



Picture of Sir Francis Drake

Famous Explorers

Famous Explorers

There were many Famous Explorers during 1400 - 1600. What were the names of the most famous explorers? What were the major accomplishments and achievements of the famous explorers? This page provides a list of the names and lifespan dates of all the Famous Explorers and their accomplishments, achievements and voyages of discovery.

[The Age of Exploration](#)
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All the famous explorers mentioned in the list has a link providing details of timelines, biography, life, facts, history, pictures and information about these brave, famous explorers.

Famous European Explorers

The famous European explorers came from England, Portugal, Spain, Italy and France. The voyages of discovery undertaken by these famous European explorers were motivated by:

- Wealth - gold, silver and spices
- Increased Power in Europe
- Prestige
- Increasing opportunities for trade
- Spreading the Christian Religion
- Building European Empires

Famous European explorers

included Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand Magellan, Vasco de Gama, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, Hernando Cortes, John Cabot and Samuel de Champlain!

Famous Canadian Explorers

The discovery of the New World opened up new colonies and settlements in Canada. One of the most famous of the Canadian explorers was Louis Joliet who explored the Great Lakes area and discovered the Mississippi River.

Famous Spanish Explorers

Famous Spanish Explorers and Conquistadors explored the Caribbean and South America. Just a few famous Spanish explorers conquered the millions who made up the nations of the Incas and the Aztecs. Famous Spanish explorers included Hernando Cortes, Francisco Pizarro, Hernando De Soto, Vasco Nunez de Balboa and Juan Ponce de Leon

Famous English Explorers

The famous English explorers were referred to as pirates and privateers by their enemies. The most famous English explorers embarked on their voyages of discovery during the Elizabethan reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The most famous English explorers included Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Martin Frobisher and Sir John Hawkins.

Famous Portuguese Explorers

The famous Portuguese explorers led the way when it came to exploration. The most famous Portuguese explorers included Ferdinand Magellan, Vasco da Gama, Bartholomeu Dias and Gaspar and Miguel Corte Real.

Famous French Explorers

The famous French explorers included Jacques Cartier, Jacques Marquette and Samuel de Champlain

The Who's Who List of Famous Explorers

There were so many Famous Explorers during the Renaissance period it was referred to as the Age of Exploration. The 'Who's Who List of Famous Explorers' provides a list of the Names of Famous Explorers together with the Nationality of Famous Explorers, Lifespan dates and details of their famous Voyages of Exploration. The following facts and information chart the voyages, explorations, major accomplishments and achievements in this list of the most famous explorers.

Who's Who List of Famous Explorers			
Names of Famous Explorers	Nationality of Famous Explorers	Lifespan of Famous Explorers	Famous Voyage of Exploration
Sir Francis Drake	English	1540 - 1597	Circumnavigates the World
Sir Walter Raleigh	English	1552 - 1618	The Discovery of Guiana and establishing the Virginia colony of Roanoke Island in 1584
Marco Polo	Italian	1254 - 1324	Exploration of China and Asia
Ferdinand Magellan	Portuguese	1480 - 1521	First voyage around the World by this famous explorer

Christopher Columbus	Italian / Spanish	1451 - 1506	Discovery of the New World by this famous explorer
Francisco Pizarro	Spanish	1478 - 1541	Famous Explorer who conquered the Incas of Peru
Amerigo Vespucci	Italian / Spanish	1454 - 1512	America was named after this famous explorer
Vasco Nunez de Balboa	Spanish	1475 - 1519	First famous European explorer to see the Pacific Ocean from its eastern shore
Vasco da Gama	Portuguese	1469 - 1524	Discovery of an ocean route from Portugal to the East by this famous explorer
Sir Humphrey Gilbert	English	1539 - 1583	This famous explorer established St Johns, Newfoundland
Juan Ponce de Leon	Spanish	1460 - 1521	First European explorer to set foot in Florida
Sir Richard Grenville	English	1542 - 1591	Voyages to Virginia and Roanoke Island and the Azores by this famous explorer
Sir John Hawkins	English	1532 - 1595	Voyages to West Africa and South America by this famous explorer
Francisco Vasquez de Coronado	Spanish	1510 - 1554	First European to explore the Southwest of North America in Arizona and New Mexico
Sir Martin Frobisher	English	1535 - 1594	Voyages to Labrador and Greenland
Hernando De Soto	Spanish	1500 - 1542	First European to explore Florida and South East America
Sir Richard Hawkins	English	1562 - 1622	Voyages to South America by this famous explorer
Hernando Cortes	Spanish	1485 - 1547	Spanish conqueror of Mexico and the Aztec Empire
Bartolomeu Dias	Portuguese	1457 - 1500	The first European explorer to lead a 1487 voyage around the Cape of Good Hope on the Southern most tip of South Africa
Pedro Alvares Cabral	Portuguese	1467 - 1520	The first European explorer to see Brazil in 1500
Giovanni da Verrazzano	Italian / French	1485 - 1528	Famous explorer from Italy who explored the NE coast of North America from Cape Fear, North Carolina to Maine
Gaspar Corte Real	Portuguese	1450 - 1501	Exploration of Greenland and the coast of Newfoundland by this famous explorer
John Cabot	Italian / English	1450 - 1499	Exploring the coastline of Canada the subsequent colonization of Canada. Cabot was the second famous explorer to find North America (after Christopher Columbus)
Sebastian Cabot	Italian / English	1474 - 1557	Son of the famous explorer John Cabot. Searching for the Northwest passage across North America, attempting to circumnavigate the world and making expeditions to Russia
Jacques Cartier	French	1491 - 1557	Led three expeditions of exploration to Canada by this famous explorer
Henry Hudson	English	1565 - 1611	The discovery of the Hudson River by this famous explorer
Jacques Marquette	French	1637 - 1675	Discovering the Mississippi River with famous Canadian explorer Louis Joliet
Samuel de Champlain	French	1567 - 1635	Famous explorer and founder of Quebec City. Known as 'The Father of Canada'
Pedro Alvares Cabral	Portuguese	1467 - 1520	Famous Portuguese explorer was the first to see Brazil in 1500
Cabeza de Vaca	Spanish	1490 - 1557	The first European to explore Texas and Southwest

			America
Estevanico	North African	1500 - 1539	Exploring Texas and Southwest America and heralded as having been “the first black man in North America.”
Panfilo de Narvaez	Spanish	1470 - 1528	The exploration of Cuba leading an ill fated expedition to Florida and North America by this famous explorer
Fray Marcos de Niza	Italian / Spanish	1495 - 1558	Discovering the Pueblo tribe called the Zuni indians. Duped into believing the myth of the "Seven Golden Cities of Cibola"
Alonso Alvarez de Pineda	Spanish	1494 - 1519	Believed to be the first European in Texas and proved that Florida was not an island
Juan de Oñate	Spanish	1550 - 1630	Famous for establishing the colony of New Mexico for Spain
Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon	Spanish	1475 - 1526	Famous explorer and colonizer of South Carolina and discoverer of Chesapeake Bay
Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo	Spanish	1499 - 1543	First European explorer to navigate the coast of present day California in the United States
Louis Joliet	Canadian	1645 - 1700	Famous for exploring the Great Lakes area and discovering the Mississippi River
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