

THE TRAVELS OF IBN BATTUTA



▲ During 30 years of traveling, Ibn Battuta visited the furthest edges of the Islamic world—from the deserts of North Africa to China and back.



▲ Ibn Battuta spent several years in Mecca before heading on to India and beyond.

- 1 “I left Tangier, my birthplace, the 13th of June 1325 with the intention of making the pilgrimage¹ [to Mecca]. . . . to leave all my friends both female and male, to abandon² my home as birds abandon
5 their nests.” So begins an old manuscript³ in a library in Paris—the travel journal of Ibn Battuta.

Almost two centuries before Columbus, this young Moroccan set off for Mecca, returning home three decades later as one of history’s great travelers.

- 10 Driven by curiosity, he journeyed to **remote** corners of the Islamic world, traveling through 44 modern countries, three times as far as Marco Polo. Little celebrated in the West, his name is well known among Arabs. In his hometown of Tangiers, a square, a hotel, a café, a ferry boat, and even a
15 hamburger are named after him.

- Ibn Battuta stayed in Mecca as a student for several years, but the urge to travel soon took over. In one adventure, he traveled to India seeking **profitable** employment with the sultan⁴ of Delhi. On the way, he described his group
20 being attacked in the open country by 80 men on foot and two horsemen: “we fought . . . killing one of their horsemen and about twelve of the foot soldiers. . . . I was hit by an arrow and my horse by another, but God in his grace preserved me. . . . We carried the heads of the slain⁵ to the castle of Abu Bak’har . . . and suspended⁶ them from the wall.”



▲ After losing his ships in a storm, Ibn Battuta continued on to the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), where he visited the mountain known as Adam's Peak: "When we climbed it, we saw the clouds below us, shutting out our view of its base."

25 In Delhi, the sultan gave him the position of judge based on his **prior** study at Mecca. But the sultan had an **unpredictable** character, and Ibn Battuta looked for an opportunity to leave. When the sultan offered to **finance** a trip to China, he agreed. Ibn Battuta set off in three ships, but **misfortune** struck while he was still on the shore. A sudden storm grounded and broke
30 up two ships, scattering⁷ treasure and drowning many people and horses. As he watched, the third ship with all his belongings and slaves—one carrying his child—was carried out to sea and never heard from again.

After a lifetime of incredible adventures, Ibn Battuta was finally ordered by the Sultan of Morocco to return home
35 to share his **wisdom** with the world. Fortunately he **consented** and wrote a book that has been **translated** into numerous languages, allowing people everywhere to read about his **unparalleled** journeys.

¹ A **pilgrimage** is a trip to a place of religious importance.

² If you **abandon** a place, thing or person, you leave it for a long time or forever.

³ A writer's first version of a book, handwritten or typed, is called a **manuscript**.

⁴ A **sultan** is a ruler in some Islamic countries.

⁵ If someone has been **slain**, he or she has been killed.

⁶ If you **suspend** something from a high place, you hang it from that place.

⁷ If things are **scattered**, they have been thrown or dropped so they are spread all over an area.



▲ Ibn Battuta met the Indian sultan at his luxurious palace in Delhi, surrounded by 200 soldiers, 60 horses, and 50 elephants covered in silk and gold. The Sultan sent him on a mission to China, which Ibn Battuta described as "the safest and best regulated of countries for a traveler."



◀ After reaching China and the east Indies (Indonesia), Ibn Battuta returned home to Morocco. He died in 1369 at the age of 64 near the town of Fez; the location of his burial site remains a mystery.