

The indian ocean trade network 100 – 1500 essay sample

[Parts of the World](#), [Africa](#)



The Indian Ocean Trade spread diseases and created more feuds, but mostly, it linked cultures, spread new religions, enhanced trading skills, and increased economic growth in several different regions of the world. Before the Indian Ocean Trade, most regions knew nothing of their neighboring civilizations. This trade network united the world. Because of it, just about all civilizations are conversant with each other.

The Indian Ocean Trade began with small trading settlements around 800 A. D., and ended in the 1500's when Portugal invaded and tried to run the trade for its own profit. As trade intensified between Africa and Asia, powerful city-states flourished along the eastern coast of Africa. These city-states traded with inland kingdoms like Great Zimbabwe to obtain gold, ivory, and iron. These materials were then sold to places like India, Southeast Asia, and China via the Indian Ocean Trade, and could be sold at a profit because they were scarce in Asian countries. At the same time, the East African city-states were buying items from Asia. Many residents of the city-states were willing to pay high prices for cotton, silk, and porcelain objects. These items were expensive because they were not available in Africa at the time. The city-states were easy to reach from Asia by ship because of the favorable wind and ocean currents. And merchants enjoyed the fine restaurants, lodging, and entertainment offered by the port cities.

A Portuguese captain Vasco da Gama came upon the bustling port cities of Sofala, Kilwa, Mombasa, and Malindi as he sailed up the eastern coast of Africa in 1498. His mission was to find a route to Asia by sailing from Portugal, around Africa, then on to India. European countries had been

buying Asian goods for years through other, more difficult routes. Vasco da Gama did eventually reach India. In 1499, he returned to Portugal and told the king and queen, who had sponsored his voyage, everything that he'd seen, including the shiploads gold, ivory, porcelain, silk, and cotton being bought and sold in the port cities along the eastern coast of Africa.

The Portuguese then started trading with the Indians and other regions that had been unknown to them. While trading, the Portuguese wanted to gain control over the entire Indian Ocean trade. They captured the port cities, then wrecked, looted, and burned them to the ground, killing the residents of the cities. This was one of the feuds that had been created during the time. Diseases were brought by the Portuguese sailors and merchants, and were spread throughout the region of the Indian Ocean.

However, the Portuguese didn't just bring diseases. And the Portuguese weren't the only people who traded through the Indian Ocean Trade. As people from other countries traded as well, they brought their culture, religions, and other values and beliefs that fascinated the people who lived along the Indian Ocean regions. Thus, the trade was a way of spreading religions and cultures, and binding civilizations together. Also, by trading sundry goods and merchandise, the economies of the trading countries grew and they became experts at trading.