes a good case for calling Columbus a jerk, because he did knowingly participate in slavery and kill thousands of people. However, I believe Columbus was just a product of his times. His decision to sail west and his discovery of America is a major part of history that should be recognized, whether he is viewed as a jerk or not. More than anything, it seems like he was just ignorant. He thought America was the Indies, he thought there was more gold to be found than there was, and he thought sailing west would be faster than sailing east. In conclusion, Columbus was a visionary and well-intentioned. He was also a jerk for his executions of thousands of natives and slaves. In the end, whether he was truly a good person or jerk is in the eye of the beholder. For me, I think that regardless of the times, to knowingly decimate thousands of people makes him a jerk.