

Ferdinand and Isabella

Fund Christopher Columbus' discovery of the New World—1492

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella ruled Spain in the fifteenth century. Under their rule, Spain was unified. They started reforms in the Catholic Church that allowed Catholicism to thrive in Spain.

Because the trade routes to the East had become dangerous after the Turks captured Constantinople, Ferdinand and Isabella thought a new route to the East would be better. They decided to hire the great sailor Christopher Columbus to find a safer water route to the East.

Many people thought Columbus crazy when he set out toward the west with three ships: the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria. He believed the new idea that the earth was round, and that by traveling west, he would reach the East. In 1492, he landed on an island in the Caribbean Sea. Because he was looking for India, the land became known as the West Indies.