**The Rise of Monarchies: France, England, and Spain**

One of the most significant developments in the three centuries leading up to the Renaissance period was the collapse of feudalism. This social and economic system had emerged during the ninth century in the Carolingian Empire (pronounced care-eh-LIN-jee-ehn), which was centered in the region that is now France. (See "Feudalism" in Chapter 1.) Eventually feudalism (a term derived from the medieval Latin word *feudum,* meaning "fee") spread throughout Europe and served as a unifying institution for all aspects of life. Under feudalism, which was based on an agricultural economy, distinct social classes were dependent on one another through a complex system of pledging loyalty in exchange for goods and services. At the top were kings, who owned the land. Beneath them were lords (noblemen) and clergymen (church officials), who were granted tracts of land called fiefs (pronounced feefs) by the king. Below the lords were vassals (knights), who held smaller amounts of land awarded to them by lords. At the bottom were serfs (peasants), who farmed the fiefs but were not given land of their own. Land occupied by churches, monasteries (houses for men called monks, who dedicated themselves to the religious life), and other religious establishments of the [Roman Catholic Church](https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/roman-catholic-and-orthodox-churches-branches-schisms-and-8) were also considered fiefs.

Feudalism began to decline in the eleventh century with the rise of capitalism, an economy based on investing money and earning profits from business ventures. Capitalism is considered one of the major contributions of the Renaissance. Under feudalism there were few cities, and most communities consisted of small towns and rural areas clustered around castles, which served as centers of government and social life (see "Castle as center of community" in Chapter 1). Capitalism brought about the rise of cities, which were built as hubs in a network of trade routes throughout Europe. The cities replaced fiefs as population centers. The growth of the new economy posed threats to the feudal system. Serfs started escaping to urban areas in search of work. A middle class, consisting of merchants and bankers, was taking power away from noblemen.

Although feudalism had been replaced by a new economic system, social and political structures were still based on the fief. When the Renaissance began in the mid-fourteenth century in Italy, Europe was divided into hundreds of independent states, each with its own laws and customs. The result was absolute chaos, as leaders of states vied for more power and larger territories. In the south, the Italian peninsula was turned into a battleground. Numerous wealthy city-states competed for trade rights around the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas, and the [Italian Wars](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/wars-and-battles/italian-wars) (a conflict between France and Spain for control in Italy) raged for sixty-four years (see "[Italian Wars](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/wars-and-battles/italian-wars) dominate Renaissance" in Chapter 2). As the Renaissance moved north of Italy in the fifteenth century, northern and central Europe was even more fragmented. The power of the Holy [Roman Empire](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/ancient-greece-and-rome/ancient-history-rome/roman-empire) had dwindled, and princes (noblemen who ruled states)—particularly in the more than two hundred principalities of Germany—were seeking independence. At the same time religious reformers, first in Germany and then in the Netherlands and Scandinavia, were leading a movement against the practices of the [Roman Catholic Church](https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/roman-catholic-and-orthodox-churches-branches-schisms-and-8). Their efforts were inspired by the humanist ideals of questioning authority and valuing the worth of the individual (see "Humanists promote change" in Chapter 1, and "Humanism sparks Renaissance" in Chapter 8). This reform movement resulted in the revolution known as the Protestant Reformation, which eventually spread throughout Europe.

Monarchs (kings and queen with supreme rule) in France, England, and Spain responded to the chaotic situation in Europe by consolidating their power. A significant development in all three of these monarchies was the rise of nationalism, or pride in and loyalty to one's homeland, which was a distinctive feature of the Renaissance period. In France, the Capetians (pronounced cuh-PEE-shuns) gained control of nearly all duchies (fiefs) by staging internal wars and defeating England in the Hundred Years' War. They established a line of strong monarchs that lasted for eight hundred years and elevated France to the status of a major power. Although England was exhausted by the long conflict with France, the Tudor monarchs began a new dynasty after emerging victorious from the War of the Roses, a struggle between two families for the throne of England. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Tudors reigned over the English Renaissance. Their era produced one of the greatest cultures in the world and led to the creation of the [British Empire](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/british-empire) in later centuries. In Spain, the monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and [Isabella of Castile](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/spanish-and-portuguese-history-biographies/isabella-castile) laid the foundation for an immense empire by uniting several independent provinces. In the sixteenth century, during the reign of King Charles I (Holy Roman Emperor Charles V), the Spanish empire spread east from Spain to include the kingdoms of Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, Naples, and Sicily. It also extended south and west to include possessions in North Africa and the Americas.

**France**

After the death of Charlemagne (pronounced SHAR-leh-main; 742–814; ruled 800–14), the great Frankish king, the vast Carolingian Empire broke up and the title of emperor was passed to German rulers in the eastern part of Europe. Territory that is now France was invaded by tribes from Scandinavia (Norway, Denmark, and Sweden). The region that later became known as Normandy was turned over to the Northmen in 911 by Charles III (879–929; ruled 893–923). At the end of the tenth century, Hugh Capet (c. 938–996; ruled 987–96) founded the line of French kings that ruled the country for the next eight hundred years. Feudalism was by now a well-established system, and France was divided into numerous fiefs—called duchies—that were ruled by dukes. The Capetians were a family who controlled the Île-de-France, a region centered on Paris that extended roughly a three days' march in all directions around the city. At first the Capetians' control over the other duchies of France was mostly in name only because many were semi-independent kingdoms. Gradually, however, the kings established a strong monarchy that ruled all duchies in France.

 **Capetians establish strong monarchy**

One of the most powerful Capetians was William II (c. 1028–1087), the duke of Normandy, a duchy in northwestern France. He expanded his territory by crossing the [English Channel](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/english-channel) (a body of water between France and England) and launching the Norman conquest of England (1066–70). Crowned King William I of England (also known as William the Conqueror; ruled 1066–87), he introduced [French language](https://www.encyclopedia.com/literature-and-arts/language-linguistics-and-literary-terms/language-and-linguistics/french) and culture into that country. The Capetians gradually extended their control over the duchies of France during the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Especially strong kings were [Louis VI](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-vi) (called the Fat; 1081–1137; ruled 1108–37) and his son [Louis VII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-vii) (c. 1120–1180; ruled 1137–80). The younger Louis was challenged by Henry of Anjou (1133–1189), who took the English throne as [Henry II](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-ii) (ruled 1154–89) in 1154. At that time he was feudal lord of a greater part of France, including Normandy, Brittany, and Anjou in the northwest and Aquitaine in the southwest. However, Henry's sons, Richard and John, were unable to hold these far-flung territories against the vigorous assaults of [Louis VII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-vii)'s son Philip Augustus (1165–1223; ruled 1180–1223). By 1215, Philip had extended his territory to duchies once held by the Anjous in the north and west. He also increased his power in Languedoc and Toulouse in the south. Philip's grandson, [Louis IX](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-ix) (1214–1270; ruled 1226–70), had a long reign. He firmly established the strength of the monarchy by enforcing his royal powers.

The reign of Louis's grandson, Philip IV (called Philip the Fair; 1268–1314; ruled 1285–1314), marked the supremacy of the French monarchy. Philip the Fair quarreled with the popes (heads of the Roman Catholic Church) over control of the French clergy and other aspects of the monarch's sovereignty (independent rule). For instance, Philip argued that he, as king, should be able to appoint bishops (officials who head church districts) and make governmental decisions without the consent of the pope. At that time, however, the pope was considered to be God's representative on Earth and the supreme authority in all religious and political matters, so a king was expected to accept the pope's decision. When the popes would not give in to Philip's demands he resolved the situation by having his agents arrest Pope [Boniface VIII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/roman-catholic-popes-and-antipopes/boniface-viii) (c.1235–1303; reigned 1294–1303). After Boniface's death in 1303, Philip succeeded in having the seat of the papacy (office of the pope) moved from Rome, Italy, to Avignon, France. The popes remained in Avignon under French domination until 1377, during a period called the [Babylonian captivity](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/asia-and-africa/ancient-history-middle-east/babylonian-captivity) (see "[Babylonian captivity](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/asia-and-africa/ancient-history-middle-east/babylonian-captivity) and the [Great Schism](https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/roman-catholic-and-orthodox-churches-branches-schisms-and-9)" in Chapter 1). Philip the Fair was followed by three sons, each of whom reigned only briefly and left no direct male heirs. In 1328 his nephew, [Philip VI](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/philip-vi) (1293–1350; ruled 1328–50), took the throne as the first king from the Valois (pronounced val-WAH) family, a branch of the Capetians. [Philip VI](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/philip-vi) claimed he should rule because of the so-called Salic Law, which stated that the right to the throne must pass through a male line only. Philip reasoned that since there were no longer any Capetian male heirs and since he was related to the Capetians through the Valois line of the family, he had the right to be named king. Philip was challenged by [Edward III](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/edward-iii) (1312–1377; ruled 1327–77) of England, whose mother was the daughter of Philip the Fair. In 1337 Edward claimed the right to the throne through his mother's line—ignoring the Salic Law—and named himself king of France. As a sign of his authority he had lilies, the official symbol of France, painted on his shield.

**France versus England: The Hundred Years' War**

The rivalry between the English and the French over the throne of France resulted in the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453; see also "England" section later in this chapter). Actually, the struggle did not last a full one hundred years but instead consisted of a series of conflicts interspersed with periods of peace. At that time France was severely weakened by a wave of epidemics (widespread outbreaks of disease) that began with the [Black Death](https://www.encyclopedia.com/medicine/diseases-and-conditions/pathology/black-death) (bubonic plague) in 1348 (see "[Black Death](https://www.encyclopedia.com/medicine/diseases-and-conditions/pathology/black-death)" in Chapter 1). It is estimated that between 1348 and 1400 the population of France dropped from sixteen million to eleven million. Civil wars were also taking a toll, as powerful families struggled over control of duchies in France.

In 1346, [Edward III](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/edward-iii) won a notable victory at Crécy in a battle that showed the superiority of English ground troops and longbows (oversized stringed weapons used to shoot arrows) against the French knights in armor. In 1356 French forces were defeated at Poitiers. Under terms of the peace agreement, the Treaty of Brétigny (1360), the kingdom of France was divided and the southwest region was formally given to the king of England. The great soldier Bertrand du Guesclin (pronounced gay-klahn; c. 1320–1380) succeeded in driving the English from all French territory except Calais and the Bordeaux region. France was then ravaged by an internal war between the Orléanists (a family in the duchy of Orléans, in north central France) and the Burgundians (a family in the duchy of Burgundy, in northeastern France), who were both claiming the right to the French throne.

**Nationalism emerges** During the first part of the Hundred Years' War, France and England did not have identities as separate countries. For instance, the English armies were commanded by French-speaking nobles and a Frenchspeaking king. A nationalistic spirit began to emerge among the English, however, with a campaign launched by King [Henry V](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-v), whose everyday language was English. Taking advantage of the civil war between the Orléanists and the Burgundians, Henry invaded France in 1415. He won a decisive victory at Agincourt (now Azincourt), a village in northern France, and instantly became a hero in England. The English were given an increased sense of national pride by the [Treaty of Troyes](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/treaties-and-alliances/treaty-troyes) (1420). The treaty required France's King Charles VI (1368–1422; ruled 1380–1422), an Orléanist, to give his daughter, [Catherine of Valois](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/catherine-valois) (1401–1437), in marriage to Henry. Charles also had to declare Henry and Henry's descendants heirs to the French crown. Upon Henry's death in 1422, his infant son, [Henry VI](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-vi), was crowned king of both France and England. (See "England" section later in this chapter.)

By this time the French were also consumed by a nationalistic spirit. Shortly after the death of [Henry V](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-v), Charles VII (1403–1461; ruled 1422–61), who was Charles VI's son, slowly began to regain French territories from the English. In 1429 the country was dramatically energized by [Joan of Arc](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/joan-arc) (c. 1412–1431), who was known as the Maid of Orléans. Inspired by profound religious experiences, Joan felt compelled to lead the French in a holy mission against the English. Under her command, the French won several important battles. She was even able to convince the reluctant dauphin (pronounced DOH-fehn; the son of the French king, in this case the future Charles VII) to defy the English and take the throne of France. Joan stood near Charles VII as he was crowned king at Rheims, France, in 1429. Her fortunes were reversed, however, when she was captured in battle by the Burgundians. She was sold to the English, who then turned her over to the Inquisition, an official church court appointed to punish heretics (those who violate church laws), at the French city of Rouen. (See "The Inquisition" in Chapter 1.) Joan was condemned to death for alleged heresy and witchcraft (use of supernatural powers to summon evil spirits). She was burned at the stake in 1431. Over the next thirty years the French armies continued to advance, winning major battles against the English. By the time Charles died in 1461, the English had been driven from all French territory.

The next king, [Louis XI](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-xi) (1423–1483; ruled 1461–83), set France on a course that eventually destroyed the power of the great feudal lords. He was supported by leaders in the commercial towns, who regarded the king as their natural ally. His greatest enemy was [Charles the Bold](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/charles-bold) (1433–1477; ruled 1467–77), duke of Burgundy, who ruled Burgundy virtually as an independent state. For many years Charles commanded far more resources than the king of France himself. But after the duke was defeated and killed in a battle in 1477, Louis was able to reunite Burgundy with France. Louis's son, King [Charles VIII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/charles-viii) (1470–1498; ruled 1483–98) then married [Anne of Brittany](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/anne-brittany) (1477–1514) and merged Brittany, the last remaining quasi-independent province, into royal lands. The consolidation of the kingdom of France under one ruler was now complete.

[**Charles VIII**](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/charles-viii)**launches Italian Wars**

In 1494, during the reign of Charles VIII, France embarked on the first phase of the Italian Wars (1494–1559), a series of conflicts between France and Spain that took place in Italy (see also "Italian Wars dominate Renaissance" in Chapter 2). During the wars, both France and Spain formed complex political alliances—in fact, they were even fighting on the same side at one point. At various times these alliances involved the forces of the Holy [Roman Empire](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/ancient-greece-and-rome/ancient-history-rome/roman-empire), the [Papal States](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/italian-history/papal-states) (duchies in Italy controlled by the pope), and numerous Italian city-states, as well as mercenaries (hired soldiers) from other countries such as Switzerland. The dispute over whether France or Spain had the right to rule Naples and Sicily had been going on since the thirteenth century. In 1266 King Charles I of France (Charles of Anjou; 1227–1285; ruled 1266–85), the youngest brother of King [Louis IX](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-ix), took the thrones of Naples and Sicily (called the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies). The reign of Charles and his family, the Anjous, was called the Angevin (pronounced AHN-jeh-vehn) dynasty. Charles lost control of Sicily in 1306, at the end of a twenty-year conflict called the War of the [Sicilian Vespers](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/italian-history/sicilian-vespers) (see "War of the [Sicilian Vespers](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/italian-history/sicilian-vespers)" in Chapter 2). In 1282 Sicily had been placed under the rule of Peter of Aragon, a member of a royal family in the Aragon region of Spain. Peter and his successors were called the Argonese. In the sixteenth century the Argonese cause was adopted by the Habsburgs (a royal family with branches in Austria and Spain) when Charles I, a member of the Habsburg family, became Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (see "Spain" section later in this chapter).

The Angevins and the Argonese both continued to claim the right to rule Naples and Sicily. In 1489 Charles VIII was offered the crown of Naples by Pope Innocent VIII (1432–1492; reigned 1484–92). Charles felt he now had the right to move into Naples. The Italian Wars began in 1494, when Charles was asked by the Sforzas, the family that ruled the city-state of Milan, to join them and Swiss mercenaries in seizing Florence from the Medici family (see "Milan" in Chapter 2). Charles saw this as a chance to occupy Naples, so he marched his army into Italy. Pope [Alexander VI](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/roman-catholic-popes-and-antipopes/alexander-vi) (1431–1503; reigned 1492–1503) took the side of the Medicis and convinced King Ferdinand of Aragon to send in Spanish troops to fend off the Sforzas, the French, and the Swiss. The Spanish drove the French out of Italy in 1495. The French returned in 1499, however, this time to take Naples and Sicily from the Sforzas. Charles VIII's successor, [Louis XII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-xii) (1462–1515; ruled 1498–1515), joined Swiss troops and Ferdinand of Aragon to overthrow Sforza rule in Naples. The French and Spanish monarchs then had a falling-out because [Louis XII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-xii) also claimed a right to rule in Italybecause his grandmother, Valentina Visconti, was a daughter of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, duke of Milan. This conflict led to overwhelming Spanish victories at Barletta, Cerignola, and Garigliano. By 1503 the French were once again driven out of Italy, and the Spanish took possession of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

**Francis I renews conflict in Italy**

The Italian Wars were continued with renewed vigor under King Francis I (1494–1547; ruled 1515–47), who became known as a Renaissance prince during his long reign. (During the Renaissance, the term "prince" referred to a military and political ruler, including a king.) Francis had grown up in the court of King Louis XII and was called the dauphin. He married Louis's daughter, Claude de France, in 1514. In 1512, when France went to war with Spain, the king gave the eighteen-year-old Francis command of an army. The Spanish king, Ferdinand II of Aragon, had conquered and an nexed the small kingdom of Navarre, situated between France and Spain on the [Bay of Biscay](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/bay-biscay) (see "Spain" section later in this chapter). The French were now trying to recapture Navarre. Although Francis had able military advisers, he failed to score a victory. Then in 1513 Swiss troops inflicted a humiliating defeat on the French at Novara, a province in northwest Italy. On December 31, 1514, Louis died, and on the first day of 1515 Francis I took the throne of France.

Francis's reign had an impressive beginning. Determined to avenge the defeat at Novara by taking Spanish-held Naples, the young king personally led an army into Italy. On September 13 and 14, 1515, at Marignano (now Melegnano) near Milan, Francis won the greatest triumph in what was to be his long career as a military leader. His troops annihilated Swiss mercenaries hired by Massimiliano Sforza (1493–1530), duke of Milan (see "Milan" in Chapter 2). In the aftermath of Marignano, Francis took the duchy of Milan, and Pope [Leo X](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/roman-catholic-popes-and-antipopes/leo-x)(1475–1521; reigned 1513–21) gave him neighboring Parma and Piacenza. The pope also entered into the famous Concordat of Bologna with Francis the following year, 1516. According to the terms of the agreement, the Catholic Church in France came under direct control of the French crown. The Concordat marked a high point in the struggle over the question of the monarch's sovereignty, which had divided France into two camps. Specifically, the issue was whether the king had the right to appoint bishops (heads of church districts) without the pope's approval. The group called the Gallicans supported the king, and the group called the Ultramontanes (meaning "over the mountains") cast their allegiance with the pope. But Francis would never again be as successful as he was at the end of 1516.

**Francis I: Renaissance King**

King Francis I became known as a Renaissance prince during his long reign. His childhood was remarkable because of his enlightened, humanist education. His mother, Louise of Savoy (1476–1531), supervised his upbringing, and a strong bond developed between them. The young boy learned the Spanish and Italian languages, and he spent his time reading mythology, history, and literature and admiring art. Francis also received a proper noble education in the art of war. Surrounded by young playmates, he learned the strategy and methods of Renaissance warfare and showed signs of unusual talent at the craft. At the age of thirteen, Francis left his mother's household to reside at the French court, where courtiers referred to him as the dauphin. King Louis XII granted Francis the duchy of Valois, created from the vast estates of the house of Orléans.

When Louis died in 1515, Francis became king. Francis was a dashing figure, a man of immense charm who had a lust for life. He was daring and courageous in battle, to the point of folly. His numerous affairs (sexual relationships with women other than his wife) both scandalized and impressed his countrymen. His compassion and leniency toward his subjects were uncharacteristic of the age, and he did much to improve the cultural life of his country during the Renaissance. Yet there was a darker side to the gallant French king. He often broke treaties, and on occasion he even allied with Muslims and Protestants to oppose Catholic Spain. He neglected to reward several of his best lieutenants for their services, and as a result he lost their support. Finally, he became so obsessed by his rivalry with Holy Roman Emperor Charles V that he lost all sense of proportion, spending heavily on unsuccessful wars against Spain.

**Rivarly between two young kings** Francis became his own worst enemy when he began competing against Charles I, the young king of Spain. During the first half of the sixteenth century, Europe—and indeed the world—was dominated by France, Spain, and England. As king of France, Francis I had complex political rivalries, primarily with Charles, but also with [Henry VIII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-viii) of England, who was also a youthful ruler. Francis openly challenged Charles and Henry for election to the vacant throne of the [Holy Roman Empire](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/german-history/holy-roman-empire). The three young monarchs bitterly competed for the title of Emperor, but the rivalry was especially intense between Francis and Charles. Charles's advisers bribed the German princes who served as electors, however, and in 1519 Charles took office as Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. As both the king of Spain and head of the [Holy Roman Empire](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/german-history/holy-roman-empire), Charles was now the most powerful ruler in Europe. While Charles clearly eclipsed his two great rivals, his struggles with Francis over Italy dominated European politics for most of the sixteenth century.

In order to avenge the slight of not being named emperor, Francis initiated the first of five wars with Spain and the Holy Roman Empire (Charles was head of forces for both Spain and the empire). In August 1520 he met with [Henry VIII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-viii) in Calais, France, at the [Field of the Cloth of Gold](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/treaties-and-alliances/field-cloth-gold), hoping to win Henry's support in the war against Spain. Henry declined to join the French effort. Meanwhile, Charles V had formed an alliance with Pope [Clement VII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/roman-catholic-popes-and-antipopes/clement-vii) (1478–1534; reigned 1523–34). In late 1520, Francis secretly backed an assault on Luxembourg (now in Belgium), a city in the Holy Roman Empire. The French also occupied the province of Navarre during the Comuneros Revolt in Spain. The Comuneros had formed the "Holy League of Cities" and were protesting the policies of Charles's government (see "Spain" section later in this chapter). The revolt was distracting Charles's attention, so the French were able to move into Navarre and wage war with Spain.

During the next four years, however, the war with Spain went poorly for Francis. His men won a few battles, at Parma and Fuenterrabia, but they were soundly defeated at Ezquiros and Pamplona and driven out of Navarre. The Spanish then invaded France, taking Toulon and other parts of southeast France. In northern Italy, Spanish forces won victories against the French at Tournai, Lodi, Cremona, Genoa, and Alessandria. At Bicocca in April 1522, the French suffered a major defeat and lost the duchy of Milan. Complete disaster awaited Francis at Pavia, a city near Milan, in February 1525. He led an army of 37,000 men against a Spanish army of equal numbers. The Spanish lost 1,000 men. Between 10,000 and 14,000 Frenchmen died, and many others were taken prisoner, including Francis himself.

**More losses for France**

Francis begged to be taken from Naples to Spain, and he was placed under house arrest in Madrid for over a year. The French king was not confined like most prisoners: He hunted regularly, enjoyed the companionship of his nobleman comrades, and attended numerous dinners given in his honor. He gained his release in March 1526 by agreeing to relinquish all claims to Italy and by giving up the duchies of Burgundy, Flanders (now part of Belgium, France, and the Netherlands), and Artois (a region in northern France). When Francis swore as a gentleman to return to captivity if he failed to live up to his end of the bargain, Charles agreed to set him free. Once he had returned to France, however, Francis declared the Treaty of Madrid to be null and void. His excuse was that he was forced to sign the document at a time when he could not think clearly.

Francis's violation of the treaty made another war with Spain inevitable. Francis quickly organized the League of Cognac (1526), which allied France, England, Milan, Venice, the [Papal States](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/italian-history/papal-states), and the republic of Florence against Charles. But in this second war, which began in 1527, Charles was destined to win an even greater victory. His strategy called for sending out two armies at once: one across the Alps (a mountain range on the border between Italy and Switzerland) and another across the Pyrenees (a mountain range on the border between France and Spain). To counter the Spanish offensive, Francis planned for Swiss troops in the employ of [Clement VII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/roman-catholic-popes-and-antipopes/clement-vii) and Venice to attack Spanish holdings on the Italian peninsula. The French would meanwhile send a fleet to take Genoa and Naples. At first all went well for Francis. Genoa fell to his naval forces, led by admiral [Andrea Doria](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/italian-history-biographies/andrea-doria) (1466–1560). Doria was a soldier-for-hire who hailed from Genoa but, in 1527, held the post of commander of French naval forces. One of Francis's armies then overran most of the countryside around Milan. But in May 1527, Charles's soldiers made a massive assault on the city and caused extensive damage. The siege has often been called the "German Fury" because the majority of the marauding soldiers were German Lutherans. Charles's spokesmen claimed the troops had moved on Rome against the emperor's wishes. According to an official report, when the soldiers reached the city they were so upset by the corruption of the Roman clergy that they committed atrocities. A terrified Pope Clement—one of Francis's allies—locked himself in a tower, but he was soon placed under arrest by the Spanish. He surrendered to Charles in the Treaty of Barcelona. Henry VIII, whose heart had never really been in the war, also quickly came to terms with Charles.

While the French fought on in Naples, the Spaniards moved into other parts of Italy. The French effort collapsed in 1528. The Spanish won two battles at Genoa and were victorious at nearby Savona and at Aversa in the south. By 1529, Francis had signed the Treaty of Cambrai, which repeated the humiliating terms of the earlier Treaty of Madrid. It also called for Francis's two sons to be held in Madrid for a ransom (money paid for releasing a hostage) of two million gold crowns (a large sum of Spanish money).

**Francis is patron of the arts**

For six years, Francis remained in France, where he became an enthusiastic patron of the arts. In the process, he helped bring the Italian Renaissance to France. A pet project was the renovation of the royal palaces at Blois, Chambord, Fontainebleau, and the Louvre. Purchasing the works of Italian painters Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titian, Francis also invited some of the finest Italian artists of the day to come to France. Among them were [Leonardo da Vinci](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/european-art-1599-biographies/leonardo-da-vinci), [Benvenuto Cellini](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/european-art-1599-biographies/benvenuto-cellini), and [Andrea del Sarto](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/european-art-1599-biographies/andrea-del-sarto). Francis corresponded with the Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus and sponsored a royal lecture series that supported promising scholars. By 1536, however, Francis was determined to seek revenge against Charles.

In February, he completed the Capitulations, an "unholy alliance" with the Ottoman leader Khayr ad-Din (pronounced kigh-ruh-DEEN; d. 1546), who was called Barbarossa by Europeans. This move shocked and offended most Christians in Europe, even many of Francis's longtime supporters. Although they appreciated his will to resist the mighty Spanish kingdom, they felt that Francis was committing heresy by allying with what Christians considered "infidel" Turks to slaughter fellow Christians.

Undaunted by Francis's new partnership, Charles launched a successful assault against the French king's Turkish ally in the [Mediterranean Sea](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/mediterranean-sea). Spanish forces led personally by Charles took La Goletta (now Halq al-Wadi), a seaport town in northeast Tunisia. Charles liberated thousands of Christian prisoners and soon thereafter captured the port of Tunis. Barbarossa fled to Algiers (now Algeria), in North Africa, with the remnant of his fleet. Charles then turned toward Italy, landed in Sicily in August, and advanced with ease toward the Alps. He also invaded Provence, a region in southeast France, and areas of northern France. By 1538, when a peace agreement was signed in Nice, France, both sides were financially exhausted. In one year alone, Francis had spent 5.5 million livres (the French unit of currency at that time) on the war. He had neither won nor regained any territory.

Francis mounted another war against Charles in 1542, this time allying his forces with the German Protestants of the Schmalkaldic League (see "[Augsburg Confession](https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/protestant-christianity/augsburg-confession)" in Chapter 5). At Mühlberg, Germany, however, Charles won his greatest victory over Francis and the Lutheran princes. Although Francis had sided with Protestants against his great rival Charles V, he turned against the Waldensians, a group of Protestants in his own country. (Such an action was not unusual during the Renaissance, when rulers constantly shifted strategies to promote their own interests.) The Waldensians were advocates of the views of [Peter Waldo](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/protestant-christianity-biographies/peter-waldo) (also known as Pierre Valdés; d. before 1218), an early French religious reformer who protested against corruption in the Catholic Church. A brutal campaign against the Waldensians demolished twenty-two towns and killed four thousand people. Francis issued a list of banned books and established a court to punish heretics. The court burned hundreds of Huguenots (French Protestants) at the stake.

Francis died of gout and liver disease at Rambouillet, France, in 1547. At the time of his death, the French crown was six million livres in debt. Ten years later, France declared bankruptcy (a lack of funds to pay bills). The Italian Wars finally ended after a seventh war, which lasted from 1547 until 1559. It was waged by the successors of Francis and Charles. In these wars, Spanish armies were victorious for the sixth time. As a result, Spain was given control of Italy in the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559.

**Tensions between Catholics and Protestants**

Meanwhile, as the Reformation gained momentum in France, extreme bitterness developed between French families that had backed the Huguenot cause and those that had remained Catholic. The policy of the French monarchy was to suppress Protestantism at home while supporting it abroad as a counterbalance to Habsburg power. Under the last of the Valois kings, Charles IX (1550–1574; ruled 1560–74) and [Henry III](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-iii) (1551–1589; ruled 1574–89), a series of fierce religious civil wars devastated France. Paris remained a stronghold of Catholicism, and on August 23 and 24, 1572, thousands of Protestants were slaughtered in the massacre of [Saint Bartholomew](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/early-christianity-biographies/saint-bartholomew)'s Day.

Upon the death of [Henry III](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-iii) in 1589, the government of France was taken over by Henry of Navarre (1553–1610; ruled 1589–1610), a Protestant, who became King [Henry IV](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-iv). He was the first of the Bourbon line of rulers. Unable to capture Paris by force, Henry embraced Catholicism in 1593 and entered the city peacefully the following year. In 1598 he signed the [Edict of Nantes](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/french-history/edict-nantes), which guaranteed religious freedom to the Huguenots. Henry succeeded in restoring prosperity to France. Assassinated in 1610 by a Catholic fanatic, Henry was followed by his young nine-year-old son [Louis XIII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-xiii) (1601–1643; ruled 1610–43). Louis's mother, Marie de Médicis (1519–1589), acted as regent (interim ruler) in the early years of his reign.

Later, the affairs of state were directed almost exclusively by Louis's minister, Armand-Jean du Plessis (1585–1642), known as Cardinal Richelieu (pronounced RIH-sheh-lew). Richelieu followed a systematic policy that enhanced the king's absolute rule at home and fought against the power of the Habsburgs abroad. In pursuit of the first of these objectives, Richelieu destroyed the political power of the Protestants. In pursuit of the second he led France, in 1635, into the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), a series of conflicts fought mainly in Germany over many social, political, and religious issues (see "Thirty Years' War" in Chapter 6). France allied with the Protestants and against the Austrians and the Spanish. Richelieu died in 1642, and [Louis XIII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-xiii) died a few months later. His successor, [Louis XIV](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-xiv) (1638–1715; ruled 1643–1715), was only five years old. During the two years his mother, [Anne of Austria](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/anne-austria) (1601–1666), served as regent, France's policy was largely guided by her adviser, Cardinal [Jules Mazarin](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/jules-mazarin) (1602–1661). The [Peace of Westphalia](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/treaties-and-alliances/peace-westphalia) (1648), which ended the Thirty Years' War, and the [Peace of the Pyrenees](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/treaties-and-alliances/peace-pyrenees) (1659) marked the end of Habsburg dominance. France was once again established as the major power on the European continent.

**French Exploration**

During the reign of Francis I, French explorers became part of the age of European exploration, one of the great achievements not only of the Renaissance period but also in Western history. In 1534 French navigator [Jacques Cartier](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/canadian-history-biographies/jacques-cartier) (1491–1557) joined the search for a [Northwest Passage](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/arctic-physical-geography/northwest-passage) to China. He explored the St. Lawrence River—gateway to the [Great Lakes](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-physical-geography/great-lakes)—but his voyages never took him farther west than the site of modernday Montreal, Canada. Nevertheless, his thorough exploration and charting of the Gulf of [Saint Lawrence](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/canadian-physical-geography/saint-lawrence) led the way for further exploration by one of his countrymen, [Samuel de Champlain](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/canadian-history-biographies/samuel-de-champlain) (c. 1567–1635). In fact, most of the major exploratory work in [North America](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/north-america) was done on inland water routes by the French. Beginning with Champlain in 1600, the French pushed their way down the [Saint Lawrence](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/canadian-physical-geography/saint-lawrence) River to the [Great Lakes](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-physical-geography/great-lakes). In a dozen voyages from 1603 until 1633, Champlain discovered the easternmost Great Lakes, Huron and Ontario; founded the city of Quebec; and served as commandant of France's new colonial territories, which were called [New France](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/canadian-political-geography/new-france).

**England**

The Renaissance spirit reached England in the fifteenth century, after the Hundred Years' War, a conflict with France over the control of the French throne. The Hundred Years' War was not actually a single war that lasted one hundred years. Instead, it was a series of conflicts mixed with periods of peace that began in 1337 and ended in 1453. The Hundred Years' War was the outcome of disputes between the ruling families of England and France, the Plantagenets (pronounced plan-TAJ-eh-nets) in England and the Capetians (pronounced keh-PEE-shehns) in France. Since 1066 the English had controlled rich agricultural areas in France, and the two countries had often fought over these territories. In the 1300s marriages between English and French nobles meant that both English and French kings had a claim to the French throne. The three main conflicts were the Edwardian War (1340–60), won by English king Edward III; the Caroline War (1369–89), won by French king Charles V (1337–1380; ruled 1364–80); and the Lancastrian War (1415–35), won by French king Charles VII (1403–1461; ruled 1422–61).

During the Edwardian War the English took control of large areas of southwestern France and the northern coastal city of Calais. Although England was smaller than France, it was able to gather a large army. Equipped with longbows and arrows that could pierce French armor, the English defeated the French cavalry. During the Caroline War, the French regained much of the territory lost during the Edwardian War. This success was due to able military leadership, development of a full-time professional army, and a taxation system that supported the army. During the Lancastrian War, the English allied with Philip III (called [Philip the Good](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/philip-good); 1396–1467, ruled 1419–67), the duke of Burgundy, to conquer most of northern and western France. The tide changed, however, when Philip formed an alliance with the French. During the Lancastrian War religious mystic [Joan of Arc](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/joan-arc) led French forces in victories against the English (see "France" section previously in this chapter). The use of newly invented cannons also significantly aided the French war effort. The uncrowned French king, Charles VII, then took the throne in 1429. Although the English maintained control of Calais until 1558, they were never again a serious threat to French sovereignty, or independent rule.

**War of the Roses**

The English were weakened by their loss to the French during the Hundred Years' War. Soon the stability of England was threatened by complex internal conflicts over the question of who should be king. Two rival houses (royal families), York and Lancaster, each claimed to have the right to the throne. Each house used the image of a rose to represent itself—a red rose for Lancaster and a white rose for York. For this reason the conflict is known as the War of the Roses. Tensions began in 1455 when Richard, the duke of York, tried to overthrow the weak and mentally disturbed King [Henry VI](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-vi) (1421–1471; ruled 1422–61 and 1470–71). The king was a member of the [house of Lancaster](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/house-lancaster), and many blamed him for the loss of the Hundred Years' War. Henry's wife, the strong and determined [Margaret of Anjou](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/margaret-anjou) (1430–1483), gathered those loyal to the [house of Lancaster](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/house-lancaster) and asked them to support the king. When Richard of York was killed in 1460, his son, Edward (1442–1483), continued the campaign against the Lancasters. The English Parliament, the central law-making body of England, declared Edward to be King [Edward IV](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/edward-iv) in 1461 (ruled 1461–70 and 1471–83). Henry and Margaret fled to Scotland, where she continued her opposition to the [house of York](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/house-york).

Edward was a talented military leader, but his weaknesses were laziness, cruelty, and a hesitancy to call meetings of the Parliament. This left many members of Parliament feeling that they were being ignored. Edward began to lose support, even in the [house of York](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/house-york). Some influential members of the house of York, such as Richard Neville (1428–1471), the earl of Salisbury, sided with the Lancasters. In 1470, with the support of King [Louis XI](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-xi) of France (1423–1483, ruled 1461–83), the house of Lancaster managed to return Henry VI and Margaret to the throne. After a six-month battle, however, Edward's forces killed Neville and proclaimed victory. Edward was returned to the throne. Margaret was exiled to France, and Henry lived the rest of his life imprisoned in the [Tower of London](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/britain-ireland-france-and-low-countries/british-and-irish-physical-geography/tower-london) (a prison for members of the royalty and nobility). Edward ruled England for twelve more years, until his unexpected death in 1483. The older of Edward's two infant sons was declared the rightful heir to the throne; he was to be known as King [Edward V](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/edward-v).

[Edward IV](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/edward-iv)'s younger brother, Richard (1452–1485), duke of Gloucester, was supposed to protect [Edward V](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/edward-v). Within three months, however, Richard had outsmarted his opponents and he took the throne as [Richard III](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/richard-iii) (ruled 1483–85). The child king was placed in the [Tower of London](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/britain-ireland-france-and-low-countries/british-and-irish-physical-geography/tower-london) along with his brother; those who had opposed Richard were executed. Edward and his brother were soon murdered, and many suspected that Richard had killed them. Henry Tudor (1457–1509), earl of Richmond, became the champion of those who felt that Richard had wrongly taken the throne. Although he lived in exile, he was considered the king. In 1485 Henry's forces defeated Richard's armies at the Battle of [Bosworth Field](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/britain-ireland-france-and-low-countries/british-and-irish-political-geography/bosworth). Richard was killed in the battle and Henry took the throne as King [Henry VII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-vii) (ruled 1485–1509). He was a mem ber of the house of Lancaster, but after he married Elizabeth of York, the War of the Roses officially ended. A new royal house, the Tudors, began with this marriage. Tudor monarchs, beginning with [Henry VII](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-vii), played an important role in the English Renaissance.

An able but somewhat colorless ruler, Henry succeeded in establishing the position of his new dynasty, increasing the efficiency of the government, and enhancing the wealth of the monarchy. He was not interested in intellectual affairs, though his mother, Margaret Beaufort (1443–1509), countess of Richmond and Derby, did provide patronage for scholars. She founded two colleges at [Cambridge University](https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/education/colleges-international/cambridge-university) as well as professorships at both Cambridge and Oxford Universities. The humanist ideas associated with the English Renaissance had begun to filter into England before Henry took the throne but were firmly established only during his reign. For these reasons Henry VII was once considered England's first Renaissance ruler, and the English Renaissance was often dated to the beginning of his reign in 1485. Modern scholars have altered this view, however, concluding that Renaissance ideas became dominant in the 1530s during the reign of Henry VII's brother, Henry VIII (1491–1547; ruled 1509–47). Henry VIII is now considered the true Renaissance prince.

**Henry VIII: Renaissance Prince**

Renaissance ideas became dominant in England in the 1530s, during the reign of King Henry VIII. Henry is now considered the true English Renaissance prince. Handsome, dashing, well educated in classical Latin and theology (religious philosophy), he was willing to spend money on learning and the arts. Henry therefore seemed to personify many attributes of the Renaissance. The great humanist Thomas More served as his [lord chancellor](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/lord-chancellor) (chief secretary) in the 1530s. The German artist [Hans Holbein](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/european-art-1599-biographies/hans-holbein) was Henry's court painter, and the English scholar Thomas Elyot was one of his secretaries. The Renaissance palace at Hampton Court was the scene of many splendid entertainments. [Saint Paul](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/early-christianity-biographies/saint-paul)'s School was founded early in Henry's reign by [John Colet](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/scholars-antiquarians-and-orientalists-biographies/john-colet), the learned dean (head) of [St. Paul](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/st-paul)'s Cathedral. It was the first grammar school to provide rigorous instruction in the classical languages. The Latin grammar written for [Saint Paul](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/early-christianity-biographies/saint-paul)'s by William Lily was the first text of classical Latin (the language used by ancient Romans). Elyot's dictionary (1538) was the first to provide English equivalents for all the words in the classical Latin vocabulary. The grand tour of Europe, which often included extended visits to Rome and Florence, became part of the education of young English aristocrats and gentlemen.

**Henry reforms church**

Shortly after becoming king, Henry enacted a pro-Spanish and anti-French policy. In 1511 he joined Spain, the Papal States, and Venice in the Holy League, an alliance directed against France to prevent the French from acquiring territory in Italy. Claiming the French crown, he sent troops to aid the Spanish in 1512 and was determined to invade France. The bulk of the preparatory work fell to [Thomas Wolsey](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/thomas-wolsey) (c. 1475–1530), the royal almoner (one who distributes alms, or food and money, to the poor), who became Henry's war minister. Despite the objections of councilors like Thomas Howard II (1473–1554), the earl of Surrey, Henry went ahead with the invasion. The king personally commanded English troops at the famous [Battle of the Spurs](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/wars-and-battles/battle-spurs) (1513), in which the French made a hasty retreat, leaving several towns in northern France under English control. In 1520 Wolsey, Henry's principal adviser, attempted to bring peace to Europe by arranging the [Treaty of London](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/treaties-and-alliances/treaty-london), but this scheme was not workable. Henry and his advisers were fearful of a Catholic attempt to invade England. They spent vast amounts of money on fortifications and on renewed wars against France and Scotland (a traditional ally of the French).

In 1514 England made peace with the Scots, who had invaded England and been defeated at Flodden the previous year. The English also formed an alliance with France and, to seal the treaty, Henry's sister Mary became the wife of King Louis XII of France. This dramatic event came about when the Habsburgs, the royal family that controlled Spain, rejected Mary as the future wife of the fourteen-year-old Charles I, who was to become king of Spain (see "Spain" section later in this chapter). Increasingly, Wolsey handled state affairs; he became archbishop of York in 1514, chancellor and representative to the papacy (office of the pope) in 1515. Not even his genius, however, could win for Henry the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. The king was competing with Francis I of France and Charles I of Spain for the coveted position of emperor (see "France" section previously in this chapter). Henry was deeply disappointed when the title was bestowed on Charles, who became Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, in 1519.

**Establishes Anglican Church** Henry VIII is best known today for establish ing the Anglican Church ([Church of England](https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/protestant-denominations/church-england)) after the pope refused to let him get a divorce from his first wife. Immediately after becoming king, he married [Catherine of Aragon](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/catherine-aragon) (1485–1536), the widow of his brother, Henry VII. For more than a decade Henry and Catherine were happy together. They had a daughter, Mary, but the king wanted a son because he did not believe Mary would be accepted as his successor to the throne. In 1527 Henry began demanding a divorce from Catherine so he could marry [Anne Boleyn](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/anne-boleyn) (c. 1507–1536), an attendant in the court of Queen Claude of France. Henry was having a secret affair with Boleyn, and he hoped she might bear him a son. England was still a Catholic country and the pope's consent was required before Henry could get a divorce. However, Pope Clement VII refused to grant the divorce because Catherine's nephew, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, had invaded Italy earlier that year. During the invasion Charles's troops had sacked Rome and stormed Clement's residence. The emperor now controlled Rome and had power over the pope. Finally, Henry acted on advice from his chief minister, [Thomas Cromwell](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/thomas-cromwell) (c. 1485–1540), and simply announced that the pope had no authority in England. Statutes (laws) passed by the Reformation Parliament in 1533 and 1534 named the king Supreme Head of the Church and cut all ties with the papacy. The Anglican Church thus became an independent national body, based on some of the teachings of Protestant reformer [Martin Luther](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/protestant-christianity-biographies/martin-luther). Previously, Henry had opposed Luther and was rewarded by the pope with the title "Defender of the Faith." Now he accepted a number of Lutheran doctrines, such as rejection of the pope as God's sole representative on Earth.

**Closing of monasteries**

One of the most important events of Henry VIII's reign was the closing of monasteries. At the beginning of the Tudor era the religious houses owned as much as one-fourth of all land in England. These estates had been given or bequeathed (granted in wills) to monks by religiously devout men and women in exchange for prayers for their souls after they died. Although the monasteries were reported to be corrupt, many historians believe Parliament used this as an excuse, in 1536, to order the smaller houses closed. Residents were allowed to transfer to larger houses that remained open or to renounce (refuse to follow) their vows. Most chose to renounce their vows. The great abbeys (churches connected with monasteries) were suppressed one by one in the next few years. A second statute, passed in 1540, legalized these closures and mandated the seizing of all remaining property. Former monastic possessions were managed by a new financial bureau, the Court of Augmentations. The court paid small pensions (financial allowances for retired people) to the former monks and nuns, and larger ones to the former abbots and priors (heads of monasteries) who had cooperated in the closing of their houses. By the time of Henry VIII's death in 1547, most of the monastic land had been sold to noblemen and members of the gentry. These people would thus profit from the continuation of the Reformation.

The loss of the monasteries was felt in various ways. Earlier they had been great centers of learning and the arts, but now the great monastic libraries were divided and sent to other locations. Some collections remained in cathedrals that had earlier been associated with monasteries, like Canterbury and Dudiam, while others were acquired by Oxford and Cambridge universities or by private collectors. Much of the wealth seized from the religious houses was spent on warfare.

**Henry granted divorce**

In May 1533 Henry's divorce was granted by [Thomas Cranmer](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/thomas-cranmer) (1489–1556), the new archbishop of Canterbury (head of the Anglican Church). Henry and [Anne Boleyn](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/anne-boleyn) had been secretly married in January, and their daughter Elizabeth was born the following September. In 1536 Henry discovered that Anne had been unfaithful to him and he had her beheaded. [Catherine of Aragon](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/catherine-aragon) died a natural death in the same year. Henry finally had a male heir in 1537, when his third wife, [Jane Seymour](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/jane-seymour) (c. 1509–1537), gave birth to their son Edward. Jane died of complications following childbirth, but Henry waited until 1540 to marry again. Cromwell was eager to form an alliance against Charles V by joining England with one of the Protestant states in Germany. To accomplish this goal, he arranged for Henry to marry [Anne of Cleves](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/anne-cleves) (1515–1557), sister of the duke of Cleves, ruler of a small territory in the Rhine River region of Germany.

Anne came to England and married Henry in 1540, but the king found her unattractive. Cromwell therefore declared the marriage invalid shortly after he conducted the wedding ceremony. Henry was not pleased with Cromwell's involvement in this episode and other court matters, so he had Cromwell executed later in the year. On the very day of Cromwell's death Henry married [Catherine Howard](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/catherine-howard) (c. 1520–1542). Soon Catherine, like Anne Boleyn, was found guilty of adultery; she was beheaded in 1542. Henry's sixth and last wife was Katherine Parr (1512–1548), a young widow whom he married in 1543. She cared for the aging king and tried to be a mother to his children. Both Katherine Parr and [Anne of Cleves](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/anne-cleves) outlived Henry, who died in 1547.

**Edward takes throne**

Henry stated in his will that any of his three children—Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth—could succeed him to the throne, even though his daughters had earlier been declared illegitimate when he divorced their mothers. Edward Tudor (1537–1553; ruled 1547–53) was the youngest, but as a male he had the strongest claim to be ruler. (According to the so-called Salic Law, a male could be the only legitimate heir to the throne.) He was crowned King [Edward VI](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/edward-vi) at the age of ten, but he was too young to take the throne. Henry had named a large council of regents to rule England until Edward was old enough to be king. Nevertheless, Edward's uncle, Edward Seymour (c. 1550–1552), duke of Somerset, took control of the government. Called Protector, Somerset virtually ruled England for several years, but he found it difficult to deal with several rebellions that broke out in 1549. He lost power to John Dudley (1502–1553), earl of Warwick, who was the most important figure in the government for the remainder of Edward's reign.

Both Somerset and Warwick approved of further reform in the church. Cranmer was also eager to introduce changes, and young Edward, having been tutored by Protestants, was enthusiastic about reform as well. Renaissance ideas had dominated his education. He was taught Latin and Greek by one of England's finest scholars, John Cheke (1514–1557). He was instructed in religion by Richard Cox (c. 1500–1592), later the bishop of Ely. Protestantism now reached its highest point in English history. Cranmer's first English-language [Book of Common Prayer](https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/protestant-christianity/book-common-prayer) (text used in Anglican worship services) was introduced in 1549. It was moderate in tone—that is, it did not reflect drastic changes from the Roman Catholic worship services—but a revision issued in 1552 was radically different. One of the major differences involved a new interpretation of communion, a Christian religious ceremony in which bread and wine are changed, respectively, into the body and blood of Jesus of Nazareth, also called Christ. The revised [Book of Common Prayer](https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/protestant-christianity/book-common-prayer) regarded communion as simply a reenactment of the [Last Supper](https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/christianity-general/last-supper), the final meal that Christ shared with his disciples, or followers. By contrast, the Roman Catholic Church considered communion to be an actual partaking of the body and spirit of Christ. The revised Book of Common Prayer also ordered the destruction of stone altars associated with the Catholic Mass (worship service in which communion is taken).

Edward died in 1553 at the age of sixteen, probably from pneumonia (a disease of the lungs) and possibly tuberculosis (a bacterial infection of the lungs). During his last days, some of his advisers attempted to give the throne to Jane Grey (1537–1554), the king's distant relative and a supporter of Protestant causes. They knew that Edward's sister, [Mary Tudor](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/mary-tudor), would restore the Catholic faith because she had always been a Catholic. Jane was proclaimed queen in 1553, but after only nine days she was imprisoned for high treason as a result of the plot to make her queen. She was beheaded, along with her husband, Guildford Dudley, in 1554.

**"Bloody Mary" is queen**

[Mary Tudor](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/mary-tudor) (1516–1558; ruled 1553–58) took the throne as Queen [Mary I](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/mary-i) in 1553, after Jane Grey's nine-day reign. Like her mother, Catherine of Aragon, Mary was pro-Spanish and Catholic. Soon after being crowned, she married Philip of Spain (soon to be King [Philip II](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/african-history-biographies/philip-ii)), but Parliament prevented him from taking the English throne along with his wife. Mary had widespread popular support, and she immediately began undoing the Reformation in two stages. In 1553 she restored the Latin Mass and the following year she recognized the jurisdiction of the pope in England. Cranmer was dismissed from office and placed under house arrest, while [Reginald Pole](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/reginald-pole) (1500–1558) was brought back to England to take the archbishop's place. Pole was an English aristocrat who had lived in Italy since Henry VIII's break with the papacy. Many people supported Mary's restoration of the Catholic faith, believing that Edward's reign had gone too far in abolishing cherished ceremonies and beliefs.

Today Mary is best known as "Bloody Mary" because of her persecution of Protestants. During her brief five-year reign, nearly three hundred people were burned at the stake. This method of punishment, which was introduced by the Inquisition (an official Catholic Church court charged with finding heretics) supposedly drove evil spirits out of the sinners (see "Inquisition" in Chapters 1 and 7). Many who refused to reject Protestant beliefs continued to worship in underground churches or fled to countries on the European continent. Others became involved in a series of plots against Mary's government. Protestant leaders looked to the queen's half-sister, Elizabeth, as a possible Protestant replacement. Mary then had Elizabeth arrested and sent to the Tower of London (a prison for members of royalty and the nobility), and later to Woodstock. Five years later Mary, who was now near death, named Elizabeth to be her successor. Thus, on March 17, 1558, the last Tudor monarch of England ascended the throne.

**Elizabeth**

The reign of Queen [Elizabeth I](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/elizabeth-i) (1533–1603; ruled 1558–1603) is known as England's golden age. In 1559 Elizabeth restored the Anglican Church, taking the title Supreme Governor of the Church. She did not call herself Supreme Head, possibly because it was believed a woman could not head a church. Nevertheless, she followed the religious policies of her father and brother. The Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer was based on Cranmer's second version, but it was modified to allow individual worshipers to hold diverse views about such matters as communion. Elizabeth was highly educated. She knew the Greek and Latin languages, and she occasionally embarrassed foreign diplomats when she understood comments they made in their own languages. She was an accomplished performer on the virginal, the keyboard instrument named in honor of her status as the Virgin Queen—Elizabeth refused to get married because she had devoted her life to her country. During her long reign Renaissance ideas dominated literature. For instance, the English playwright [William Shakespeare](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/english-literature-1500-1799-biographies/william-shakespeare) (1564–1616) produced some of the world's greatest masterpieces by drawing upon ancient history and humanism for his plots and characters. Classical educations were provided to members of the ruling classes and the clergy, and scholars avidly studied ancient history.

[**Philip II**](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/african-history-biographies/philip-ii)**declares war**

Following Mary' death, Philip II had suggested that he marry Eliza beth. When she refused his proposal he realized that England could never be a Catholic country. For the rest of the century England and other Protestant states were involved in conflict with Spain and the papacy. In the Revolt of the Netherlands, Protestants in the [Low Countries](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/britain-ireland-france-and-low-countries/benelux-political-geography/low-countries) fought to throw off Spanish rule and Catholic persecution. Initially reluctant to become involved, Elizabeth finally accepted the argument that England, as the chief Protestant power in Europe, had an obligation to aid Protestants elsewhere.

A major threat to Elizabeth's security were various plots associated with [Mary Stuart](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/mary-stuart) (1542–1587), queen of Scots (ruled Scotland, 1542–67). Mary was a Catholic who had been driven from Scotland by Protestants. For years Elizabeth gave her protection in England, even though Mary was in line for the English throne because she was a granddaughter of King [James IV](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/james-iv) (1473–1513; ruled 1488–1513) of Scotland and [Margaret Tudor](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/margaret-tudor) (1489–1514). But the discovery of a conspiracy to assassinate Elizabeth in 1586 led to Mary's execution at Fotheringhay castle in 1587.

**English defeat**[**Spanish Armada**](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/spanish-and-portuguese-history/spanish-armada)

The execution of the Catholic queen was a signal to Philip that he must seize the throne of England. He began organizing the famous "Invincible Armada," a fleet of 130 heavily armored ships that carried 30,000 men, for an invasion of England (see "Spain" section later in this chapter). In 1587, even before the Armada could set out, the English seaman [Francis Drake](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/historians-miscellaneous-biographies/francis-drake) (c. 1540–1596) launched a surprise attack on the Spanish ships, which were anchored in the port of Cádiz, Spain. The destruction was so great that the invasion was delayed for a year. In May 1588 the [Spanish Armada](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/spanish-and-portuguese-history/spanish-armada) set out from Lisbon, but storms forced the fleet into La Coruña in northwestern Spain. The ships did not set sail again until July. By this time pandemonium had broken out in England, and Elizabeth's advisers urged her to prepare for the impending attack. English seamen rushed home from all over the globe to defend their homeland for their beloved Gloriana (the nickname given to Elizabeth). Among them were Drake, John Hawkins (1532–1595), and Martin Frobisher (c. 1535–1594). At the town of Tilbury, Elizabeth reviewed her small land army, which was clearly inadequate to take on the Spanish forces. She inspired the soldiers by saying that though she had "the body of a weak and feeble woman," she had "the heart and stomach of a King."

When the Armada began moving up the [English Channel](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/english-channel) in early August, the English main fleet took advantage of a favorable wind and made three assaults on the Spanish ships. They did not inflict any serious damage, so on August 6 the Armada anchored at Calais (a French town on the Strait of Dover on the Channel) to await reinforcements. The following night the Spanish fleet commander, Alonso Pérez de Guzmán, duke of Medina-Sidonia, made a serious mistake. He improperly anchored the fleet, thus leaving an opening for a squadron of English fire ships to set the Armada ablaze. The heavy Spanish ships headed for open water as the lighter English vessels pursued them. The Armada was doomed when a powerful storm, which the English called the "Great Protestant Wind," swept through the Channel. Medina-Sidonia retreated, taking his ships north around the [British Isles](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/britain-ireland-france-and-low-countries/british-and-irish-political-geography/british-isles). Many Spanish ships broke up on the west coast of Ireland, and only half of the Armada eventually returned to Spain.

**Queen confronts problems**

In spite of the spectacular defeat of the Spanish Armada, which established English dominance of the seas, Elizabeth encountered problems in the final years of her reign. During the 1590s, she struggled to keep her government from going bankrupt. Yet she also spent excessive amounts of money on the "Cult of Gloriana," staging grand pageants and spectacles to impress the English people. Her final years were dominated by controversy surrounding one of her favorite courtiers (members of the court), Robert Devereux (1566–1601), earl of Essex. Essex had numerous clashes with two of the queen's most able ministers, William Cecil (1520–1598) and his son, Robert Cecil (1563–1612). When William Cecil died in 1598, Elizabeth snubbed Essex and awarded her highest council post to Robert Cecil. Then in 1599 she placed Essex in command of a military force and sent him to Ireland to subdue Tyrone's Rebellion. This movement, led by Hugh O'Neill (c. 1540–1616), earl of Tyrone, was designed to gain Irish independence from England. But Essex botched the job miserably. Not only did he refuse to follow Elizabeth's orders, but he also signed an unauthorized truce with the rebels.

When Essex returned to England, Elizabeth reluctantly withdrew her patronage from him. In 1601 he attempted to stage a coup (overthrow of government) that would oust Cecil's party and put his own party in power around the queen. He sought aid from the army in Ireland and from King James VI of Scotland. The plot failed, however, and Essex was arrested. He was put on trial and sentenced to death. After Elizabeth reluctantly signed the death warrant, Essex was executed. The queen died two years later. Since she had no heirs, the [Tudor dynasty](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/ancient-history-middle-ages-and-feudalism/tudor-dynasty) came to an end. Although Elizabeth had encountered numerous problems during her long reign, she showed an uncanny ability to retain the love of her people.

**James I known for Bible**

Elizabeth was followed by James VI of Scotland, who became King James I of England (ruled 1603–25). He was the son of Mary, queen of Scots, and Henry Stewart (1545–1567), who was the grandson of Henry VII. James was married to [Anne of Denmark](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/anne-denmark). A learned man himself, James wrote two studies of political theory, *The True Law of Free Monarchy* (1598) and *Baslikon doron* ("Royal gift"; 1599). He enjoyed delivering lectures on history and politics. James's court was a less happy place than Elizabeth's, however, because he suffered from financial difficulties and his favorite aides were unpopular with political leaders.

James also had to contend with religious unrest. As he rode from Edinburgh to London in 1603, shortly after becoming king, he was met by a group of Puritans (members of the Anglican Church who advocated strict reforms). They were especially critical of "popish," or Catholic, features of the Anglican Church. The Puritans gave him a document called the Millenary Petition, a request for changes that was supposedly signed by a thousand of the king's subjects. Among the reforms they demanded were simplified services, less elaborate [church music](https://www.encyclopedia.com/literature-and-arts/performing-arts/music-theory-forms-and-instruments/church-music), simpler vestments (robes worn by clergymen), and more preaching. They also wanted to end the use of wedding rings, which were believed to be popish because Catholics wore them. Eager to respond to reasonable requests, James called the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. Here Puritan leaders met with the king and some of the officers of the Anglican Church. Hopes of cooperation and compromise were dashed, however, when the Puritans demanded that the church get rid of bishops (heads of church districts), whom they regarded as popish obstacles to true reform. Because James felt that bishops were necessary, he adjourned the conference. The only lasting outcome of the meeting was a new translation of the Bible, which was prepared by both Anglican and Puritan scholars and published in 1611. Although it was called the King James Bible, James himself had little to

**Elizabeth's Legacy**

The forty-five-year reign of [Elizabeth I](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/elizabeth-i) was darkened by the executions of her cousin [Mary Stuart](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/mary-stuart) (Mary, Queen of Scots) and of her favorite courtier, Robert Devereux, earl of Essex. Yet Elizabeth is best remembered for her accomplishments, such as strengthening the Anglican Church and keeping government finances stable. Most of all, she embodied the spirit of her people—a determination to survive and indeed prosper in the face of enormous odds. Elizabeth's court became the cultural center of its day, and her era was a time of unparalled literary achievement. [Edmund Spenser](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/english-literature-1500-1799-biographies/edmund-spenser) dedicated his masterpiece, the epic poem *The Faerie Queen,* to Elizabeth, and dramas by [William Shakespeare](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/english-literature-1500-1799-biographies/william-shakespeare) and his contemporaries rank among the highest achievements of the Elizabethan age.

During Elizabeth's reign England also began emerging as a great sea power, which eventually gave rise to the expansion of the [British Empire](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/british-empire) over the next three centuries. English exploration and discovery began in the previous century, during the reign of Henry VII, when [John Cabot](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/john-cabot) made a voyage from Bristol to [Nova Scotia](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/canadian-political-geography/nova-scotia) (in what is now Canada) in 1497. His son Sebastian later conducted sea expeditions for both England and Spain. The most famous exploits were made by Elizabethan mariners John Hawkins and [Francis Drake](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/historians-miscellaneous-biographies/francis-drake). Hawkins opened up English trade with the islands in the [Caribbean Sea](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/caribbean-sea) in the New World, and Drake circumnavigated (sailed around) the globe between 1577 and 1580. Attempts were made to colonize Virginia, the territory in [North America](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/north-america) named in Elizabeth's honor (she was called the "Virgin Queen"). English settlers made three failed attempts to start a colony at Roanoke, an island off the coast of Virginia. The last group of colonists mysteriously disappeared. The first successful English colony in North America was Jamestown, Virginia, which was started in 1607 during the reign of Elizabeth's successor, James I. Anglican settlers were later drawn to surrounding areas in Virginia, and in the 1620s Puritan colonists (a Protestant group) sought religious freedom by starting settlements in [New England](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/miscellaneous-us-geography/new-england).

do with the translation. Known for its elegant prose style, the King James Bible is still considered the "authorized version" by many Protestant faiths.

**Involvement in Thirty Years' War**

James's reign was troubled by his insistence upon ruling by [divine right](https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/political-science-and-government/political-science-terms-and-concepts-21) (the concept that a king is chosen directly by God). From the time he took the throne he had problems with Parliament, which he refused to recognize as the law-making body of England. In fact, in 1614 he dissolved Parliament, then ruled for seven years without one. In 1621, however, Parliament reconvened in order to vote funds to aid [Frederick V](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/scandinavian-history-biographies/frederick-v) of Bohemia (1596–1632). Frederick was married to James's daughter Elizabeth. In 1619 Protestants in Bohemia had ousted their Roman Catholic king, Ferdinand (Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II), and replaced him with Frederick. Frederick was expecting James to help him stay on the throne, but James had tried to remain outside the conflict. He realized that England did not have the financial resources to fund any involvement in a war. In 1620 Frederick lost the throne of Bohemia (he was nicknamed the "Winter King" because he ruled for only one winter) and was stripped of all his territories in the Holy Roman Empire. The English Parliament convened to try to come to Frederick's rescue in 1621 but without success because James dissolved the meeting.

The events in Bohemia became part of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), a complex conflict that was taking place in the Holy Roman Empire over several social, political, and religious issues (see "Thirty Years' War" in Chapter 6). James again tried to remain free of the war by arranging an alliance with a Catholic country. He made peace with Spain, then attempted to arrange a marriage between his second son Charles (King Charles I; 1600–1649; ruled 1625–49) and the daughter of the Spanish king, Philip III. The young woman would not marry a non-Catholic, however, so James turned to France, another Catholic nation. In 1624 he arranged for Charles to marry [Henrietta Maria](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henrietta-maria) (1609–1669), the sister of King Louis XIII of France. This marriage did not allow England to be free of the war, though, since many English people believed it was necessary to aid Protestants on the European continent. James could not prevent Parliament from voting funds for a campaign against Spain. England was also dragged into several unsuccessful naval campaigns against Spain and France during the course of the Thirty Years' War.

**English Renaissance continues**

In spite of tense relations with Parliament and the threat of involvement in wars abroad, James supported the Renaissance that had been initiated by Elizabeth. During his reign classical learning continued to dominate education and literature. Court masques (plays in which actors wear masks), some of them written by the dramatist [Ben Jonson](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/english-literature-1500-1799-biographies/ben-jonson) (1572–1637), were based on classical myths. They often involved elaborate scenery and costumes as well as music. Prominent members of the royal family and the court frequently played roles in these productions. An important revolution in English architecture was begun by [Inigo Jones](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/architecture-biographies/inigo-jones) (1573–1652). Originally employed as a designer of costumes and stage sets, Jones was commissioned by James to erect a new [Banqueting House](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/banqueting-house) in Whitehall. James's wife, [Anne of Denmark](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/anne-denmark), hired Jones to build the Queen's House on the royal estate at Greenwich. These two buildings introduced to England the classical style of such Italian Renaissance architects as [Andrea Palladio](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/architecture-biographies/andrea-palladio) (1508–1580). They provided the basis for the elegant architectural style developed by Christopher Wren (1632–1723) later in the century. James also supported settlement in the New World. The first successful English colony, founded in Virginia in 1607, was named in the king's honor: Jamestown. Renaissance ideas were still dominant in England when James died in 1625. During the reign of Charles I, England was embroiled in a civil war between the Puritans and supporters of the monarchy. Charles was executed in 1649 and the Puritans took control of the government, bringing about the decline of Renaissance values in England.

**Spain**

Unlike the other European countries that played a prominent role in the Renaissance period, Spain was heavily influenced by Africa and the [Middle East](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/asia/middle-eastern-physical-geography/middle-east). Spain had often attracted the attention of people from North Africa as a promising new land. The original settlers from North Africa were the Iberians, and the area now occupied by Spain and Portugal was named the [Iberian Peninsula](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/spain-portugal-italy-greece-and-balkans/spanish-and-portuguese-physical-geography/iberian). The Iberians were followed by the Carthaginians. The third group from North Africa were Muslim Arabs and Berbers (wandering tribes) called Moors. In a.d. 711 twelve thousand Moors, led by Tāriq ibn Ziyād (died c. 720), crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and invaded Spain. By that time Germanic tribes, called the Visigoths, had carved up Spain into numerous small regions, each controlled by a feudal lord. These lords were constantly fighting among themselves. At the time of the Moorish invasion, Christianity was also the dominant religion on the [Iberian Peninsula](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/spain-portugal-italy-greece-and-balkans/spanish-and-portuguese-physical-geography/iberian). After winning several major battles, the Moors conquered the Visigoth capital of Toledo in 712 and soon pushed the Germanic lords and their armies into the northern frontiers of Spain.

The Moors established a new culture on the Iberian Peninsula. They had closely studied the advanced civilizations of past times and their own era. Moorish farming techniques brought the dry land to life. Moorish architects renewed cities with intricately decorated mosques, lush gardens, and paved streets. They built the Great Mosque (Muslim house of worship) of Córdoba in 786 and the Alhambra (a grand palace) in Granada in the 1300s. The Moors introduced the secrets of making medicine and of producing steel, skills they had learned from the Far East (countries in Asia). Their philosophy made the cities of Toledo, Córdoba, and Granada important centers of learning.

**Jews link Muslims and Christians**

The Jews were another important group that shaped the culture of Spain. They had arrived on the peninsula by a.d. 300, becoming both urban and rural dwellers. Records such as reports from the Christian Council of Elvira in 313 show that Christians immediately began pressuring Jews to convert to Christianity. Thus, from the outset of their arrival in Spain, Jews were separated from Christians. The Jews therefore welcomed the invading Moors in 711. The Muslim conquest was economically attractive to Jews, since it opened the markets of North Africa as well as of the entire Muslim world as far away as India. Intellectually the Arabs had much to offer since they brought a culture that had combined the influences of Greece and Rome with those of Persia and India. Jews became highly influential in Spain from the tenth through the twelfth centuries, a period that is often called the "[Golden Age](https://www.encyclopedia.com/literature-and-arts/classical-literature-mythology-and-folklore/folklore-and-mythology/golden-age)" of Jewish history. During this time Jews not only produced great works of philosophy, poetry, liturgy (texts for worship services), theology (philosophy of religion), and literature, but they also served as the vital intellectual link between the Muslim [Middle East](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/asia/middle-eastern-physical-geography/middle-east) and Christian Europe.

Eventually feuds and dynastic (ruling family) disputes arose among the Muslims (see "[Ottoman Empire](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/turkish-and-ottoman-history/ottoman-empire)" in Chapter 1). In the eleventh century Christian states in the north of Spain, even though they were not unified, took advantage of Muslim unrest and set out to recapture territories conquered by the Moors. The Moors surrendered Toledo to the Christians in 1085. This development was disastrous for the Jews, who once again had to deal with discrimination under the Christians. Yet the Jews found Berber conquests even more threatening. In 1150 a new group of Berber conquerors, the Almohades, came to Spain and forced the Jews to convert to Islam. As a result, many Jews fled from the region.

**Inquisition reaches Spain**

During the Christian reconquest of Spain, the Roman Catholic Church launched the Crusades (1096–1291), a series of holy wars against "pagans." (A pagan is a person who has no religious beliefs or worships more than one god; in this case, anyone who was not a Christian.) The Christians were trying to recapture the [Holy Land](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/asia/israeli-political-geography/holy-land) (called Palestine at the time; the territory is now in parts of Israel, Jordan, and Egypt), which they considered sacred because it was the place where Jesus of Nazareth founded Christianity. In 1071 Muslim Turks had seized Jerusalem—the center of the [Holy Land](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/asia/israeli-political-geography/holy-land) and a city considered sacred to Jews, Muslims, and Christians—when they conquered the [Byzantine Empire](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/ancient-greece-and-rome/ancient-history-late-roman-and-byzantine/byzantine-empire) (the eastern part of the former Roman Empire, based in Constantinople, which is now Istanbul, Turkey). After retaking Jerusalem from the Muslims during the First Crusade, the Christians began establishing Crusader kingdoms around the [Mediterranean Sea](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/mediterranean-sea).

In 1233 Pope [Gregory IX](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/roman-catholic-popes-and-antipopes/gregory-ix) (c. 1170–1241; reigned 1227–41) established the Inquisition (now known as the medieval Inquisition; see "Inquisition" in Chapter 1). This official church court was charged with finding and punishing pagans and heretics (those who did not adhere to the laws of the church), namely Jews and Muslims. During the Inquisition thousands of non-Christians were killed by mobs, while thousands more tried to save their own lives by converting to Christianity. Some Jews, called Marranos, pretended to convert while secretly practicing Judaism (the Jewish religion). "Converted" Muslims who still practiced Islam were called Moriscos. Religious fanaticism soon intensified. For a time Jews' property was seized, but they did not receive any further punishment. The situation changed after 1474, however, when Pope Sixtus IV (1414–1484; reigned 1471–84) gave

Spanish monarchs Ferdinand II (1452–1516) and [Isabella I](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/spanish-and-portuguese-history-biographies/isabella-i) (1451–1504) permission to conduct the Spanish Inquisition, which was separate from the medieval Inquisition.

**Ferdinand and Isabella seek to unite Spain**

With the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and [Isabella of Castile](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/spanish-and-portuguese-history-biographies/isabella-castile), Spain's two largest Christian kingdoms, Aragon (in central Spain) and Castile (in eastern Spain), were united into a powerful force. Ferdinand and Isabella ascended to the throne as the Catholic Monarchs of Spain in 1474. Their reign, which lasted until Isabella's death in 1504, marked the end of the [Middle Ages](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/ancient-history-middle-ages-and-feudalism/middle-ages) and the beginning of the Renaissance in Spain.

Ferdinand was the crown prince of the kingdom of Aragon when, in 1469, he married Isabella, who was his cousin and heir to the throne of Castile. The noblemen of Castile opposed the marriage because they knew a strong monarchy would limit their power. In 1474 Isabella succeeded her brother [Henry IV](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-iv) (1425–1474; ruled 1454–74) to the throne of Castile. Ferdinand became king of Aragon when his father, King John II (1397–1479; ruled 1458–79), died in 1479. Thus the two largest Christian kingdoms in Spain were united. The marriage contract stated that Ferdinand and Isabella would rule their own kingdoms and that Aragon and Castile were not to be merged. Nevertheless, the monarchs were able to apply the same policies to both kingdoms. Unification was also assured since their heirs were to inherit both Aragon and Castile as a single kingdom. The Catholic sovereigns had specific goals: they wanted to bring the remainder of the Iberian Peninsula under their control, crush opposition groups, centralize the government, and unify the Spanish kingdoms. They had the support and advice of Isabella's priest, Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517), and Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba (1453–1515), the foremost military leader of his day.

Ferdinand and Isabella first waged war against the Moorish kingdom of Granada, on the southern end of the peninsula. In 1492, after conquering this last outpost of Moorish rule in western Europe, they annexed Granada to Castile. In the early 1500s they continued the crusade against the Moors into North Africa with a series of military expeditions. Ferdinand's most brilliant military and political successes were achieved in Italy during the Italian Wars, a series of conflicts in which Spain and France were fighting over control of Naples and Sicily (see discussion of the Italian Wars in "France" section previously in this chapter). After the French invasion of Italy in 1494, Ferdinand was able to intervene in the affairs of Naples and Milan. He took complete control of Naples by 1504. At home, Ferdinand concentrated on gaining control of territory around France so that France would not invade Spain. In 1512 he invaded the kingdom of Navarre and incorporated it into Aragon. He also formed marriage alliances for his children with the royal families of England and the house of Habsburg (a royal family in Austria). He made similar alliances with Portugal.

Ferdinand and Isabella were able to centralize most of the government, although Aragon successfully resisted any changes that would increase royal authority. Most reforms took place in Castile, the larger and stronger of the two kingdoms. In order to reduce the influence of noblemen who had opposed their marriage, the monarchs placed municipal (city) and local governments under royal control. They rarely called meetings of the Cortes (Parliament, or central law-making body) and they appointed middle-class people to government offices. Ferdinand and Isabella also took over a municipal league known as the Santa Hermandad (Holy Brotherhood), which had provided mutual assistance and protection to its members for several centuries. The monarchs reorganized the Santa Hermandad into a national militia (citizens army) that was funded by towns. They used the militia to put down noblemen's efforts to revolt. Armed resistance from the most troublesome nobles was crushed by Fernández de Córdoba's armies.

**Jews and Muslims expelled from Spain**

The Catholic sovereigns' most controversial actions involved Jews and Muslims. Isabella believed that only Catholicism could unite the separate provinces of Spain. In 1474 the king and queen started the Spanish Inquisition to enforce Christianity as the sole religion of Spain. Their adviser was Tomás de Torquemada (pronounced tor-kay-MAH-thah; 1420–1498), a Dominican monk (member of a religious order founded by [Saint Dominic](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/saints/saint-dominic)). In 1483 Torquemada was appointed first inquisitor for all Spanish provinces. In 1487, when he was named grand inquisitor (supreme head of the court), he set out to rid Spain of "converts" who did not actually practice Christianity. Those who did not confess their sins or undergo genuine conversion were severely punished or executed. Practicing Jews were segregated and forced to wear an identifying badge.

On March 30, 1492, heeding the advice of Torquemada, the king and queen ordered all Jews to leave Spanish territory by July 30. Those who chose to stay in Spain had to submit to baptism (a ceremony marking admission into the Christian religion) or be put to death. Jews were forbidden to take most of their possessions with them if they chose to leave the country. Jewish leaders such as Abraham Senior, Isaac Abrabanel, and others tried in vain to have the order revoked. The Jews were expelled and went mainly to North Africa. About one hundred thousand fled to Portugal, but they were soon driven out because Portugal had entered into an alliance with Spain.

In 1502 Moriscos were also given the choice of converting to Christianity or leaving the dominion of Castile. This policy continued for more than twenty years. Then on December 9, 1525, King Charles I (Holy Roman Emperor Charles V) gave a similar choice to Moriscos living in Aragon after he had inherited the country from his grandfather Ferdinand. The following year he established an Inquisition court at Granada, a heavily Muslim province, as a final effort to force Moriscos to accept Christianity or leave Spain. The church then sent Franciscans and Jesuits (members of Catholic religious orders) into Granada and Valencia to apply pressure on the Moriscos. Many Moriscos paid considerable sums of money to Catholic Church officials so they could stay in the country. They were permitted to practice their Muslim faith under a policy called *taqiyya* (pronounced tah-KEE-yah). By the mid-1500s, between 350,000 and 400,000 Moriscos were living in the Spanish provinces. While they were less numerous in Catalonia, Castile, Estremadura, and Andalusia, Moriscos comprised about one-fifth of the population (50,000 people) in Aragon and one-third of the population (100,000 people) of Valencia. The majority of Moriscos were farm laborers, though many worked in trades such as the silk and leather industries. Some had even entered the ranks of nobility.

Tensions between Spain and the Ottomans had reached a peak in the mid-1500s. Christians were becoming impatient because only a few Moriscos had actually converted. Moriscos were also fiercely opposing the efforts of the Inquisition. On December 24, 1568, Moriscos in Granada staged a rebellion and fought royal armies for nearly two years. During the standoff, in 1569, [King Philip](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/north-american-indigenous-peoples-biographies/king-philip) II ordered all Moriscos—including those who were not involved in the conflict—out of Castile, Estremadura, and central Andalusia. More than 80,000 people were deported. Government and church officials then debated what to do about Moriscos in the rest of Spain. Some contended that conversion was the best policy. Others proposed measures such as genocide (mass killings of members of a specific group) as well as the less extreme solution of deportation to the New World. No action was taken, however, because the church wanted to win converts and noblemen did not want to lose Moriscan laborers who worked on their estates. By the early seventeenth century, however, Spanish people had become convinced that Moriscos were plotting with Muslim and Protestant enemies to overthrow the Catholic state. On April 9, 1609, [King Philip](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/north-american-indigenous-peoples-biographies/king-philip) III signed a decree of expulsion. From 1609 until 1614, between 300,000 and 350,000 Moriscos were forced to leave Spain. Most settled in North Africa, while others went to Turkey, France, and Italy. Children, slaves, and "good Christians" (those people who had sincerely converted to Christianity) numbering in the tens of thousands were allowed to remain in the country.

**Monarchs back Columbus's voyage**

In 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella became leaders in the European quest for new territories and markets in the East (see "The age of European exploration" section later in this chapter). They commissioned [Christopher Columbus](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/christopher-columbus) (1451–1506), a navigator from Genoa, Italy, to find a sea route to the Indies (Asia). Columbus's ships went off course and he did not reach Asia. Nevertheless, he did come upon a continent that was then unknown

**Portugal**

Portugal was a rival of Spain during the age of exploration and discovery. The country occupies the western part of the Iberian Peninsula, next to Spain. The name Portugal comes from the ancient port city of Portus Cale (now Porto), at the mouth of the Douro River, where the Portuguese monarchy began. The country's early history is indistinguishable from that of the other Iberian peoples. Lusitanians were successively overrun by Celts, Romans, Visigoths, and Moors (711). In 1094 Henry of Burgundy was given the county of Portugal by the king of Castile and León for his success against the Moors. Henry's son, Alfonso I (c. 1109–1185), became king and achieved independence for Portugal in 1143. Thus began the Burgundy dynasty. By the mid-thirteenth century, the present boundaries of Portugal were established and Lisbon became the capital.

King John I (c. 1357–1433; ruled 1385–1433) was the founder of the powerful Aviz dynasty. He was married to the English princess Philippa of Lancaster. After the Portuguese defeated the Spanish in a war over the throne in 1385, John established a political alliance with England under the Treaty of Windsor (1386) that has endured to the present day. This victory inaugurated the most brilliant era in Portuguese history. Prince [Henry the Navigator](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/spanish-and-portuguese-history-biographies/henry-navigator) (1394–1460), a son of John I, founded a nautical school at Sagres, where he gathered the world' best navigators, mapmakers, geographers, and astronomers. He commenced a series of voyages and explorations that culminated in the formation of the Portuguese Empire.

In the golden age of Portugal, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Portuguese explorers sailed most of the world's seas. They made the European discovery of the [Cape of Good Hope](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/africa/south-african-political-geography/cape-good-hope), Brazil, and Labrador. They also founded Portugal's overseas provinces in western and eastern Africa, India, [Southeast Asia](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/asia/southeast-asia-physical-geography/southeast-asia), and Brazil and poured the vast riches of the empire into the homeland. In 1580 and 1581, Philip II of Spain claimed the throne of Portugal, conquered the country, and acquired its empire. National sovereignty was restored by the revolution of 1640. King John IV (1604–1656; ruled 1640–56), founder of the Bragança dynasty, then took the Portuguese throne. John IV ushered in Portugal's silver age, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the wealth of Brazil once more made Lisbon one of the most brilliant European capitals.

to Europeans. When Columbus returned from this "New World," Ferdinand and Isabella asked Pope [Alexander VI](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/roman-catholic-popes-and-antipopes/alexander-vi) to recognize Spain's authority over these new lands. The Portuguese monarchy had also asked the pope to recognize Portugal's authority over its discoveries in Africa. These requests raised a question about rights to sea routes. In a papal bull, or decree, Alexander drew a line from north to south one hundred leagues (approximately 240 miles, or 386 kilometers) west of the Azores Islands. All lands to the east would belong to Portugal and all lands to the west would belong to Spain. In 1494, the [Treaty of Tordesillas](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/spanish-and-portuguese-history/treaty-tordesillas) between these two countries moved the line farther west, to 370 leagues (about 988 miles, or 1,590 kilometers) west of the [Cape Verde](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/africa/cape-verde-political-geography/cape-verde) Islands. The new line would give Portugal authority over Brazil when it was discovered five years later. The pope also gave Ferdinand and Isabella the authority to convert the people of these new lands to Christianity and to govern them.

**Habsburg alliance with Spain**

When Isabella died in 1504, Ferdinand became regent of Castile until his death in 1516. Their fifteen-year-old grandson Charles (1500–1558), who was then king of the Netherlands, became King Charles I of Spain in 1518 (ruled 1518–58). The crowning of Charles as king of Spain was the climax of a bitter dispute that resulted from the marriage contract between Ferdinand and Isabella. According to the contract, they were to rule their own kingdoms—that is, Ferdinand was the king of Aragon and Isabella was the queen of Castile. Although there was no mention of heirs, Spanish law stated that the monarchs' heir would inherit both kingdoms. The problems started when Isabella died in 1504. Ferdinand and Isabella's son John had been the heir to the throne of Castile, but he had also died. The next in line was their daughter Joanna (1479–1555), who was married to Philip I of Austria (1478–1506), son of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. Ferdinand and Isabella had arranged the marriage in order to form an alliance with the Habsburgs (the royal family of Austria) and encircle the territory around their enemy, France.

Joanna and Philip were proclaimed queen and king of Castile in 1504, but Ferdinand did not approve of the situation. He disliked having Philip, a foreign prince, on a Spanish throne. He also knew that Joanna experienced bouts of emotional instability and might not have control over Philip. Another concern was that the noblemen of Castile supported Philip because they hoped he would rule in their favor. They wanted to regain power that had been taken from them by Ferdinand and Isabella over the past twenty years. Ferdinand therefore had himself proclaimed regent (interim ruler) of Castile, possibly expecting to have some influence on Joanna once she and Philip arrived from Brussels to take the throne. Shortly after the new monarchs reached Spain in 1506, Philip suddenly died. Having been deeply in love with her husband, Joanna was completely devastated and could not rule. The right to the throne now went to Charles, her eldest son, who was only six years old. Joanna retired to a castle in Tordesillas, where she mourned her deceased husband until her own death in 1555.

Ferdinand remained regent of Castile. The prospect of having Charles someday take the thrones of both Castile and Aragon disturbed Ferdinand. The main problem was that Charles was a foreigner. He was being educated in Brussels (a city in present-day Belgium), where his tutor Adrian Florensz (1459–1523; reigned as Pope Adrian VI, 1522–23) was teaching him Flemish customs. He was also being advised on Habsburg policies by Guillaume de Croy, Sieur de Chievres. In addition, Charles would inherit lands in Burgundy (a region of France) that belonged to Maximilian I, and he was in line to become Holy Roman Emperor. At one time, the Holy Roman Empire had encompassed nearly all of Europe. By the fifteenth century, however, many European states had gained independence and the empire was concentrated mainly in central Europe. Nevertheless, the emperor was still the most powerful political figure in the Christian world.

**Charles is king, then emperor**

Since the thirteenth century all [Holy Roman Emperors](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/german-history/holy-roman-emperors) had come from the house of Habsburg. Ferdinand feared that the Habsburgs would influence Charles to place their own interests above the needs of Spain. In an effort to prevent this outcome, Ferdinand brought Charles's younger brother, Ferdinand, from Flanders to Spain. He had the boy trained in Spanish customs and politics and even made out a will naming the young Ferdinand as his heir. The Castilian nobility were alarmed by this development because they knew a Spanish king would limit their power. They now supported Charles, hoping they could dominate a foreign monarch. Giving in to pressure from the noblemen and Charles's Flemish advisers, Ferdinand rewrote his will and named Charles as his heir.

When Ferdinand died in 1516, Charles was named king of Castile and Aragon, becoming the first official monarch of a united Spain. The aged Jiménez de Cisneros, who was now archbishop of Toledo, acted as regent of Castile until Charles arrived in Spain. By this time most Spaniards were having second thoughts about the new king: Charles had never been to their country, and he could not even speak Spanish. Like Ferdinand, they also feared that he would be more interested in expanding Habsburg territory and becoming Holy Roman Emperor than in ruling Spain. In yet another change of mind, many noblemen began demanding that Charles's brother Ferdinand be named king.

Early in 1518 the eighteen-year-old Charles took the throne of Spain. The Spaniards' worst fears were realized when Charles's political advisers arrived in Spain. Spanish officials were dismissed and replaced by men from Flanders. The following year, after extensive manipulation by his Habsburg advisers, Charles was elected as Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor (he was not officially crowned until 1530). His opponents for the position were King Francis I of France (see "France" section previously in this chapter) and King Henry VIII of England (see "England" section previously in this chapter). Charles's victory started a rivalry among the three young kings that was to last for the rest of their lives. To take on his duties as emperor Charles had to move to Aachen, Germany. The parliaments of Castile and Aragon were immediately called into session so Charles could request money to finance his trip to Aachen. His advisers also needed to pay back a loan of 850,000 florins (the Italian unit of currency) they had received from [Jacob Fugger](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/historians-miscellaneous-biographies/jacob-fugger) (1459–1525), a wealthy German banker. They had used the borrowed money to bribe imperial electors, the voting representatives who selected Charles as emperor. The Cortes of Castile announced that, before they would approve any funds, Charles had to give Spain priority over the Holy Roman Empire. Their efforts were defeated after the king's agents bullied and bribed the majority of Cortes members. Charles received funding for both the trip and the bribe. Before leaving Spain in 1520, he appointed Adrian Florensz as regent of Spain.

**The Comuneros Revolt**

Revolts broke out as soon as the king left the country. Juan de Padilla (c. 1490–1521), a representative from Toledo, organized leaders in other cities into a "Holy League of Cities." Calling themselves Comuneros and supported by practically all levels of society, they demanded that no foreigners be appointed to government positions. They also declared that Spain's foreign policy must promote Spanish interests and that the Cortes should meet every three years. Adrian did not respond to their demands, so the Comuneros formed an army under Antonio de Acuña, bishop of Zamora. Adrian sent a royal army to put down the revolt. While preparing to confront Adrian's forces, the Comuneros discovered that they were divided among themselves. Leaders of both the nobility and the middle class feared that their property would be seized by government forces, so they had lost the motivation to champion their political cause. With the Comuneros fractured by internal bickering, the royal army easily crushed Acuña's army at the Battle of Villalar in April 1521.

**Conquistadors Are Ruthless**

While Charles was securing his empire in [Western Europe](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/ancient-history-middle-ages-and-feudalism/western-europe), his military generals—called the conquistadors—were winning tremendous lands and wealth in the Americas. In what became known as [New Spain](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/latin-america-and-caribbean/mexican-history/new-spain) (present-day Mexico), Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) led Spanish forces against the ancient Aztec empire. He marched his army through Mexico in 1519 to the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán (modern-day [Mexico City](https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/political-science-and-government/military-affairs-nonnaval/mexico-city)). Sitting on horses in their gleaming armor, the Spaniards looked like gods to the Aztec. Moctezuma II, the Aztec ruler, gave gifts of gold and silver as peace offerings. But Cortés wanted more treasures, and over the next two years he massacred the Aztec, finally destroying Tenochtitlán in 1521. Even more ruthless than Cortés was Francisco Pizzaro. Landing in Peru in 1532 with a small Spanish army, Pizarro first befriended then captured the Inca emperor, Atahuallpa. After receiving a tremendous ransom for the emperor's release, Pizarro murdered Atahuallpa, then claimed the Inca empire for Spain, killing all the Inca who did not cooperate.

Charles returned to Spain from Germany in 1522. One of his first acts was to execute 270 people who had been involved in the Comuneros revolt. The king also established completely new policies that would appeal to Spanish pride. Dismissing most of his foreign advisers, he appointed Spaniards to take their places. As both the Holy Roman Emperor and the king of Spain, Charles—at the age of twenty-two—was now the most powerful man in Christendom (the term then used for Europe). States occupied by the Holy Roman Empire also came under the rule of Spain and the Habsburgs. For the next eight years Charles increased his power and expanded Habsburg territory. In 1526 he inherited the thrones of Hungary and Bohemia when the Ottoman Turks killed King Louis, the ruler of those provinces. That same year he married Isabella of Portugal. Charles also continued the war against France in Italy. Pope Clement VII joined Francis I of France and Henry VIII of England in the League of Co gnac, an alliance against Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. Infuriated that the pope had sided with France, Charles sent his Spanish and German troops into Rome in 1527. The soldiers were equally angry—not at the pope but at Charles—because they had not received their wages. They went on a rampage that is now called the "German Fury" and sacked Rome. The horrified Clement, who had been locked away in a tower for his own safety, quickly joined Henry in making peace with Charles. Francis was also forced to make peace by 1529. The war between Spain and France continued until 1559, when Italy was placed under Habsburg rule by the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis.

**Emperor confronts reformer**

In 1530 Clement VII officially crowned Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor. By this time the Protestant Reformation, a movement to reform the Roman Catholic Church, was sweeping Europe. The Reformation had begun thirteen years earlier, just before Charles became king of Spain. At a Catholic church in Wittenberg, Germany, a German monk named [Martin Luther](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/protestant-christianity-biographies/martin-luther) presented a document called the Ninety-five Theses. (Over the years the story has been told that Luther nailed the Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle church, but many historians refute that story.) In the Theses Luther listed his grievances with [Roman Catholicism](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/roman-catholicism), such as his opposition to the practice of selling indulgences (forgiveness of sins). Soon he had many enthusiastic followers called Lutherans, who joined him in initiating the Protestant Reformation. At the time Charles was preoccupied with campaigning for the position of emperor and with putting down the Comuneros revolt, so he dismissed Luther as an insignificant heretic. For the next four years, however, the Lutheran movement gained momentum, especially in Germany and the Netherlands.

In 1521, after Charles had become Holy Roman Emperor, he summoned Luther before the Imperial Diet at Worms, a meeting of representatives of states in the Holy Roman Empire held in Worms, Germany. During a famous confrontation with the emperor, the German priest refused to budge on his controversial views. Charles denounced Luther as a heretic who could never be returned to the church. Finally, in 1543, Pope [Paul III](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/roman-catholic-popes-and-antipopes/paul-iii) (1468–1549; reigned 1534–49) convened the long-awaited [Council of Trent](https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/roman-catholic-and-orthodox-churches-councils-and-treaties-21), a meeting to discuss reforming the Roman Catholic Church from within (see "[Council of Trent](https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/roman-catholic-and-orthodox-churches-councils-and-treaties-21)" in Chapter 7). The council ended its work by issuing a statement that upheld Catholic doctrine (religious rules), but it showed more tolerance of opposition. Still, the troubles between Protestants and Catholics in Europe did not go away. Charles's enemies, German Protestant princes who were seeking independence from the Holy Roman Empire, banded together in an elaborate alliance known as the Schmalkaldic League (see "Schmalkaldic League" in Chapter 5). Charles V won his greatest victory as seventy thousand imperial soldiers annihilated the forces of the German Protestant princes at Müberg. Although hostilities ended for a time, by 1551 the German princes had found another ally in the new king of France, [Henry II](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/henry-ii) (see "France" section previously in this chapter).

**Charles ends long reign**

After the battle at Müberg, Charles V concentrated his foreign policy on forming alliances rather than on waging war. In 1554 he formed an alliance between Spain and England by arranging for his son Philip II (1527–1598; ruled 1556–98) to marry the Catholic English queen, [Mary I](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/british-and-irish-history-biographies/mary-i) (see "England" section previously in this chapter). In 1555 Charles officially turned rule of the Netherlands over to Philip. The Netherlands had always been the Spanish territory closest to Charles's heart, and many noblemen wept during his speech. The following year Charles retired to a monastery and Philip became king of Spain. Charles's younger brother, Ferdinand, was named Ferdinand II, Holy Roman Emperor in 1558. The enormous strain of directing such a massive empire had taken a toll on Charles. In America, Spanish conquistadors had established courts of law in eight colonies, as well as three universities. Tons of silver from the mines of Potosi as well as Mexican and Peruvian gold and gems were streaming into Spanish ports aboard giant galleons (the large, heavy ships used by Spain). Charles had firmly consolidated Spanish hold on far-flung territory that was eight times the size of Castile and held one-fifth of the world's population. Charles spent his final years as an adviser to Philip, who soon earned the nickname of the "Prudent King" because he made decisions slowly and with great deliberation. Just one year before Charles died, Philip decisively ended more than a half-century of Spanish-French conflict regarding Italy. Philip's forces demolished the French at Saint Quentin. Spain and France signed the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559.

**Numerous problems confront Philip II**

During the first twenty years of Philip's reign, the [Ottoman Empire](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/turkish-and-ottoman-history/ottoman-empire) was the most serious threat to Spanish world power. Charles had left Philip in charge of an unresolved war with the Muslim Turks, which had begun in 1551 over control of the Mediterranean Sea. In 1560 the Spanish attempted unsuccessfully to take Tripoli, a port city in northwest Lebanon, from the Turks. In 1563 and 1565, Philip's troops managed to repel Turkish attacks on Oran, a port city in Algeria, and on the island of Malta, a Spanish stronghold in the Mediterranean near Sicily. The conflict ended in 1571, when Philip's illegitimate half-brother, [John of Austria](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/spanish-and-portuguese-history-biographies/john-austria) (1545–1578), led a Catholic armada against the Turks in the great naval [battle of Lepanto](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/wars-and-battles/battle-lepanto) (Gulf of Corinth) in the Ionian Sea off the coast of Greece. The Spaniards took 127 Ottoman ships and thousands of soldiers and seamen. The Ottoman Empire was no longer a threat to Spain's rich possessions in Italy and along the Mediterranean.

While Spanish forces were defeating the Ottomans, Philip was contending with the Revolt of the Netherlands, which broke out in 1566 (see "Netherlands" in Chapter 4). Although the revolt did not end until 1648 with Dutch independence, the Spanish had many military victories in the Netherlands during Philip's reign. The uprising began when Dutch Protestants staged violent riots and smashed statues of Catholic saints. In 1567 Philip introduced the Spanish Inquisition in the Netherlands and sent Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, duke of Alba (c. 1507–1582), to crush the revolt. Alba initiated an extremely repressive policy. Arresting two rebel leaders, Lamoral, count of Egmont (1522–1568), and Philip de Montmorency, count of Hoorn (c. 1518–1568), Alba established the Council of Troubles. Alba had Egmont and Hoorn executed along with perhaps twelve thousand other rebels. Other notable leaders fled to safety in Germany. Among them was William I Prince of Orange (1533–1584), the spiritual leader of the rebellion. Known as [William the Silent](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/benelux-history-biographies/william-silent), he was the ruler of Orange, a province in southeastern France. William was a member of the Nassau family, who were based in the Netherlands, and he had acquired Orange through inheritance. Alba's repression continued unchecked, but by 1573 Philip had seen enough. He recalled Alba and replaced him with Luis de Requesens (pronounced ray-kay-SAINS; 1528–1576). In 1577 Requesens was replaced by [John of Austria](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/spanish-and-portuguese-history-biographies/john-austria).

In 1568, at the height of his Dutch troubles, Philip experienced several other misfortunes. He lost his third and most beloved wife, Elizabeth of Valois, as she was delivering a baby daughter. The Moriscos revolted in Granada and had to be forcibly restrained. Philip's only son, Carlos, was exhibiting bouts of severe mental instability. For instance, he threw a servant out of the window when the young man crossed him. He frequently attacked his father's ministers, including the duke of Alba, with a knife. Carlos also made a shoemaker eat a pair of boots because they were too tight. The troubled young man was finally locked away in a tower, where he went on a series of hunger strikes and died later in the year.

**Special mission to defend faith**

The Dutch troubles worsened in 1578 when Philip approved the assassination of Juan de Escobedo (died 1578), John of Austria's dangerous and ambitious secretary. Two years later, Philip issued a royal proclamation condemning [William of Orange](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/benelux-history-biographies/william-orange) as an outlaw and the main source of unrest in the Netherlands. The king's announcement also offered a reward of 25,000 ducats (coins used in various European countries) for the capture of [William of Orange](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/benelux-history-biographies/william-orange). William responded with a document that accused Philip of incest (having sexual relations with family members), adultery (having sexual relations outside marriage), and the murders of both Carlos and Elizabeth of Valois.

Philip was convinced, however, that God had chosen him for a special mission to defend the Catholic faith. Indeed, it seemed to many Europeans that "God had turned into a Spaniard" by 1584. That year an assassin killed William of Orange in his home in Delft. In 1585, [Alessandro Farnese](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/italian-history-biographies/alessandro-farnese) (1545–1592), the duke of Parma, surpassed the military skill of even the bloody Alba when he captured the great walled town of Antwerp (a city in present-day Belgium). The successful siege ended a five-year Spanish offensive that conquered more than thirty rebel Dutch towns and maintained Spanish and Catholic control of the southern provinces of the Netherlands until 1714.

Meanwhile, in 1580, Philip had claimed the throne of Portugal. Forced to fight for what he considered to be his hereditary rights (his mother was the princess of Portugal), he had sent Alba into Portugal with twenty-two thousand troops. The old and brutal duke was again successful, and the vast dominions of Portugal fell into Philip's hands. Then, in a crowning victory, Philip's navy, under Álvaro de Bázan (1526–1588), the marquis de [Santa Cruz](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/santa-cruz), smashed a combined English-French force off the coast of the Azores in 1582 and 1583. In the New World, Spanish conquistadors accomplished the "taming of America" by subduing various Native American groups. To many Europeans at the time, this was Philip's most impressive achievement.

**Spanish Armada defeated**

Just as Philip was on the verge of reclaiming the northern provinces of the Netherlands, his attention was diverted by war with England. The English Protestant queen, Elizabeth I, was worried about the Catholic advance in the [Low Countries](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/britain-ireland-france-and-low-countries/benelux-political-geography/low-countries). In 1585 she openly supported the Dutch rebels. Philip immediately began organizing the famous "Invincible Armada," a fleet of 130 heavily armored ships that carried 30,000 men, for an invasion of England. Leading the venture would be an experienced admiral, the marquis of [Santa Cruz](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/santa-cruz). The plan called for the Armada to sail from Lisbon, Portugal, into the English Channel. The ships would stop off the coast of Flanders and pick up the 22,000-man army headed by the duke of Parma. The Armada would then sail on to England and stage a massive sea assault.

Almost from the beginning, things went wrong with the complicated Spanish plan. In 1587, even before the Armada could set out, the English seaman Francis Drake launched a surprise attack on the Spanish ships, which were anchored in the port of Cádiz, Spain. The destruction was so great that the Spanish invasion was delayed for a year. In the meantime, Santa Cruz died and Philip replaced him with the inexperienced Alonso Pérez de Guzmán (c. 1550–1619), duke of Medina-Sidonia. Medina-Sidonia was an army commander, so he protested that he was unqualified to lead a naval fleet. Philip brushed his reservations aside, insisting that only a man of Medina-Sidonia's stature would be obeyed by the captains of the Armada ships.

In May 1588 the Spanish Armada set out from Lisbon, but storms forced the fleet into La Coruña in northwestern Spain. The ships did not set sail again until July. By this time Elizabeth had prepared the English fleet and organized a dedicated but small land army. In August, sailing against strong winds, the Armada began moving up the English Channel toward Flanders. Medina-Sidonia had been ordered not to engage in battle with the English until he had made contact with Parma. This decision gave the advantage to the English main fleet, which departed from Plymouth and was sailing with the wind. Once within range of the Armada, the English ships were able to fire their weapons at the Spanish vessels from a relatively safe distance. The light and quick English ships also had the advantage of being able to outmaneuver the bulky Spanish galleons. The English made three assaults on the Spanish, but they did not inflict any serious damage. On August 6, Medina-Sidonia anchored his fleet at Calais to await contact with Parma. But Medina-Sidonia made a fatal mistake on the night of August 7. He had not secured all of the anchors, so some ships drifted in the water and left an opening for a squadron of English fire ships to move in and set the Armada ablaze. One by one the Spanish ships broke their cables and headed for open water. The smaller English ships darted in and out of the flames, pouncing on stragglers.

Then a powerful storm—the "Great Protestant Wind," as the English called it—swept through the Channel and forced the Spanish vessels away from England. Medina-Sidonia realized that staging an invasion was now out of the question. He did his best to save the fleet, and the Armada sailed north. Storm after storm seemed to come from nowhere to pound the galleons as they desperately tried to sail around the [British Isles](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/britain-ireland-france-and-low-countries/british-and-irish-political-geography/british-isles). Many of the Spanish ships broke up on the west coast of Ireland. Nearly three months after the battle, Geoffrey Felton, secretary for Ireland, went walking on the coast of Sligo Bay. Although the secretary had seen slaughter and bloodshed during Irish wars with the English, he reported that he had seen nothing like the carnage that awaited him that autumn day. In walking less than five miles, he counted more than eleven hundred Spanish bodies. Half of the Armada was lost and so was Philip's dream of making England into a Catholic province.

In 1584 Philip began Spanish financial aid to France's [Catholic League](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/french-history/catholic-league) in an unsuccessful effort to put a Catholic on the throne of France. Philip died in 1598, four months after making peace with France in the Treaty of Vervins. He believed he had left to his son, King Philip III (1578–1621; ruled 1598–1621), a nation relatively free from international difficulties. Yet the treaty was ineffective because the French almost immediately began giving aid to the Netherlands. Claiming also that the treaty applied only to the continent of Europe, the French continued to encroach on Spanish commerce in the [Atlantic Ocean](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/atlantic-ocean).

**Philip III heads Renaissance**

After Philip III took the throne in 1598, Spain began going into decline. Like his father, he was a devout Catholic, yet he lacked Philip II's intelligence and commitment to work. He was more interested in pursuing his own pleasures, so he turned the government over to his favorite adviser, Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas, duke of Lerma (pronounced fran-THES-koh GO-mahth day sahn-doh-VAHL ee RO-hahs; 1553–1625). Spain made peace with England in 1604 and reached a truce with the United Provinces of the Netherlands in 1609. Spain resumed wars in Italy (1615–16), however, and then entered the Thirty Years' War by sending troops into Germany (see "Thirty Years' War" in Chapter 8). Philip III reigned during a glorious Renaissance period that produced such great figures as the novelist [Miguel de Cervantes](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/theater-biographies/miguel-de-cervantes) (1547–1616), the dramatist [Lope de Vega](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/brazilian-history-biographies/lope-de-vega) (1562–1635), and the painters [El Greco](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/european-art-1599-biographies/el-greco) (1541–1614) and Francisco de Zubarán (1598–1664).

**Empire in decline**

When King Philip III died in 1621, the decline of Spain was becoming more evident. Long years of fighting Habsburg wars in central Europe had depleted the Spanish treasury, despite gold and silver shipments from the New World. Although aware of these difficulties, the new king, Philip IV (1605–1665; ruled 1621–65), continued his father's policy of turning over the government to a court favorite. In this case the favorite was Gaspar de Guzmán (1587–1645), who was given the title of count-duke of Olivares. Olivares had plans for far-reaching reform that he hoped would solve Spain's economic and political problems. First, he wanted to distribute taxes throughout the country and, second, he wanted to abolish privileges given to certain provinces.

Olivares's plans caused revolts in Catalonia, a region of Aragon. Once the thriving center of sea trade on the Iberian Peninsula, Catalonia and its capital city Barcelona had been declining since the middle of the fifteenth century. In the 1300s the Catalans had been given the privilege of taxing themselves and voting subsidies (additional funds) for the crown only if they wanted to do so. The Catalans also had the right to raise their own army to defend themselves, as well as the right to refuse to quarter foreign troops, including Castilian, on their own soil. Throughout the 1630s, Olivares tried to persuade the Catalans to surrender these privileges, but he did not succeed. In 1639 a French army invaded Catalonia, and in 1641 the Catalonians declared their independence from Spain and gave their allegiance to King Louis XIII of France. While the Catalan revolt was going on, the Portuguese took advantage of the confusion and declared their independence from Spain. A similar movement emerged in Andalusia. Thus, Olivares's usefulness had come to an end. In 1643 the king dismissed him and appointed his nephew Luís de Haro as the new chief minister. By the late 1640s, the Catalans had tired of French rule, and Haro offered to restore Catalan privileges. In 1652 Philip sent an army under his illegitimate son John of Austria (1629–1679) to Barcelona. The city surrendered and Catalonia was restored to Spain. Yet the Catalan revolt and the Andalusian independence movement, along with the loss of Portugal, showed that Spain was losing its status as a major world power.

**The age of European exploration**

Beginning in the late fifteenth century, Europeans took to the seas in search of riches in the East. Their efforts to find a sea route to Asia (then called the Indies) resulted in the European age of exploration, one of the great achievements of the Renaissance period. The forerunner to the European explorers was the Venetian traveler [Marco Polo](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/marco-polo) (1254–1324). In the 1300s he had left a record of his journeys to the faraway lands of China (then called Cathay), India, and the Spice Islands. In these lands Europeans could find exotic merchandise and foods that had never been known in Europe. After [Marco Polo](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/marco-polo)'s explorations, the Mongols, who ruled all of Asia and parts of the European continent, had allowed free overland access to European merchants. Although it was a long and difficult journey across the entire Asian continent, scores of European traders managed to return from Cathay and the islands with valuable goods.

The Mongolian empire fell apart at the end of the fourteenth century, and the rulers of the Persian and Muslim kingdoms closest to Europe no longer gave outsiders access to their territory. Denied land routes to some of their most treasured goods, the Europeans had to find a route to Asia in the uncharted oceans. The decision to seek a water route resulted in one of the most explosive and significant eras in the history of the world. By the mid-eighteenth century, virtually all of the world, including the continents of the Americas, became known to Europeans. Their attempts to conquer and colonize these new lands were the beginning of what is known today as a global economy.

**Europeans begin expansion**

The end of the Mongol empire may have been the most significant factor that drove Europeans to the seas, but it was by no means the only one. In the early 1400s the Renaissance was spreading across Europe. Renaissance thought emphasized pursuit of the arts and sciences, the achievement of personal glory, and commercial expansion. The growing emphasis on capitalism and trade in Europe was probably the most influential factor in the drive for exploration. Increasingly, a nation's power and prestige had become dependent upon money and material wealth, and the best way to become a world power was to build a trade empire. Also the Christian nations of Europe had long been devoted to converting the rest of the world to Christianity. Some European explorers were inspired by the myth of [Prester John](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/african-history-biographies/prester-john), a Christian king rumored to be living somewhere in eastern Asia. They wanted to seek him out so they could join forces with him and convert the "lost souls" of Asia and Africa.

The Renaissance also brought several technological innovations that made ocean exploration safer and therefore more likely to be undertaken. For example, the magnetic compass and other advances made it possible for navigators, who had previously been forced to rely on the Sun and the stars, to travel in bad weather and poor climates. Reliable maps of the known world, which previously had been closely guarded as state secrets, were becoming available to seafarers. Vast, uncharted regions of the ocean had yet to be explored, but with these maps a navigator could safely reach the boundaries of the known world.

**Portuguese exploration and colonization**

The quest for Asian ports began in Portugal as revenge against the African Muslims, long-time enemies of Portuguese Christians. The Muslims lived across the Strait of Gibraltar from Portugal, at the port city of Ceuta. In 1415 [Henry the Navigator](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/spanish-and-portuguese-history-biographies/henry-navigator), son of the Portuguese king, led an armada against Ceuta and won a battle that left thousands of Muslim bodies piled in the streets of the city. Only eight Portuguese were killed. After this bloody victory, while looting the city, Henry first glimpsed the riches of African trade that had come from the Indies: cinnamon, pepper, cloves, ginger, and other spices. Unlike Asia, Africa's kingdoms had never allowed Europeans to penetrate the interior. After the battle at Ceuta, Henry became obsessed with gaining access to exotic markets in Africa.

Henry the Navigtor believed the mission would be dangerous if undertaken by sea. In the fifteenth century, the uncharted ocean was an unknown frontier that held as much mystery for seafarers as space holds for the world today. Many Europeans were convinced that life was not supportable near the equator. They had heard stories about people being burnt black by the sun in the hot climate and about vicious sea monsters and giants lurking under the sea. Nevertheless, Henry managed to recruit many able sea captains to go on his venture. In expedition after expedition, Portuguese ships inched their way down the African coast. Along the route, the Portuguese started trading posts and supply stations, often by fighting off natives who tried to repel the intruders. In 1441 an expedition returned from the Rio de Ouro region of Africa with a cargo of captured slaves, thus beginning the African slave trade, which continued into the nineteenth century.

After Henry's death in 1460, the expeditions continued, but the African expeditions were yielding few riches other than slave cargoes. King John II of Portugal therefore decided to have his captains circumnavigate (sail around) the African continent and reach India by way of the ocean. This feat would not happen until 1488 when the Portuguese seaman Bartolomeu Dias (c. 1450–1500) rounded what he called the Cape of Storms (known today as the [Cape of Good Hope](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/africa/south-african-political-geography/cape-good-hope)). Dias's voyage, however, did not match the 1497 journey of [Vasco da Gama](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/vasco-da-gama) (c. 1460–1524), who went across the southernmost tip of Africa and sailed all the way across the [Indian Ocean](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/indian-ocean) to Calicut, on the Malabar Coast of India.

The merchants of India were immediately suspicious of this highly organized expedition from Europe. When Gama returned to Calicut in 1502, with the purpose of turning it into a Portuguese colony, the city's head administrator, or Samuri, sent a ship full of envoys (representatives) to discuss the captain's intentions. Gama responded by seizing a number of traders and fishermen from the harbor, killing them, and sending a boat filled with their body parts back to the Samuri. He included a note suggesting that the Samuri use the body parts to make himself a curry (an Indian dish with spices).

Gama's handling of the Samuri's diplomatic efforts was only a hint of the brutality later committed by the Portuguese invasion force in Asia and the Indies. The Portuguese viceroy placed in charge of Portuguese colonization, Alfonso de Albuquerque battered his way across the [Indian Ocean](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/indian-ocean). He set up a line of fortified outposts from the [Persian Gulf](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/asia/arabian-peninsula-political-geography/persian-gulf) all the way to the Malaccan Strait, the most popular route to China and the Spice Islands. Many of the natives near these garrisons were forced to convert to Christianity. Less than fifty years after Gama's discovery of the eastern route to Asia, trade between Europe and the ancient lands of the Orient was controlled by Portugal, a small kingdom that was more than a year's journey away from Asia.

**"Discovering" the Indies**

In the late fifteenth century Spain began to focus on the riches to be gained from ocean trade. Yet Africa and the eastern route to the Indies were off limits because Pope Alexander VI had granted total control of these areas to Portugal (see "Spain" section previously in this chapter). The only way another country could reach the Indies would be by a western route. The Genoan seafarer [Christopher Columbus](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/christopher-columbus) believed that the western route would actually be shorter. He theorized that one did not need to sail east for a year to reach the Indies. Instead, one had merely to sail west for a month or two, across the [Atlantic Ocean](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/atlantic-ocean), in order to reach the island of Japan. In 1492 Queen Isabella, the monarch of Spain, commissioned Columbus to prove he could find the western route. He returned about a year later with the news that he had discovered the Indies. Columbus was of course mistaken: he had landed somewhere in [the Bahamas](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean-political-geography/bahamas), in the [Caribbean Sea](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/caribbean-sea). Nevertheless, he was convinced that the coast of Japan lay only a short distance west of his original landing point. He made three more voyages to the "Indies" (in 1493, 1498, and 1502) to confirm his theory and to colonize the islands he had already explored. Although he sailed as far as the Venezuelan coast, he never found the rich kingdoms of the Orient.

**Spain claims Americas**

In 1501 [Amerigo Vespucci](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/amerigo-vespucci) (1454–1512) sailed far down the coast of [South America](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/south-america). He proved that Columbus had landed nowhere near the Indies but instead had discovered an entirely new continent. North and [South America](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/south-america) were later named for Vespucci. His discovery made possible two other historic events: the conquest and colonization of the American continents and the circumnavigation of (completely go around) the globe.

The conquest of the American natives by Spanish conquistadors happened within a few decades. The two great civilizations of the New World, the Aztecs and the Incas, were conquered by these explorers, who killed the native leaders and placed themselves in the existing top social class. Other native tribes were quickly brought under control by the conquistadors, and for the next three centuries Spain built up an empire in the New World. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa (1475–1519) traveled across the [Isthmus of Panama](https://www.encyclopedia.com/earth-and-environment/ecology-and-environmentalism/environmental-studies/isthmus-panama), and Juan Ponce de León (1460–1521) searched for the mythical Fountain of Youth in Florida. Hernando de Soto (c. 1496–1542) navigated the Mississippi River, and Francisco de Coronado (1510–1554) traveled through territory that is now northern Mexico and the southwestern [United States](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/united-states). Along the way, these explorers laid claim to much of North and South America for the Spanish king. At the same time, the Portuguese were establishing a colonial presence in Brazil, the easternmost part of [the South](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/miscellaneous-us-geography/south) American continent.

Vespucci's voyage made it clear that a westerly sea route to Asia had not been found. The stage was set for what was then, and is perhaps still, the greatest ocean voyage ever accomplished: the circumnavigation of the globe. In September 1519 the Portuguese navigator [Ferdinand Magellan](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/ferdinand-magellan) (c. 1480–1521), sponsored by King Charles I (Holy Roman Emperor Charles V) of Spain, set out from Seville, Spain, with five ships bound for the coast of South America. He reached the continent in November. A year later, in October and November 1520, Magellan navigated the treacherous straits (now known as the Straits of Magellan) at the continent's cape and sailed across the Pacific, the world's largest ocean. The following month Magellan was killed in a skirmish with the island natives. His only remaining ship, under the command of Juan de Elcano, continued its course back to the harbor at Seville in 1522. Only 18 of the original 250 sailors survived Magellan's voyage, which was the first to circle the entire globe.

**The Latecomers: England, France, and the Netherlands**

Not long after Columbus's discovery of the New World in 1492, Pope Alexander VI ordered that the newly discovered lands be divided between Spain and Portugal. The Spanish had rights to all lands west of the longitudinal Line of Demarcation, while Portugal could claim everything to the east. The [Treaty of Tordesillas](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/spanish-and-portuguese-history/treaty-tordesillas) in 1494 made this division official and granted Portugal possession of what is now Brazil. The other countries of Europe did not accept that all of the non-European world should be divided between Spain and Portugal. Driven by increasing prosperity, the emerging powers of northwestern Europe—England, France, and the Netherlands—decided to invest in exploration.

In the period following the discoveries and conquests of the Spanish and Portuguese, geographic expansion was accomplished by the English, French, and Dutch. During the next two hundred years, nearly every remaining land mass in the world, with the exception of Antarctica, was explored and mapped by explorers from these countries. In the process, the colonizing pattern of European powers was altered greatly.

The problem with being a latecomer to world exploration and conquest was that most of the good lands were already occupied and defended by superior Spanish and Portuguese navies. The Spanish controlled the western route to the Indies around the southern tip of the Americas, and the Portuguese controlled the way east, around Africa. Consequently, the earliest efforts at exploration by the English, Dutch, and French concentrated on lands unclaimed by either country, in North America. At the time, many believed that a "[Northwest Passage](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/arctic-physical-geography/northwest-passage)," a water route to the Indies, could be found either around or through the North American continent. One of the first to seek the Northwest Passage was [John Cabot](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/john-cabot), an Italian navigator financed by King Henry VII of England. Cabot's exploration of Newfoundland, in 1497, yielded sparse information about the new continent's northern-most regions. Also in search of the Northwest Passage was French navigator [Jacques Cartier](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/canadian-history-biographies/jacques-cartier) (1491–1557). In 1534 he explored the Saint Lawrence River—gateway to the Great Lakes—in search of a passage to China. Cartier's voyages never took him farther west than the site of modern-day Montreal, Canada, but his thorough exploration and charting of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence led the way for further exploration by one of his countrymen, [Samuel de Champlain](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/canadian-history-biographies/samuel-de-champlain) (c. 1567–1635).

**French explore inland water routes** Nearly sixty years later, and farther north, [Henry Hudson](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/henry-hudson) (died 1611), a British captain sailing for the Dutch, led his expedition in search of the Northwest Passage. Hudson's expedition wound through the strait and into the huge bay, now in upper Canada, that now bear his name. Originally, the [Hudson Bay](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/hudson-bay), the [Hudson River](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/medicine/biochemistry-biographies/hudson-river), and the river valley were settled by the Dutch, who controlled entrance to the river at the fortress town of [New Amsterdam](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/miscellaneous-us-geography/new-amsterdam), on what is now Manhattan Island. After Hudson's expedition, most of the major exploratory work in North America was done on inland water routes by the French. Beginning with Champlain in 1600, the French pushed their way down the Saint Lawrence River to the Great Lakes. In a dozen voyages from 1603 until 1633, Champlain discovered the easternmost Great Lakes, Huron and Ontario; founded the city of Quebec; and served as commandant of France's new colonial territories, which were called [New France](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/canadian-political-geography/new-france).

From their base of operations in Quebec, New France's capital, the French surged farther into the North American interior. The Jesuit missionary [Jacques Marquette](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/jacques-marquette) (1637–1675), on a 1673 expedition to carry traders and goods into New France's fur-trapping country, discovered a new North American river, the Mississippi, and descended it all the way to the mouth of the Arkansas River before returning. Marquette's accidental voyage convinced the French that the Mississippi flowed into the [Gulf of Mexico](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/gulf-mexico), a suspicion that was confirmed in 1682, when René-Robert Cavelier de [La Salle](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/la-salle) (1643–1687) traveled down the Mississippi to its mouth, where he founded the city of [New Orleans](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/new-orleans). In 1684, [La Salle](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/la-salle) lay claim, on behalf of France, to the entire Mississippi River basin, from the Illinois country to the [Gulf of Mexico](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/gulf-mexico). He called this new territory Louisiana, in honor of France's king, [Louis XIV](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/french-history-biographies/louis-xiv). French colonization and a thriving [fur trade](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/united-states-and-canada/us-history/fur-trade) spread outward along the corridor of the Mississippi Valley, pushing as far west as the [Rocky Mountains](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-physical-geography/rocky-mountains).

For the time being, the English were content to settle along the eastern coast of North America. After a couple of failed attempts, English settlements were established in Virginia and Massachusetts, later spreading into Maryland and Pennsylvania. The English colonies, especially in [the South](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/miscellaneous-us-geography/south), would later establish a plantation economy, producing chiefly tobacco and cotton, that relied heavily on the use of African slaves.

The other European powers now had land and a certain amount of income from their colonies, but they still did not have what they wanted: the spices, sugar, and precious metals owned by Spain and Portugal. Growing bolder in their quest for riches, these countries attacked Portuguese and Spanish treasure ships wherever they could find them—in the Caribbean, along the Spanish-American coast, and in the English Channel. Nevertheless, Spain's empire was never seriously threatened on land. In fact, only the Dutch had any success in attacking European empires in America. In 1630 the Netherlands seized some coastal towns in northern Brazil. For about twenty years the Netherlands maintained virtual control of Brazil and its sugar production, before being thrown out by an increasingly independent Brazilian population.

**Five European empires**

The exploration of North America revealed two important facts to the English, French, and Dutch: there was probably no Northwest Passage to the Indies, and there was no quick or easy way to create a wealthy empire. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, these countries were shifting their attention to the riches of the Indies. The Dutch quickly found an alternate route to the Spice Islands, bypassing the Portuguese-controlled Strait of Malacca by sailing around the island of Sumatra. Once a Dutch presence had been established in the Spice Islands, ships commissioned by the [Dutch East India Company](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/benelux-history/dutch-east-india-company) assaulted Portuguese ports from the Indian Ocean to China. By 1615, the Dutch possessed the Spice Islands and were forced to face the threat of the [British East India Company](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/british-east-india-company). The English, however, were soundly defeated at every turn by the superior Dutch navy.

Eventually, the [Dutch East India Company](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/benelux-history/dutch-east-india-company) took over every Portuguese-controlled point between the Malabar Coast and the Chinese city of Macao. Although the fiercest fighting over African colonies would not occur until the eighteenth century, English and French expeditions managed to take control of various slaving stations along the coast of Africa. By the year 1700, there were not two, but five important European empires with influence throughout the world: Spain, Portugal, England, France, and the Netherlands.