

# Tudor Explorers

The golden age of exploration began in the 15th century and lasted more than 200 years. During the reign of Elizabeth 1, many sailors went in search of unknown lands. There were two main reasons: one was adventure and the other was money.

## Early Explorers

Did you know, Portugal and Spain led the way, exploring the coasts of Africa, Asia and the 'New World' of the Americas? English exploration began in the reign of Henry VII.



## John Cabot

In 1497 Cabot sailed west from Bristol, on his ship, the **Matthew**, hoping to find a shorter route to Asia. After a month, he discovered an unknown land - he called it 'new found land', today still known as **Newfoundland** in Canada.



Arrow points from the UK to Newfoundland



## Sir Walter Raleigh (1554-1618)

Did you know that, Sir Walter Raleigh was born in 1554 in He was also a poet and a fearless soldier.



Interestingly, he led many expeditions to America and introduced tobacco and the potato into England.

## **FUN FACTS!**

Historians widely believe that, he spread his cloak in front of Queen Elizabeth so that she did not have to stand in a puddle. However, there is no evidence to support this.

Elizabeth didn't like her courtiers to fall in love with anyone except her. Sir Walter lost her friendship after he fell in love and married one of Elizabeth's maids of honour. He was briefly sent to the Tower of London.

## **Sir Francis Drake (1540-1596)**

You may be surprised to learn that, Sir Francis Drake was born in 1540 in Tavistock, Devon, England? He was an apprentice on a small trading ship which was left to him when the master died. However, he became famous as a pirate and explorer.

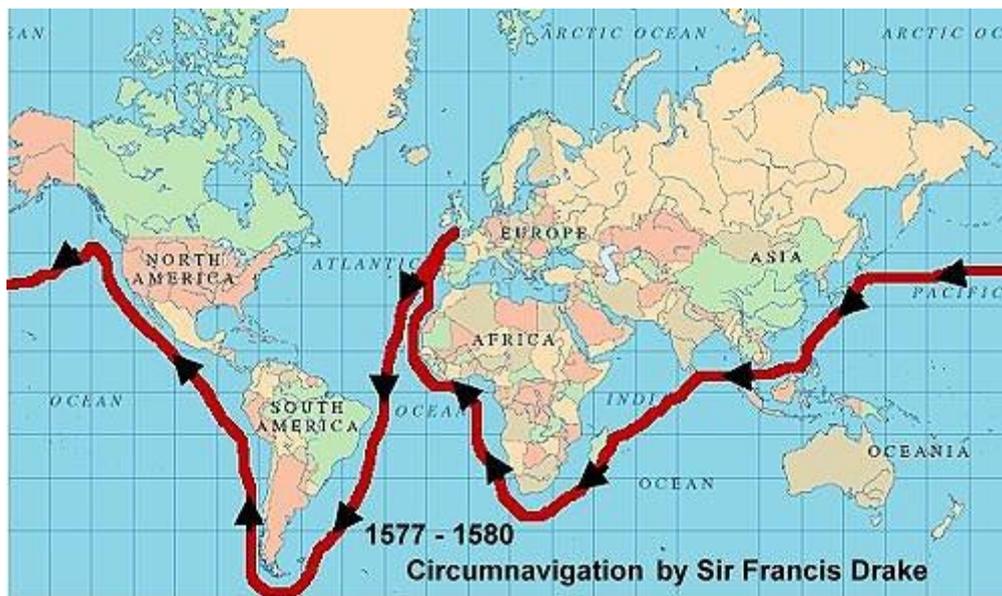


Evidence suggests, Drake: who was an incredibly bold and brilliant sailor, captured more than his fair share of Spanish ships.

Interestingly, his pirate raids on Spanish ships off the coast of America were strongly encouraged by Queen Elizabeth I. Drake's successful battles against the Spanish helped England become a major sea power.

Famously, **Drake was the first Englishman to sail around the world**, which he did (1577 - 1580) in his ship *The Golden Hinde*. Drake started

his famous **circumnavigation** of the world from Plymouth, England, November 15, 1577, passed through the Strait of Magellan (southern tip of South America) into the Pacific, coasted up the western shores of the Americas, crossed to Asia and the Philippines, and finally returned to Britain on September 26, 1580.



Drake's route around the world

On the way round the world, Drake landed in what is now California, naming it **Nova Albion** (New England) and claiming it for his queen.

Drake returned from his voyage with his ship packed full of spices from the Indies, and plundered Spanish silver and treasure.

### Knighthed

Interestingly, Drake was **knighthed** by Queen Elizabeth I for his courage, and for the treasures he brought back with him. He brought back enough treasure to pay off the entire national debt!

### Spanish Armada

In 1587, Elizabeth I put him in command of an expedition to attack a Spanish fleet which was getting ready to attack England. Drake sailed right in to **Cadiz harbour** and wrecked the ships there, before going on to capture another hundred Spanish ships elsewhere. It was said he'd 'singed the king of Spain's beard'. By 1588, he was Vice-Admiral of the fleet which defeated the **Spanish Armada**.



A painting of the Spanish Armada.

As a sailor, adventurer, navigator, politician, engineer and landowner, he was as famous in his own lifetime as David Beckham is today. He was one of the most famous men in Elizabethan times.



## John Hawkins

Hawkins was a cousin of Drake. He was the first Englishman to trade in slaves. He bought slaves in West **Africa** and sold them to the Spanish colonies in the **West Indies**, often raiding Spanish ships as he went.

In conclusion, the Tudor era was the golden age of exploration. Queen Elizabeth I was the main driving force in providing these explorers with the financial resources and incentives to explore the world in search of treasure, wealth, fame and fortune.