

Columbus Day is celebrated in the United States to honor Christopher Columbus's first voyage to America in 1492.



Columbus is the explorer who discovered America in that year.



Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy in 1451 to Domenico Columbo, a wool weaver.

He worked for his Father until he was 22 then set out to follow his own dream to become a sea captain. Many of his fellow Genoese had prospered in Lisbon under the Portuguese flag as Captains of sailing ships and he longed to join their ranks.


It was to this end that Columbus began to educate himself learning to read and speak Portuguese, Castilian and Latin. He read many geography books, and studied the bible and the writings of Marco Polo, gathering all the information he could about the world. He particularly studied, Pierre d'Ailly's "Imago Mundi," or picture of the world. He became a chart maker himself and because of these studies became convinced that the world was spherical, round instead of flat. This belief later became the basis for his quest of finding a shorter route to Asia.

Asia offered many goods Europeans craved but traveling East to get them was difficult and dangerous. However, it was with these countries of the EAST, India, China, Japan, and the East Indies, that Europeans longed to trade in greater volume. It was for this reason that a sea route around the tip of Africa to the East Indies and Asia was sought. Columbus was just one of many, explorers and tradesmen trying to find such a route.

Portugal deemed, "The greatest seafaring nation in the world," due in large measure to the discoveries, exploits and sponsorship of its prince, nicknamed "Henry the Navigator," seemed the most likely nation to support Columbus's dream of finding that shorter route to the EAST. So, it was no surprise that later, he would chose to approach Portugal's King John II for his support of his expedition.

In 1479 Columbus married Dona Felipa Perestrello, whose father had been one of Prince Henry The Navigator's captains. His wife's social rank opened doors for Columbus. And using his Father in laws collection of charts and documents he gained more knowledge of Portuguese discoveries and plans. In 1481 he entered the service of King John II of Portugal and voyaged to the Gold Coast of Africa.



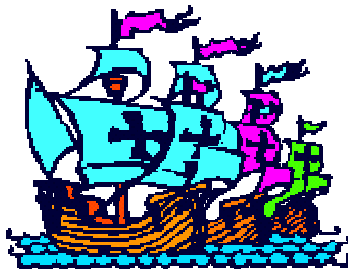
Columbus  **wanted to discover the much sought for route to the East that would open up a lucrative trade. He believed there was a better way to find it then traveling around the tip of Africa. He believed by sailing west 3000**

miles across the Atlantic Ocean that he would come full circle and end up in Asia without having to go south and east. He thought he would sail right into these countries never dreaming he would land on a whole new continent and lay claim to a whole new world.

In 1484 Columbus applied for ships and men from King John II of Portugal. He was refused and then his proposal was reconsidered. However, the final rejection of his proposal came when Bartholomew Diaz discovered the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. He had found an eastern sea route to India. The Portuguese were no longer interested in an unproven western route. Columbus was denied once again and returned to Spain.

He finally convinced the King and Queen of Spain to finance him and under the Spanish flag from Palos, Harbor in Spain with three ships the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria set sail at dawn on August 3, 1492.

However problems with the Nina and the Pinta necessitated a one month delay in the Canary Islands. He then set sail again on September 3, 1492 and thirty-three days later at 2:00 a.m. on **October 12, 1492, Rodrigo de Triana, a seaman aboard the *Pinta*, spotted land.**



Columbus actually had landed among the Bahama Islands on an island today called Watling Island. but the inhabitants then called Guanahani Island. Columbus named this land San Salvador, claiming it in the name of Spain. This NEW World would lead to the settlement by Europeans of the continents of North and South America.

