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Ferdinand Magellan: The Man Who Sailed Around the World

Ferdinand Magellan was a brave explorer who is famous for leading the first voyage around the world. Even though he did not live to complete the journey, his expedition proved that the world was round and much larger than people had thought.

Early Life and Dreams of Exploration

Ferdinand Magellan was born in 1480 in Portugal. As a young boy, he was interested in sailing and adventure. He became a sailor and learned about navigation, or how to travel using the stars and maps.

At that time, many explorers wanted to find a faster route to the Spice Islands (now part of Indonesia). These islands were important because they had valuable spices like cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon. However, the trip around Africa to get there was long and dangerous.

Magellan believed that he could reach the Spice Islands by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean, instead of sailing around Africa. He asked King Charles I of Spain for ships and supplies to test his idea. The king agreed and gave him five ships and 270 men.

The Great Voyage

On September 20, 1519, Magellan and his crew set sail from Spain. They crossed the Atlantic Ocean and reached South America. There, they searched for a way to sail through the continent to the Pacific Ocean.

After many months, they found a narrow passage at the bottom of South America. This waterway, now called the Strait of Magellan, helped them pass from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Magellan was the first European to sail across the Pacific, which he named because it was peaceful and calm. The journey was hard. The sailors ran out of food and fresh water. Many got sick and some died from hunger and disease. But Magellan and his crew kept going.

Reaching the Philippines and Magellan's Death

In March 1521, Magellan and his crew landed in the Philippines. There, Magellan met local rulers and tried to help one of them in battle. However, during a fight, Magellan was killed by warriors on April 27, 1521.

Even though Magellan died, his crew continued the journey. Under the command of Juan Sebastián Elcano, the remaining sailors sailed back to Spain in 1522, completing the first trip around the world. Only one ship and 18 men survived.

A Lasting Impact

Magellan's voyage changed history. It showed that the Earth was round and that the oceans were connected. His journey also helped people understand the true size of the world. Today, people remember Magellan as a bold and determined explorer who helped map the Earth.