

# Ferdinand Magellan

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In 1519, Ferdinand Magellan set sail on the adventure of a lifetime. When he started out, he knew it would be an adventure, but he didn't know that it would become one of the most famous adventures in history. Magellan was well prepared for a sailing adventure. He had grown up in Portugal, a country famous for voyages of discovery to the New World. He had already made several voyages to India and the Far East, sailing all the way around the continent of Africa. Then Magellan moved to Spain and asked the king to send him on an expedition. His friend, the astronomer Ruy de Falero, would help plan the expedition. King Charles I of Spain put Magellan in charge of a voyage to the Spice Islands. He would command 270 men in five ships. His ships were the *Trinidad*, the *San Antonio*, the *Concepcion*, the *Victoria*, and the *Santiago*.



On September 8, 1519, Magellan and his crew set sail from Seville, Spain. Luckily for us, one member of the crew, Antonio Pigafetta, kept a diary. That is how we know the whole story of how Magellan's expedition was the first ever to sail all the way around the world. This is the route they took; across the Atlantic Ocean, around South America through the Strait of Magellan at its southern tip, across the Pacific Ocean, between Asia and Australia, around Africa at the Cape of Good Hope, and back to Spain, with stops at the Spice Islands along the way.

At each stop along the way, the crew would search for supplies. Food and water were always at the top of the list. Water would go bad on the ship, becoming bad tasting and germ, so fresh water was a must. They would also hunt and fish to replenish their food supply. While they were docked at an island, they might enjoy a feast of fresh seafood. The meat and fish helped to keep the men from starving, but did not prevent many of them from getting scurvy, a disease caused by their poor diet that never had enough fresh fruits and vegetables.

As the expedition began to sail around South America, they had to be especially careful, keeping an eye out for pirates. Since Magellan was sailing for Spain now, he made especially sure to stay far away from Portuguese claims along the coast of

South America. Magellan's crew discovered an inland waterway between the southern tip of South America and the island called Tierra del Fuego, and had an easy passage through to the ocean on the other side. The passage was later named the Strait of Magellan. The men must have been thrilled to see the calm waters of this new ocean, and Magellan named it the Pacific (peaceful) Ocean.

Some of Magellan's sailors, however, were not happy with the way things were going on this long and tiring journey. The captain of one of the ships, named Juan de Cartagena, led a group of men in a mutiny attempt. For this, Cartagena ended up a prisoner aboard ship. After a while, one of the men in Cartagena's group let him loose. The men tried to mutiny again. This time Cartagena was imprisoned and left on an island. The other mutineers were either executed or imprisoned. The expedition continued. After many more long days of sailing, the *San Antonio* turned and sailed back to Spain. It took many of the expedition's supplies with it.

Nearing the end of its journey, the expedition stopped in the Philippine Islands. There, Magellan got involved in a fight with the native people. Magellan was killed, but his expedition resumed its journey, led by the navigator Juan Sebastian del Cano. By now there were only 115 men left. One ship had to be destroyed because there were not enough men to sail the three ships that were left. As they got even closer to the end of their journey, one of the final two ships was captured by the Portuguese. Nearly three years after the voyage had begun, on September 6, 1522, one ship, the *Victoria*, arrived home. Only 18 men had survived. They were the first men ever to sail all the way around the world.

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