

# Ferdinand Magellan and the circumnavigation of the world

The Spanish wanted to **establish trade routes** to the East and claim **territory** there, especially the Moluccas (Spice Islands)

Magellan believed he could reach the Moluccas by sailing west round the southern tip of America. Charles V of Spain agreed to finance the scheme.

The fleet crossed the Atlantic, then sailed to Brazil and down the east coast of South America.

However, Magellan **underestimated** the length of the voyage, and didn't take enough food and supplies.

Magellan left Spain in September 1519 with 260 men aboard five ships. They carried with them plenty of trading goods.

Yet Magellan encountered many **problems**. The weather was so bad he had to land for the winter, and some of his men rebelled due to the terrible conditions. He had to suppress mutiny by executing the leaders. One of his ships (*Santiago*) was also wrecked

The remaining ships found a route through the Pacific through a narrow sea passage now called the Straits of Magellan.

The crew saw fires that natives had lit, so named the area **Tierra del Fuego** (land of fire). Yet this discovery was vital - it proved to Magellan that there was another way to the East, to the south of the Americas



After stopping at the Marshall islands, Magellan continued on to the Philippines. However Magellan became involved in a quarrel between local chiefs. He and 40 of his men were **killed**

Conditions got even worse for the crew. The *San Antonio's* crew **deserted**, sailing away with most of the fleet's food. 20 men on the other ships starved to death as they crossed the Pacific

A captain called Sebastian del Cano took command of the 115 survivors. Without enough men, he was forced to **abandon** one ship, the *Concepcion*

The other ships sailed on, and reached the Moluccas in November 1521, bringing back the spices they had set out for.

The *Vittoria* went West. It crossed Portuguese trade routes in the Indian Ocean and rounded the southern cape of Africa. It managed to avoid capture, and reached Spain in 1522, having sailed round the globe in three years

The ships took two different routes back to Spain, to improve the chances of getting some of the cargo home. The *Trinidad* went East, but was seized by the Portuguese