

Ferdinand magellan
was born about 1480
in sabrosa o



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f a noble Portuguese family. His parents, who were members of nobility, died when he was about 10 years old. At the age of 12, Magellan became a page to Queen Leonor at the royal court. Such a position commonly served as a means of education for sons of the Portuguese nobility.

At the court, Magellan learned about the voyages of such explorers as Christopher Columbus of Italy and Vasco da Gama of Portugal. He also learned the fundamentals of navigation. In 1496, Magellan was promoted to rank of squire and became a clerk in the marine department. There, he helped outfit ships for trade along the west coast of Africa.

Magellan first went into sea in 1505, when he sailed to India with the fleet of Francisco Almeida, Portugal's first ruler to that country. In 1506, Magellan went on an expedition sent by Almeida to the east coast of Africa to strengthen Portuguese bases there. The next year, he returned to India, where he participated in trade and in several naval battles against Turkish fleets.

In 1509, Magellan sailed with a Portuguese fleet to Malaka, a commercial center in what is now Malaysia. The Malays attacked the Portuguese who went to shore, and Magellan helped rescue his comrades. In 1511, he took part in an expedition that conquered Malaka. After this victory, a Portuguese fleet sailed farther to the Spice Islands which were called the Molucca Islands. Portugal claimed the islands at this time. Magellan's close personal friend Francisco Serrano went along on the voyage to the Spice Islands and

wrote to Magellan, describing the route and the island of Ternate. Serrao's letters helped establish in Magellan's mind the location of the Spice Islands, which later became the destination of his great voyage.

Magellan returned to Portugal in 1513. He then joined a military expedition to Morocco. On this expedition, Magellan would suffer a wound that would make him limp for the rest of his life.

After returning to Portugal from Morocco, Magellan sought the support of King Manuel I for a voyage to the Spice Islands. The best maps available had convinced Magellan that he could reach the Spice Islands by sailing south of South America. Magellan believed such a route would be shorter than the eastward voyage around the southern tip of Africa and across the Indian Ocean. However, Manuel disliked Magellan and refused to support the proposed voyage.

Magellan then studied astronomy and navigation for about two years in Porto in northern Portugal. In Porto, he met Ruy Faleiro, an astronomer and a geographer who strongly influenced his ideas. Magellan and Faleiro concluded from their studies that the Spice Islands lay in the territory that had been awarded to Spain in 1494. Therefore, Magellan decided to seek support for his plans from the king of Spain.

In 1517, Magellan went to Spain. There, he presented his proposal for visiting <https://assignbuster.com/ferdinand-magellan-was-born-about-1480-in-sabrosa-o/>

the Spice Islands as a part of a westward circumnavigation of the earth. The next year, Magellan convinced Charles 1 of Spain to support such a voyage. The king promised Magellan a fifth of the profits from the voyage to the Spice Islands, plus a salary.

Preparations for the expedition took more than a year. The Spaniards became suspicious of Magellan, partly because he recruited many Portuguese sailors. As a result, the king forced Magellan to replace most of the Portuguese with Spanish crewmen.

On September 20, 1519, Magellan set sail from Sanlúcar de Barrameda in southern Spain. Magellan commanded a total of 241 men and a fleet of five ships, the Concepcion, San Antonio, Santiago, Trinidad, and Victoria. Dissatisfaction among the crewmen plagued from the beginning, and hostility among the Spaniards toward Magellan grew rapidly. About a month after the voyage began, the Spanish captain of San Antonio challenged Magellan's authority, and Magellan had the captain arrested.

The fleet sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to the coast of Brazil. The ships then followed the South American coast to the bay where Rio de Janeiro now stands. They remained there for two weeks and then sailed south in search of passage to the Pacific Ocean. However, the ships could not find a passage before the end of summer in the Southern Hemisphere. In late March 1520,

Magellan's fleet anchored for the winter at Puerto San Julian in what is now southern Argentina.

During the winter, a storm destroyed the Santiago. In addition, a mutiny broke out shortly after the men set up their winter quarters. Magellan and loyal crew members put down the mutiny and executed the leader. They also marooned two other mutineers when the fleet sailed again.

Magellan and his crew resumed their voyage on October 18, 1520. Three days later, they discovered the passage to the Pacific which was a passage known ever since as the Strait of Magellan. As the fleet sailed through the strait, the crew of San Antonio mutinied and returned to Spain. On November 28, the three remaining ships sailed out of the strait and into the ocean. Magellan named the ocean the Pacific, which means peaceful, because it appeared calm compared with the stormy Atlantic.

Sailing across the Pacific involved great hardship for Magellan and his crew. They were the first Europeans ever to sail across the Pacific Ocean, and it was far larger than anyone had imagined. They sailed for 98 days without seeing any land except two uninhabited islands. Their food gave out and their water supply became contaminated. They ate rats, ox hides, and sawdust to avoid starvation. Most of the crew suffered from scurvy, a disease caused by the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables. Nineteen men died before the fleet reached Guam on March 6, 1521.

Conflicts with the people of Guam and the nearby island of Rota prevented Magellan from fully resupplying his ships. But the crew seized enough food and water to continue on to the Philippines.

Magellan and his crew remained in the Philippines for several weeks, and close relations developed between them and the islanders. Magellan took special pride in converting many of the people to Christianity. Unfortunately, however, he involved himself in rivalries among the people. On April 27, 1521, Magellan was killed when he took part in a battle between rival Filipino groups on the island of Mactan.

After the battle on Mactan, only about 110 of the original crew members remained. Therefore, the men abandoned Conception, and the two remaining vessels sailed southward to the Spice Islands. There, the ships were loaded with spices. The leaders of the fleet then decide that the two ships should make separate return voyages.

The Trinidad, under the command of Gonzalo Gomez de Espinosa, tried to sail eastward across the Pacific to the Isthmus of Panama. Bad weather and disease disrupted the voyage, and more than half the crew of the Trinidad died. The surviving members of the crew were forced to return to the Spice Islands, where the Portuguese imprisoned them.