

European expansion around the world

Chronology of Portuguese and other European powers' expansion
15th to 19th Centuries

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European expansion began in the 15th century, led by Portugal, towards the Atlantic Ocean and North Africa. Between 1415 and 1427 the Portuguese conquered Ceuta and discovered Porto Santo, Madeira and the Azores. The Spanish arrived on the American continent at the end of the 15th century, in 1492.

In 1498, the Portuguese landed in Calicut, India. During the 16th century, the Portuguese occupied different points on the Asian coastline, including in China and Japan. The Spanish occupied the vice-royalties of Mexico and Peru and by the middle of the century they were established in the Philippines. The long distance routes soon included the Pacific Ocean, and eventually the first world circumnavigation was completed in 1522.

The success of these voyages and the trade of goods quickly attracted other European powers such as France, who expanded into America, and the English and the Dutch (mainly through the VOC), who occupied territory in Asia. From the 17th century the Danish arrived in Asia and the Swedish in North America.

The emergence of large European trading companies at this stage resulted in the global repositioning of these European powers during the following century. Notable developments of this period included the implementation of the 'Canton System' in 1757, whereby China controlled trade with the outside world by restricting all commerce to the southern port of Canton (now Guangzhou). This was known in Chinese as the "Single port commerce system".

The gradual empowerment of the United States of America occurred mainly from 1783, leading to the independence of several Central and South American colonies shortly afterwards.

1415	The Portuguese conquer Ceuta, North Africa
1418	The Portuguese discover the island of Porto Santo
1419	The Portuguese discover the island of Madeira
1427	The Portuguese discover the central and eastern group of the Azores archipelago
1434	Portuguese Gil Eanes rounds Cape Bojador, West Africa
1436-1437	Papal Bull recognises the Castilian dominion of the Canary Islands, Africa
1452	The Portuguese discover the western group of the Azores archipelago
1455	The Portuguese build the factory house of Arguim, Maurítânia
1460	The Portuguese discover the Cape Verde islands
1470-1473	The Portuguese discover the islands of SãoTomé, Príncipe and Ana Bom in the Gulf of Guiné
1471-1472	Possible discovery of Newfoundland, Canada, by the Portuguese João Vaz Corte-Real and Alvaro Martins Homem
1482	The Portuguese founded the São Jorge da Mina (Elmina) factory house in Ghana
1484-1486	The Portuguese founded a factory house at Benin, West Africa
1487	Portuguese Bartolomeu Dias rounds the Cape of Good Hope
1491-1494	Portuguese exploration to North America by Pêro de Barcelos and João Labrador
1492	Christopher Columbus lands on the American continent in the service of Spain
1494	Portugal and Spain sign the Treaty of Tordesillas
1498	Portuguese Vasco da Gama arrives at Calicut, India
1500	Portuguese Pedro Álvares Cabral officially arrives in Brazil
1502	The Portuguese discover Santa Helena island, in the South Atlantic Ocean
1503	The French start to trade in Brazil
1505	The Portuguese land at Quíloa, Tanzania and Mombassa and Kenya

1506	The Portuguese build a fortress at Socorotá, Yemen
1507	Portuguese Afonso de Albuquerque conquers Ormuz, Iran and arrives at Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman
1508	The Portuguese send a first expedition to Malaca in Malasia; Spanish Ponce de León founded the city of São Jõao in Porto Rico
1509	The Portuguese arrive at Sumatra, Indonesia and Portuguese conquer Diu, Índia
1510	Portuguese Afonso de Albuquerque conquers Goa, Índia
1511	Portuguese Afonso de Albuquerque conquers Malaca, Malasia and Portuguese travel up to the Molucas, Indonesia and the Kingdom of Pegu in Burma (Myanmar). The presumed arrival of the Portuguese in Timor
1513	The Portuguese establish the first direct contacts with China; Spanish Ponce de León lands in Florida, North America; Spanish Vasco Núñez de Balboa discovers the Pacific Ocean
1517	Portuguese Tomé Pires arrives at Canton, China, as ambassador of the King of Portugal
1518	The Portuguese build a fortress in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)
1519	Portuguese Fernão de Magalhães starts the first circumnavigation of the globe in the service of Spain; Spanish Hernán Cortés arrives at the Yucutan in Mexico: first contact with the Aztecs; Spanish founded Havana, Cuba and the City of Panama in Panama
1520	Portuguese Fernão de Magalhães crosses the straits that link the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean, in the service of Spain
1521	Spanish founded Mexico City on the ruins of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán; Portuguese Tomé Pires arrives at the court of Peking as an ambassador of the King of Portugal
1522	Completion of the circumnavigation of the globe trip initiated by the Portuguese Fernão de Magalhães, in the service of Spain; The Portuguese build a fortress at Ternate, in the Moluccas, Indonesia; Arrival of the Portuguese in Australia
1531-1536	Spanish Francisco Pizarro confronts the Inca Empire, Peru
1533	Spanish Pedro de Heredia founded the city of Cartagena das Índias, Colombia
1534	Brazil is divided into hereditary captaincies; the Spanish founded Quito, Ecuador; the French initiate the colonisation of New France, Canada

1535	The Spanish establish the vice-royalty of New Spain; Spanish Francisco Pizarro founded Lima, Peru
1538	The Spanish founded Santa Fé of Bogotá, Colombia
1542	Portuguese traders set up in Liampó, province of Zhejiang, China; Spanish create the vice-royalty of Peru
1542/1543	The Portuguese land at Tanegashima, Japan
1545	Portuguese merchants arrive at Chinchéu, Fujian, China
1552-1557	The Portuguese arrive at Macau, China
1558	Damion, India, is ceded to the Portuguese
1565	The Spanish arrive in the Philippines; Spanish Andrés de Urdaneta discovers the eastern sea route, sailing in the “Manila Galleon”, which was used until 1815
1579	English Francis Drake arrives at California, North America
1580	The English arrive at Hirado, Japan
1583	The English land at Newfoundland, Canada
1584	The Portuguese build a fortress at Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman; English Walter Raleigh establishes a colony in North Carolina, North America
1587	The English founded the colony of Virginia, North America
1591	The first voyage of the English to the East Indies
1594	The Portuguese build a fortress at Mombasa, Kenya
1595	The Dutch send their first fleet to the Indian Ocean
1598	The Dutch attack Brazil
1599	The Dutch arrive in the archipelago of Banda, Moluccas, Indonesia
1600	The English founded the <i>East India Company</i> ; The Dutch arrive at Hirado, Japan; The Portuguese abandon the Moluccas, Indonesia
1602	The Dutch arrive in Ceylon (Sri Lanka); The Dutch create the <i>VOC-Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie</i> (The Dutch East India Company)
1606	The Spanish arrive at Tidore, Moluccas, Indonesia
1607	The English founded Jamestown, North America
1608	The French founded Quebec, Canada
1609	The Dutch establish a factory house at Hirado, Japan and conquer Ceylon (Sri Lanka); The English arrive at the Cocos Islands, Indian Ocean and Bermuda, North Atlantic Ocean

1611	The English arrive at Masulipatan, Gulf of Bengal
1612	The French arrive at Maranhão, Brazil (until 1615)
1613	The English establish a factory house in Surate, west coast of India; Foundation of the English factory house at Hirado, Japan
1616	The Danish founded the <i>Dansk Ostindisk Kompagni</i> (Danish Eastern Indian Company)
1619	The Dutch arrived in Batavia (Jakarta), Indonesia; The Danish arrive at Trincomalee, Ceylon (Sri Lanka)
1620	The English founded Plymouth, North America; The Danish arrive at Tranquebar, India, where they stayed until 1845
1621	The Dutch founded the West-Indische Comagnie (The Dutch Western Indian Company)
1622-1638	Portuguese dominions invested by the British(1622-Ormuz, Iran) and by the Dutch (1624- Baía, Brazil; 1637-Olinda and Recife, Brazil; Mombasa, Kenya; São Jorge da Mina (Elmina), Ghana; 1638- Arguim, Mauritania)
1624	The Dutch settle in the Island of Formosa (Taiwan); The Dutch temporarily conquer Baía, Brazil and arrive at Acapulco, Mexico
1625	The Danish arrive at Pipli, West Bengal; The Dutch move from Governor's Island to the Island of Manhattan, founding Fort Amsterdam (New York, North America)
1626	The Danish arrive at Masulipatan, Bengal, which they abandoned in c. 1643
1630	The Dutch conquer Pernambuco, Brazil
1634	The Dutch conquer Paraíba, Brazil; The English founded Maryland, North America
1635	The first English ship arrives in Macau, China; The French arrive at Martinique, the Caribbean
1636	The English founded Rhode Island, North America
1637	The English make their first trading voyage to China; The Dutch conquer Sergipe, Brasil and the Fortress of São Jorge de Mina (Elmina), Ghana
1638	The Dutch conquer Arguim, Mauritania and Ceará, Brazil; The Swedish founded the colony of New Sweden, Delaware River, North America
1639	The English occupy Madras (Chennai), India

1641	The Dutch factory house in Japan is transferred from Hirado to Deshima; The Dutch capture Malaca, Malasia, and Maranhão, Brazil
1643	The French colonise the French Guiana, South America
1650	The Swedish arrive at the Gulf of Guinea
1654	The Dutch leave Brazil
1655	The English arrive at Jamaica, the Caribbean
1658	The Dutch take Ceylon (Sri Lanka); The Danish arrive at Ghana, West Africa
1659	The Dutch establish themselves in Ghana, West Africa
1660	The Dutch take Macassar, Indonesia
1661	The Portuguese deliver Tangier, Morocco, and Bombain, India to the English, as part of the Catharine of Braganza's dowry
1664	The Dutch conquer Cochim, India; The English conquer New Amsterdam and founded New York, North America; The English arrive at Ghana, West Africa; The French create the West India Company (dissolved in 1674) and the East India Company (dissolved in 1719); The French arrive at the Reunion island, Indian Ocean
1672	The Danish arrive at the Virgin Islands, the Caribbean
1673	The French founded Pondicherry, India
1680	The Portuguese founded the colony of Sacramento at Rio da Prata, South America
1681	The English founded the colony of Pennsylvania, North America; The French arrive at the Gambia, West Africa
1685	Canton, China, opens to commerce with other foreign powers; The French founded Fort Saint-Louis, Texas, North America
1692	The French expand in India (protectorate of Arkat)
1696	The English initiate the construction of Fort William, Calcutta, India; The Danish founded a factory house at Oddeway Tower, Malabar, India, that lasted until 1722
1698	The Danish founded a factory house at Gondalpara, Bengal, that remained open until 1714
1699	The English opened their first factory house in Canton, China
1715	The French arrive at the island of Mauritius, Indian Ocean
1731	The Swedish create the Svenska Ostindiska Companiet (Swedish West Indian Company)
1752	The Danish founded a factory house at Calicut, India: abandoned in 1791

1754	The Danish arrive at the Nicobar Islands, Indian Ocean
1755	The Danish arrive at Serimapore, West Bengal (until 1845)
1756	The French arrive at the Seychelles, Indian Ocean
1757	Implementation of the 'Canton System'
1776	Signing of the declaration of independence of North America
1778	Passing of Equatorial Guiné from Portugal to Spain
1782	The Portuguese founded a factory house in Mozambique
1783	The Treaty of Paris, which ended the American War of Independence
1784	Start of trade between North America and China
1785	The Swedish arrive at Saint Bartolomeu, the Caribbean
1795	The French arrive at the Dominican Republic
1798	Establishment of an American factory house at Canton, China
1801	The British arrive at the Virgin Islands, Caribbean
1821	Gambia, Gold Coast (Ghana) and Sierra Leon form British West Africa
1824	Establishment of the first permanent American company (Russel & Co.) in Canton, China
1825	Recognition of Brazil's independence

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