

# The discovery of America



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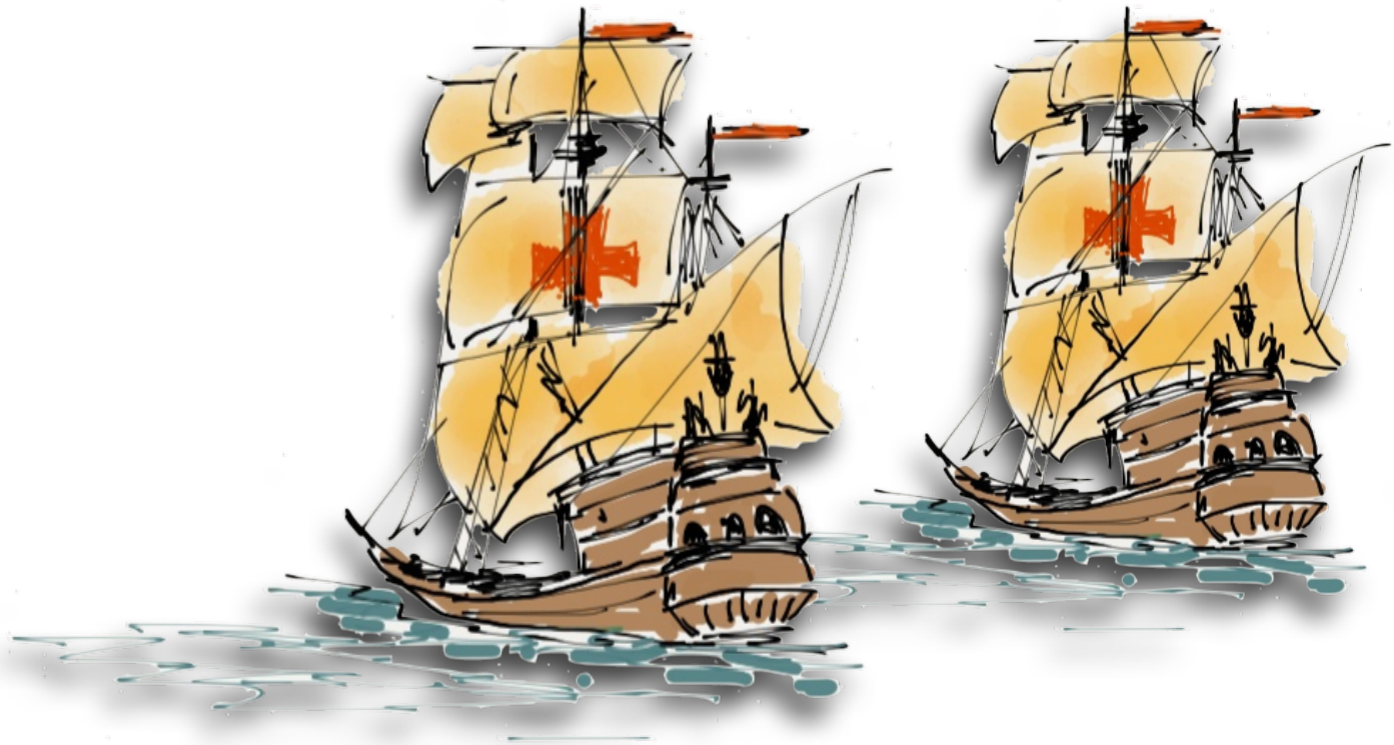


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Our story is dated back *in 1451, more than 500 years ago.*

In the fifteenth century people did not know as many countries and continents as nowadays. They knew nothing about America, as it was still undiscovered...

Would you like to travel across time living this exciting adventure? Would you like to learn how a man and a nation discovered a new continent? So, this is our dazzling voyage...



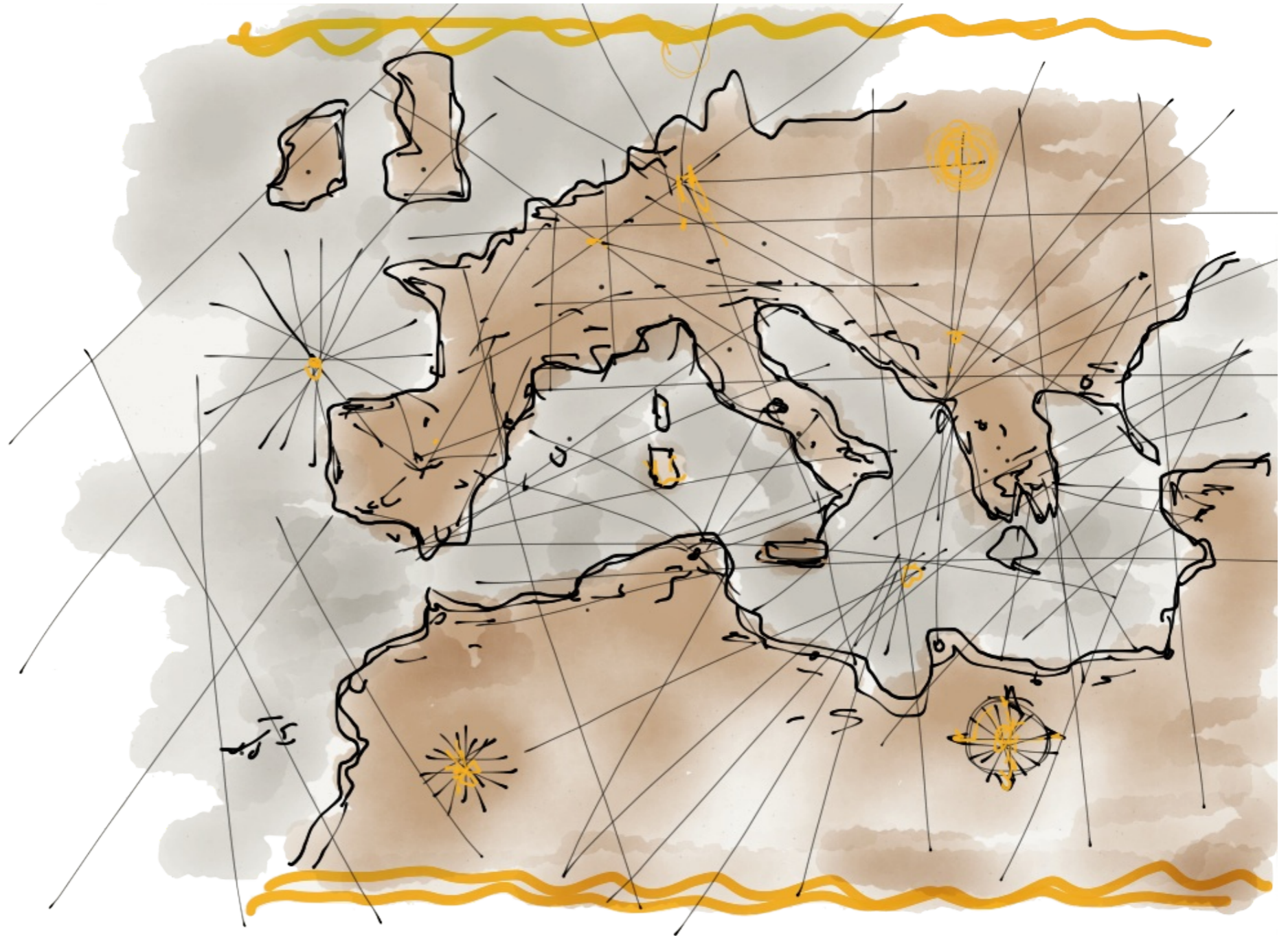
*Cristóbal Colón*, one of the five sons of a wool merchant and weaver, was born in Genoa, Italy in 1451.

As he loved the sea, he went to sail when he was a child: first, as a cabin boy and when he was 15, he became a sailor.

Everybody admired him because he was a very good sailor.



At the age of 20, Colón already worked as a captain for several Genoese companies, running the length of all **the routes of the Mediterranean.**



It was in 1476, during a sea battle among merchant seamen and pirates in the Cape St. Vincent, in the south of Portugal, when his ship caught fire. Despite the shipwreck, he swam ashore and settled in Lagos, Portugal.

He lived there for nine years.

It was then when he started to make new merchant voyages through the Atlantic Ocean, sailing from Lisbon to Guinea.



During those thrilling travels he met many seamen and discovered some of the best kept secrets of the sea.

Then he thought one of the really most brilliant idea in the history: a new sea-route...

- Ummmm ... *I could arrive to the East Indies by sailing west* instead of east, crossing the Atlantic Ocean. No one has done so up to now. - Colón thinks.

He also thought it would be an exhausting and long voyage and perhaps it would be a failure... But, although his idea seemed to be a real madness, he decided to try it.



Colón was so delighted with his project that he presented his idea to **king John II of Portugal**.

- His Majesty - Colón says. - I think you have already heard about my project of arriving to the East Indies from the west. So, I would like you to help me economically.

- Mr. Colón - the king replies. - After having analyzed your crazy idea, my experts and I do not believe in such a dangerous voyage. Besides, I do not want to waste my money. **I am so sorry** - the king says finally.





However, Colón far from being discouraged, felt an strong conviction to continue with his adventure.

He decided to began reading some books and materials related to his project: history books, maps, letters, the reports of mathematician and doctor Toscanelli, the reports of the Venetian traveller Marco Polo, who had reached India by crossing Asia...



Shortly after, Colón arrived to southern Spain, at the port of Palos de la Frontera, in Huelva.

- I will present my project in the Castilian court. I am sure they do not ignore me'. - Colón thinks.



Then Castilla and Portugal were the only countries in which Colón could find all the maritime potential needed to make his desired voyage.

When Colón arrived to the monastery of La Rábida, Huelva, he decided to present his project to the **Castile Catholic Kings, King Fernando and Queen Isabel.**



It was in January 1486, after long negotiations when the Catholic Monarchs received Colón in Alcalá de Henares, an important village of the Spain's capital, Madrid.

He asked them to help him economically after explaining his great project.

- Your Majesties, my great project consists of crossing the Atlantic Ocean, sailing towards the west in order to reach India, Catay (China) and Cipango (Japan).

- Mr. Colón - king Fernando replies. - After having analyzed your great risky project, our experts have recommended us not to approve it.

*We are so sorry.*



Once more, Colón received a negative reply. And... once more, that negative answer did not discourage him.

At that time, Duque de Medinaceli welcomed Colón in his palace for two years.

It was then that Colón continued studying all kinds of books, maps, letters... related to India and the way of reaching such distant lands.

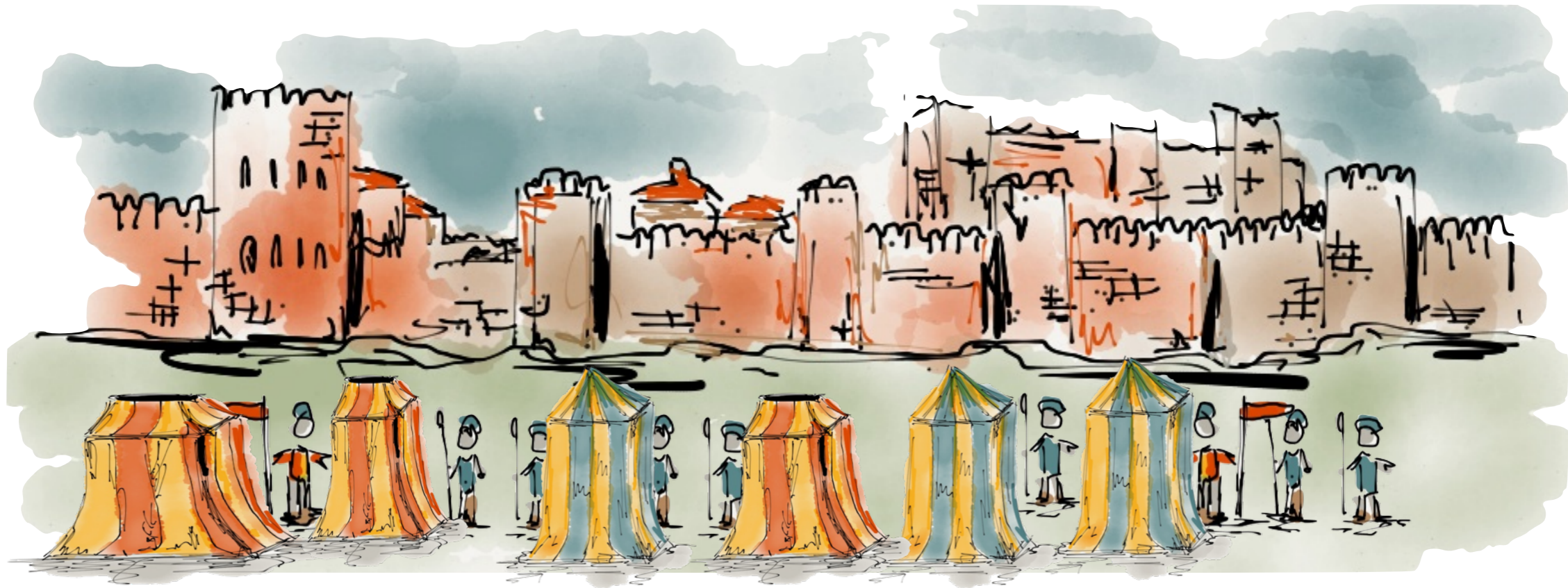
As time passed, Colón received no answer to embark upon his adventure...



Finally, the queen Isabel seemed to be interested in Colón's project.

- Colón must meet with us again in Granada! - the queen Isabel exclaims.

In December 1491, Colón met with the Catholic kings in the outskirts of Granada, a Spanish southern city. But, there was a little problem: in those days, Granada was suffering a bloody war to throw the Arabs away from Catholic Spain.



Therefore, once again the experts rejected his huge project.

However, the Catholic kings promised him to reconsider his plan, once the war was over.



This time Colón felt very sad and tired...

At last, when the war was over and Granada was conquered by the Catholics, the king Fernando and the queen Isabel approved the project of Cristóbal Colón.

- I thank Your Majesties. I certainly will not disappoint you! - Colón says.





It was on 17 April 1492 when our explorer signed a contract whereby the newly discovered lands would be part of the Spanish Crown of Castile and Aragón. Besides, the Catholic Kings named Colón as an admiral, viceroy as well as governor of the new lands. Also, Colón would receive one tenth of the wealth obtained.



The sign of this contract is known as 'The Capitulations of Santa Fé

Then Colón travelled to Palos de la Frontera, a village of Huelva (another southern city) with the aim of achieving the ships and the crew needed to accomplish his dream.

Unfortunately, our explorer was not welcomed there and nobody trusted in him.

At first, as we have just mentioned, the sailors doubted the success of Colón's project; but finally, thanks to the help of the Pinzón brothers, especially Martín Alonso, Colón got **three ships** and their crews. One ship was a nao, named '**La Santa María**' and the others were two caravels, named '**La Pinta**' and '**La Niña**'.



At last, his dream was about to become a reality... It was on **3 August 1492** when the expedition, led by Colón, sailed west from Spain, aiming for the Indies. The ships embarked from the port of Palos de la Frontera with ninety sailors and two million of maravedies (Spanish currency of the time).

The first stop was in the Canary Islands, where they repaired the rudder of 'La Pinta' and modified the sails of 'La Niña.' Then they continued living their real adventure towards India, Catay and Cipango.



The voyage was long and difficult. Sometimes, in the Atlantic Ocean, when the sea was rough, the waves were so strong and high that the old ships were continually tottering.

- Admiral, how much longer before we get to Indies? - ask impatiently the sailors.
- A little longer ... we must follow towards the West - Colón answers.



As the days passed by, the crew started to be more and more nervous because they had not seen any land for weeks. When the sailors decided to join to the expedition, they had no idea about the long and difficult voyage over the blue sea.

- Admiral, when are we going to arrive? We are very tired! - the crew exclaims.

Colón always answers the same: - A little longer ... we are closer and closer. Do not worry so much!

However, the sailors doubted of his words.



So, as the tension among the crew was increasing, on 7 October a little rebellion broke out.

- We must go back to home. If we do not turn back now, we will starve! Colón has already lost, he does not know exactly where to go - the rebels shout.

Then on 10 October, the adventure was about to fail, as the uprising had continued to grow. It was even supported by the Pinzón brothers.

Colón promised them they would turn back in 3 days if they did not find any land.



Fortunately, they had not to return.  
After navigating for 72 days, during  
the night of 11-12 October, sailor  
Rodrigo de Triana saw a piece of land  
in the horizon and shouted:

- Land ho, land ho!

Finally, it seemed the dream  
of Colón came true.



That day, on 12 October 1492 Colón and his explorers landed on the coast of the Guanahani Island and baptized it as

San Salvador. Currently, it is located

in the archipelago of the Bahamas.

Everybody was very happy. The whole crew yells out: 'Hurrah, long live Colón!'





After that, they continued sailing until they **arrived at Cuba and the Island of Hispaniola**. There, the nao 'La Santa María' was sunk and as it was a wooden ship, they decided to build the first Spanish settlement in the New World. It was known as the fort of 'La Navidad.'

At that moment, everyone thought they were in the Indies. They never even imagined the possibility of having just discovered a new continent!



On January 1493, the Admiral ordered the ships to be brought back to Spain.

After a long and stormy voyage, the two caravels 'La Pinta and La Niña', returned safely to Spain.

They all were received as heroes, in the port of Palos de la Frontera.



Shortly afterwards, they travelled to Barcelona where they were welcomed by the Catholic Monarchs. Colón marveled the court telling their long and dangerous adventure. He showed them some of his great discoveries: new food products, wonderful objects, animals, the natives from the Indies...



After his first voyage to America, Colón made other three subsequent trips.

Colón died quietly on 20 May 1506, in Valladolid, central Spain. He never knew that he had discovered a new continent.



# First trip



Spain

Canary Islands

Guanahani

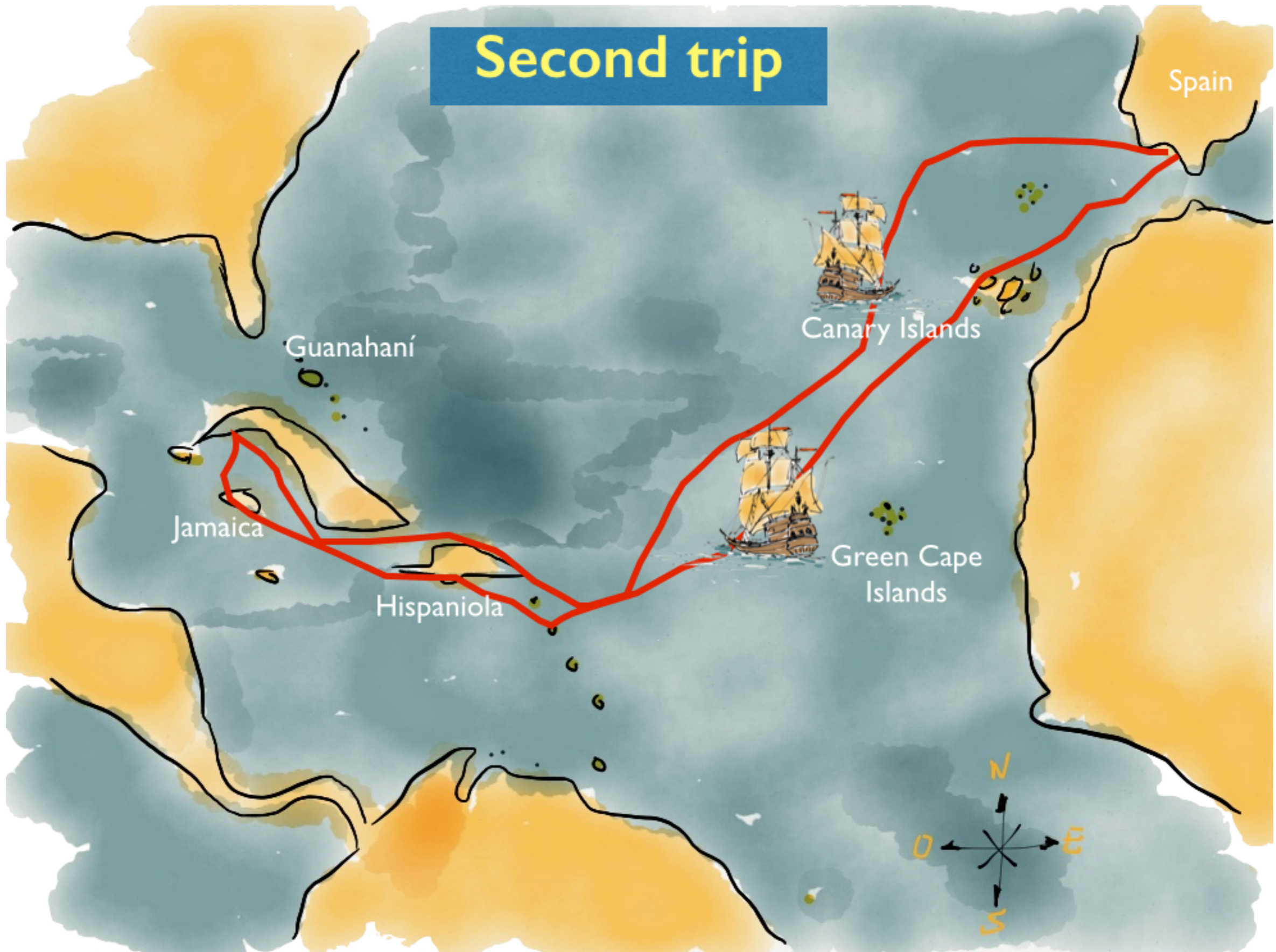
Jamaica

Hispaniola

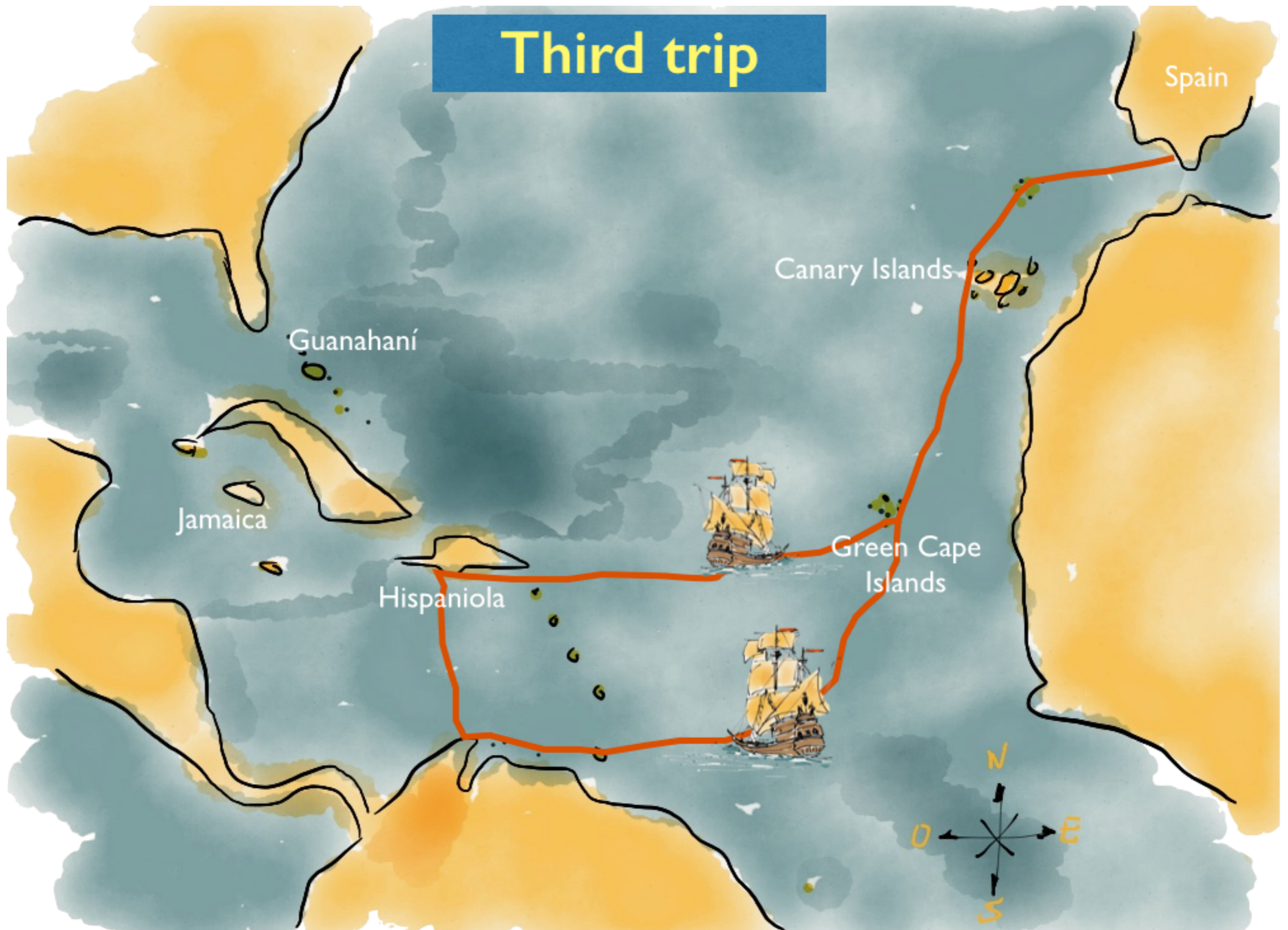
Green Cape Islands



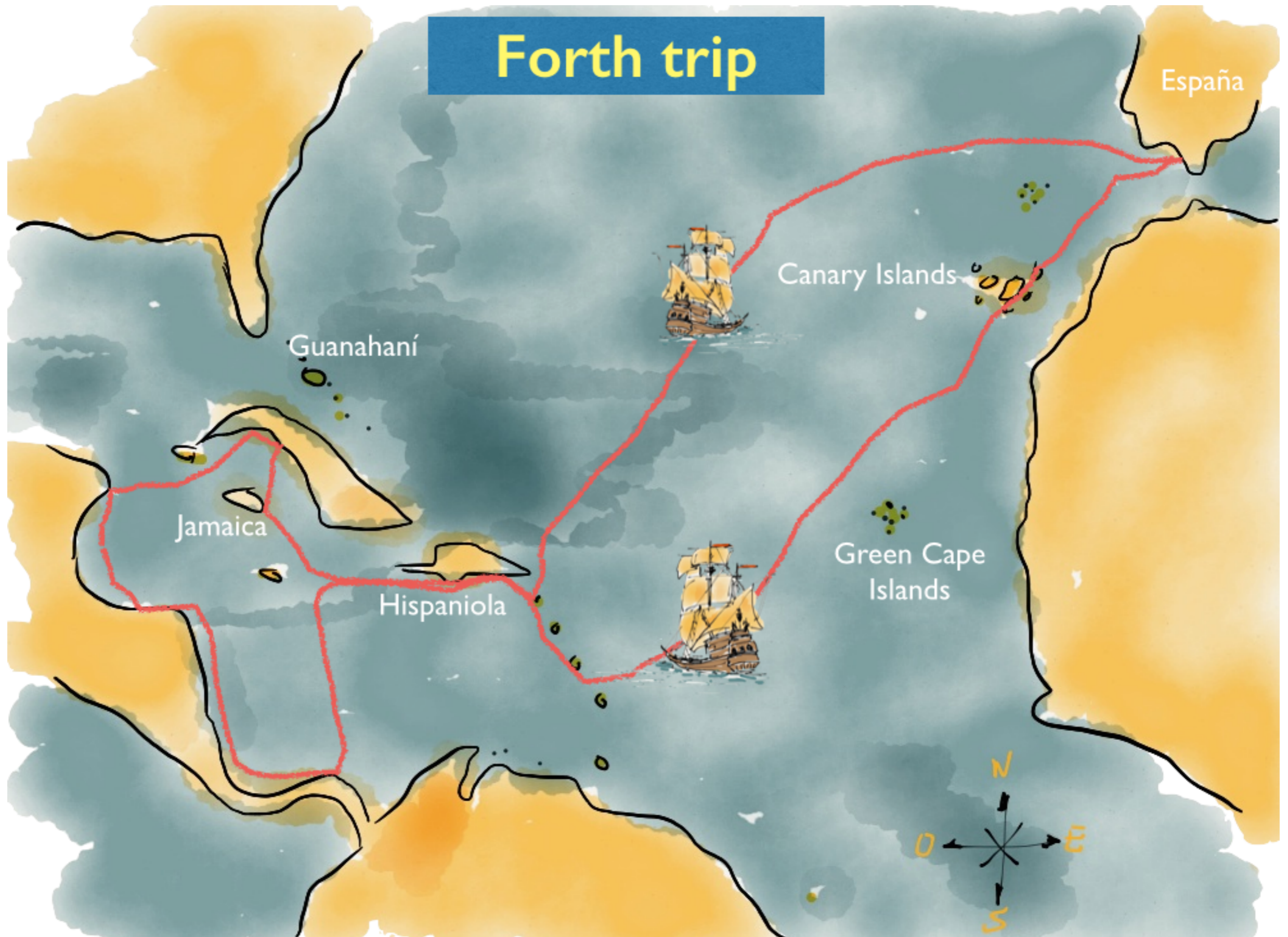
# Second trip



# Third trip



# Forth trip





It was later when a friend of Colón, an Italian navigator named **Américo Vesputio**, assured that the Indies where Colón had arrived, were actually a new continent.



Then everyone started calling **América**.

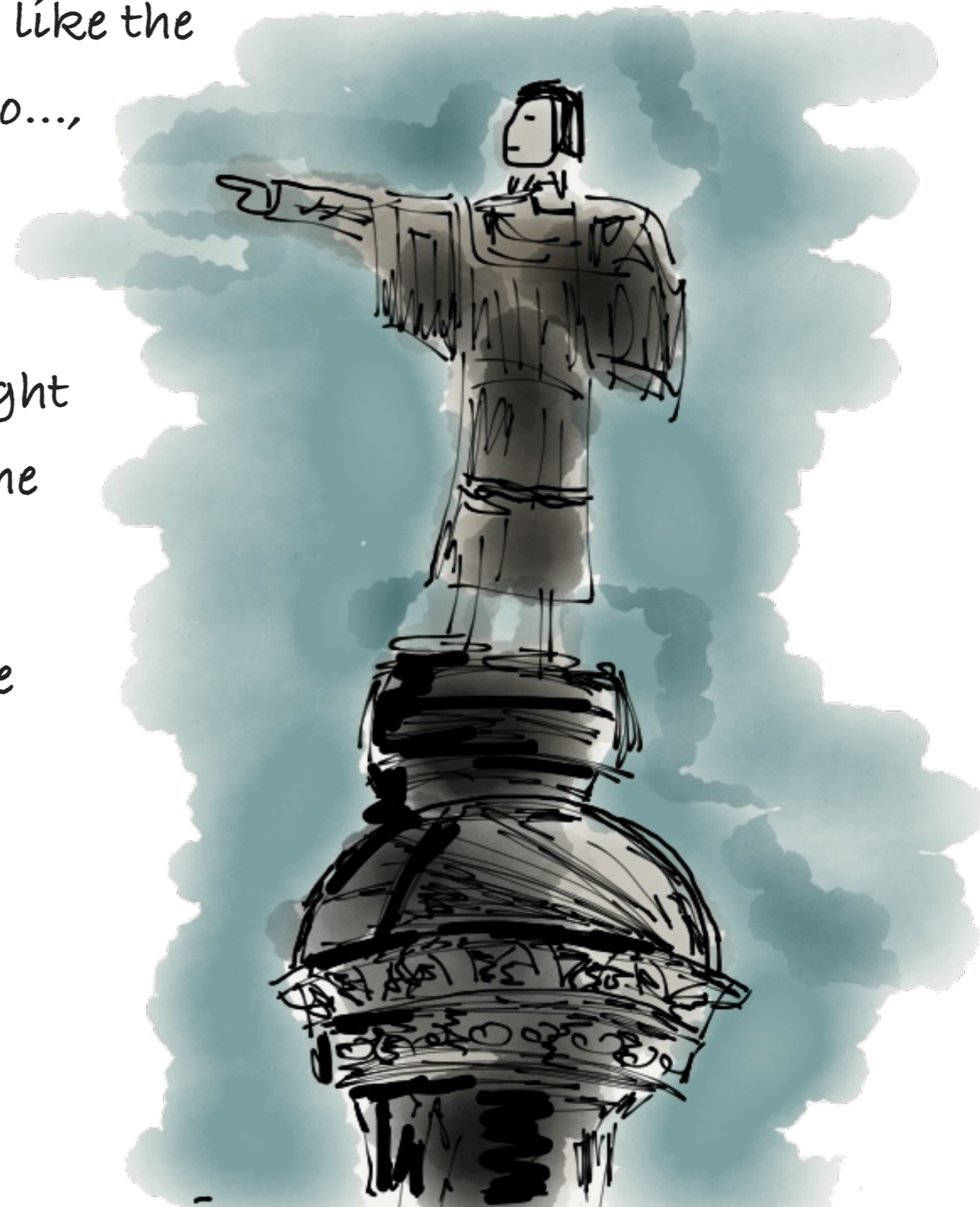


That is how thanks to Colón and his brave explorers, the European and Spanish culture travelled to América. Also thanks to them, together with foodstuffs like the corn, potato, cocoa, tobacco, pepper, tomato..., the first varieties of tropical fruits were also brought to Europe and Spain.

You should always remember Colón fought tirelessly for defending his ideas and he never gave up.

You should also remember Spain was the nation which bet for such an unrealistic project in which nobody believed.

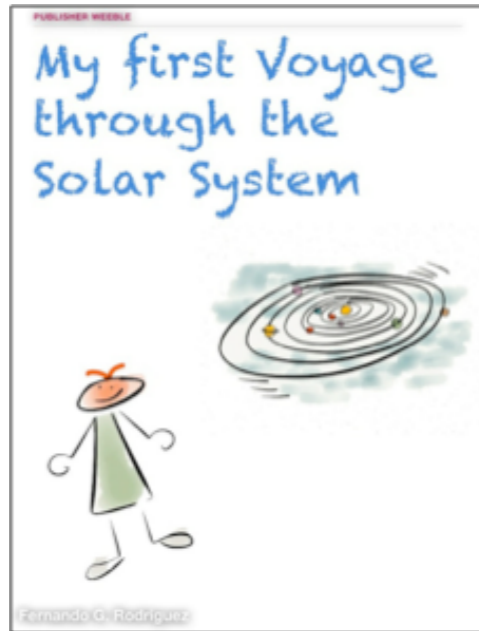
That is how it ends *one of the world's most important and dazzling adventure.*



the End



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