

# Sir Francis Drake

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## Sir Francis Drake

“El Draque” or “The Dragon” the Spanish called this English admiral out of fear. Sir Francis Drake was born at Crownsdale, near Tavistock, Devon around the 1540's. He served, as an apprentice in the Thames Coastal Trade after his father became a preacher at Chatham. He led several expeditions against the Spanish Main as well as an attack against the Spanish city of Cadiz. Drake was the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe and he helped defeat the Spanish Armada in 1588. He was a successful privateer, a talented navigator and one of the most famous seamen in history.

Drake made several [voyages](#) to the Caribbean with English seaman John [Hawkins](#) in the 1560's, which were the early years of Drake's career. They were not privateering voyages, but attempts to smuggle Spanish goods into the colonies. On the third voyage Hawkins' fleet of six ships, one commanded by Sir [Francis](#) Drake, were driven into the Gulf of Mexico by a hurricane. The ships were led into the Vera Cruz port and demanded supplies. The Spanish however had a different plan of assaulting and killing many men and destroying four ships. Drake and Hawkins returned to England safely but, this incident led to Drake's desire for revenge on the Spaniards.

In 1572 Drake sailed from England with two ships and 73 men. They landed at a small island called the Isle of Pines and began preparations for his attack on the Spanish. His plan was to sack the city of Nombre de Dios. On their first attempt they did not succeed but they made another soon after. They then took the town of Nombre de Dios on the Isthmus of Panama, they captured a ship in the harbor of Cartagena, they burned Portobello, they crossed and re-crossed the isthmus, and they captured three mule trains bearing 30 tons of silver.

Drake's real opportunity came in 1577 when Queen Elizabeth gave him a grant to make the first circumnavigation of the world by an Englishman. On December 13th Drake sailed from Plymouth in the Golden Hind with four other small ships and about 160 men. They were set out to raid the Spanish property on the Pacific coast of the New World. He abandoned two ships in the Rio de Plata in South America, and, with the remaining three, navigated the Straights of Magellan.

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