

## Why Europeans Explored

**GOLD** Europeans want to get rich by: 1. Getting gold 2. Trading spices 3. Finding natural resources. **GLORY** Europeans compete to be richest and biggest. **GOD** Europeans want diffusion of Christianity

### LENGTH OF EUROPEAN VOYAGES

- Christopher Columbus' voyage took a total of 33 days. He landed on San Salvador, Cuba, and Hispaniola.
- Vasco Da Gama's voyage took ninety-three days. The sheer distance covered by da Gama was three times the distance traveled by Christopher Columbus
- Sir Francis Drake's voyage lasted from November 15, 1577 to September 20, 1520
- **Giovanni da Verrazano's voyage was from September 1523 to July 1524. He was eaten by cannibals on his second voyage**
- **Ferdinand Magellan's voyage lasted three years 1519-1522.**

### Living conditions on the ships

Aboard ships, especially on long voyages, was appalling. Ships constantly leaked and were crawling with rats, lice, and other creatures. They were also filthy, with little or no sanitation facilities. Without refrigeration, food and water spoiled quickly and horribly. Disease was rampant, especially scurvy, caused by a vitamin C deficiency. A *good* voyage between Portugal and India would claim the lives of twenty per cent of the crewmen from scurvy alone. It should come as no surprise then that ships' crews were often drawn from the dregs of society and required a strong and often brutal, hand to keep them in line.

### Factors favoring Europe

European explorers started to lead the way in global exploration, timidly hugging the coasts at first, but gradually getting bolder and striking out across the open seas. There were four main factors that led to Europeans opening up a whole new world at this time.

1. **The rise of towns and trade** Important changes in Europeans' mental gave them the incentive and confidence to launch voyages of exploration in three ways. **First**, they stimulated a desire for Far Eastern luxuries. **Second**, they exposed Europeans to new cultures, peoples and lands. **Third** interest in the outside world was further stimulated by the travels of Marco Polo in the late 1200's.
2. **Medieval religious fervor** also played its part. Captains such as Columbus, da Gama, and Magellan had an implicit faith in God's will and guidance in their missions. They felt it was their duty to convert to Christianity any new peoples they met.
3. **Europe's geographic position** also drove it to find new routes to Asia in three ways. **First** Europe's geographic position at the extreme western end of the trade routes. **Second** trade routes were long, dangerous, and quite fragile.
4. **Third**, the fall of the Byzantine Empire and the earlier fall of the crusader states had given the Muslims a larger share of the trade headed for Europe. Thus Europe's disadvantageous geographic position provided an incentive to find another way to the Far East.
5. **Ships and navigation technology** had seen some dramatic leaps forward. The compass, allowed sailors to sail with much greater certainty that they were sailing in the right direction. The quadrant, crosstaff, and astrolabe allowed them to calculate latitude by measuring the elevation of the sun and North Star,