

LEVELED BOOKS

World Traveler Ibn Battuta



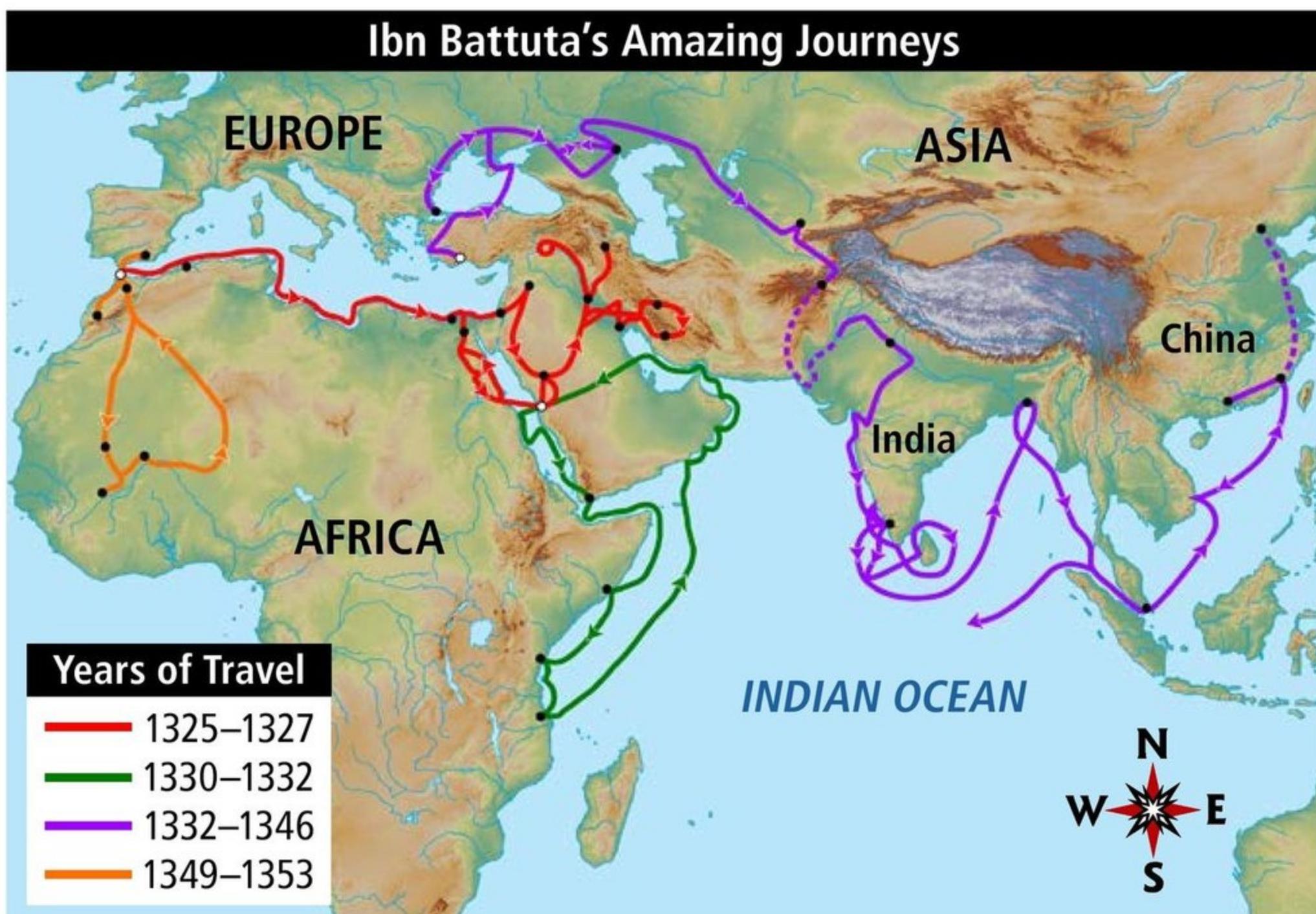
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Written by David L. Dreier
Illustrated by Roger Stewart

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World Traveler

Ibn Battuta



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Focus Question

Who was Ibn Battuta, and why was he important?

Words to Know

empire

silk

explorer

traitor

invaders

travelers

Muslim

unpredictable

rebels

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Correlation

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To Mecca and Beyond



A Traveler Like None Before

Abu Ibn Battuta was one of the greatest **travelers** in history. He was born in 1304 in Tangier, Morocco. Continuing a family tradition, he studied law.

The young student was drawn to the city of Mecca on the Arabian Peninsula. Mecca is where the **Muslim** religion was founded in the AD 600s. Muslims have a duty to travel to Mecca at least once if they can.

The Journeys Begin

In 1325, at the age of twenty-one, Ibn Battuta set out for Mecca.

After a sixteen-month journey across northern Africa, Ibn Battuta reached Mecca. He married his first wife during the trip. He would marry several more times over the years as he moved to new countries.

Having made the trip to Mecca, Ibn Battuta decided to travel all over the entire Muslim world. He wanted to see new things, and there was much to see. Since the 600s, Muslim armies had conquered a large part of the Middle East and Africa. Muslims could move freely in these areas, though bandits were often a threat.



The Muslim faith inspired many people to give money and gifts to travelers. Because Ibn Battuta was a student and eventually a famed traveler, he received many gifts and honors.

Ibn Battuta traveled mostly by camel with large groups. Traveling with many other people provided safety from bandits. The groups often traveled in the cool of the night, lighting the way with torches. As Ibn Battuta rode away from Mecca, he saw the desert “gleaming with light and the darkness turned into radiant day.”



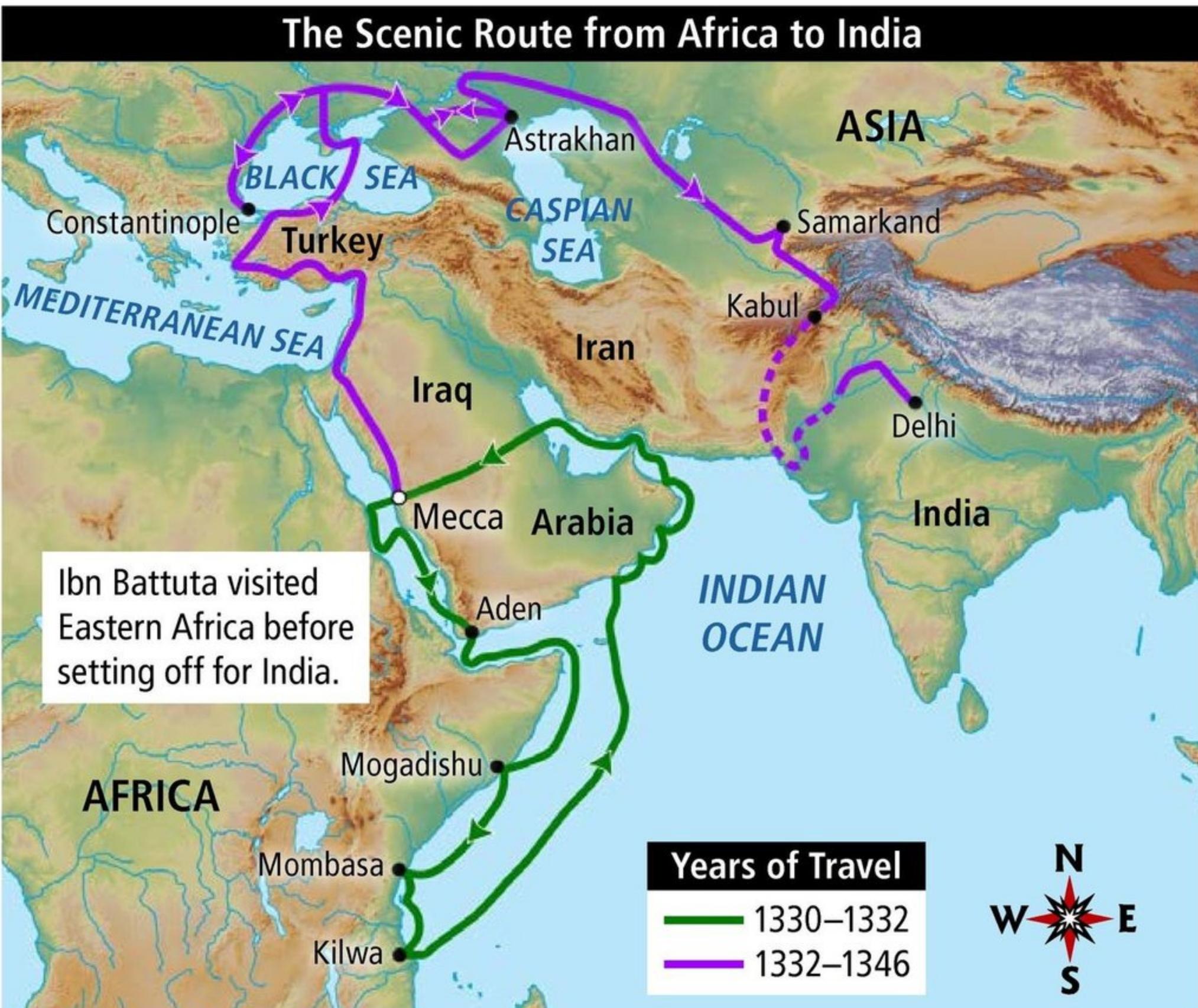


This university, built in AD 1227, was there when Ibn Battuta visited Baghdad, in what is now Iraq.

Beyond Mecca

Ibn Battuta journeyed to present-day Iraq and Iran. These countries had once been rich and beautiful, but at this time they were still recovering from attacks by **invaders**.

On a visit to Muslim Eastern Africa in 1332, Ibn Battuta heard tales about the sultan, or ruler, of India, Muhammad ibn Tughluq (TOOG-luk). The sultan was famous for granting favors, but he could also be cruel and **unpredictable**. Ignoring the possible dangers, Ibn Battuta set off for India.



His path took him through the “land of the Turks” (present-day Turkey) and the Russian steppe (grasslands). He visited the Christian city of Constantinople, the capital of the once-mighty Byzantine Empire. Ibn Battuta toured the famed city and met the emperor. He then continued his journey to India.

In Trouble in India

In 1334, Ibn Battuta crossed the mountains of Afghanistan into northern India. He presented himself at the sultan’s court in Delhi.



The sultan lived up to his reputation for generosity. He gave Ibn Battuta many gifts and later made him a judge. The future looked good for Ibn Battuta.

Things changed when Ibn Battuta married a woman whose father was a suspected **traitor**. Ibn Battuta was placed under guard and feared for his life. Eventually, the sultan forgave him.

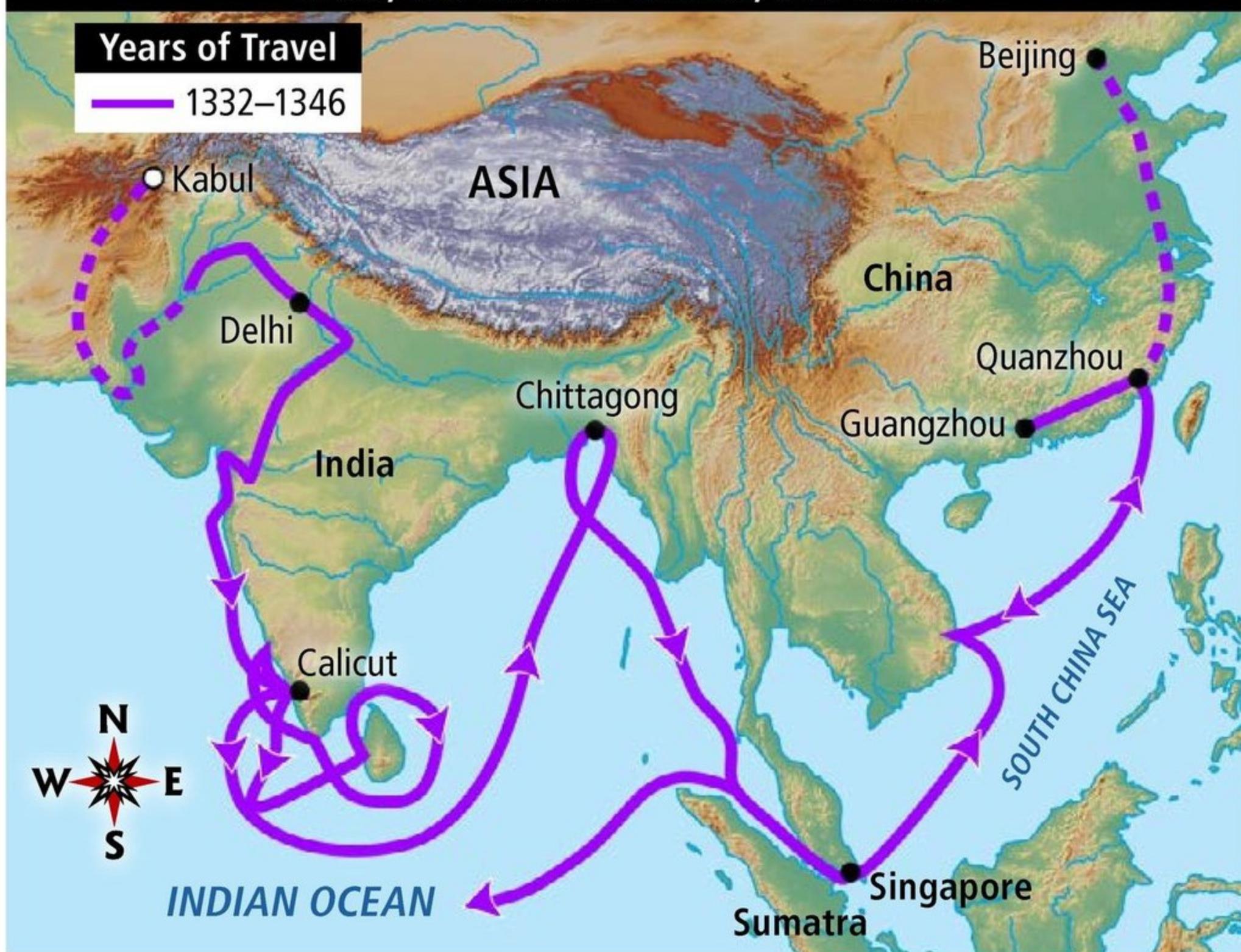
Around 1342, the sultan asked Ibn Battuta to carry gifts and messages to the ruler of China. By this time, Ibn Battuta had been in India for eight years. He was glad to leave before his luck took another turn for the worse.

Attacks, a Shipwreck, and—Finally—China

Unfortunately, Ibn Battuta's troubles were far from over. On the way to China, Ibn Battuta's group was attacked by **rebels** and had to split up. Later, the ships they were supposed to travel in were destroyed by a big storm. All the treasure aboard the ships was lost.



India, the Maldives, and China



Fearing the anger of the sultan for his failure, Ibn Battuta stayed for nearly two years in the Maldives, south of India. Later he went to the island of Sumatra, in what is now the nation of Indonesia. He got his chance to visit China when the Muslim ruler of Sumatra gave him a ship.

Ibn Battuta reached China in 1346. He was impressed with what he saw in China. He marveled that **silk**, a very expensive material in most parts of the world, was “used for clothing even by poor monks and beggars.”



The Journey Home

After less than a year, Ibn Battuta was ready to move on—this time back home to Morocco. In 1348, he traveled through Syria, which was suffering from a terrible plague, or deadly disease. In the city of Damascus, around two thousand people were dying from the disease every day.

Ibn Battuta saw the plague in other cities along his homeward route. In Cairo, Egypt, the disease was raging, but Ibn Battuta never caught the plague himself. In 1349, he finally arrived back home in Morocco. By this time, both of his parents were dead. His father had died sixteen years earlier, but his mother died just a few months before his return.

The Final Journey to Timbuktu



Final Trips

Ibn Battuta had been gone for twenty-four years and was now forty-five years old. He was not done traveling, though. He traveled next to Granada, a part of Spain still under Muslim control. Then he went to the Empire of Mali in West Africa.

In Granada, Ibn Battuta met with Muslim leaders. He also met a young writer named Ibn Juzayy. They would meet again when Ibn Battuta's travels were finished.

Ibn Battuta did not want to make the long, difficult trip to Mali. However, the sultan of Morocco ordered him to. The sultan wanted to learn more about the wealthy land.

Ibn Battuta spent eight months in Mali as the guest of its ruler. He was impressed by the richness of the sultan's court.

Ibn Battuta returned to Morocco in 1354—this time for good. He was now fifty years old.



Telling the Story

In Morocco, Ibn Battuta hired Ibn Juzayy to write the story of his travels. Ibn Juzayy put Ibn Battuta's stories into a book called the *Rihlah (Journey)*. The book is still one of the best sources of information about the lands and rulers that Ibn Battuta visited in the 1300s.

In his final years, Ibn Battuta is thought to have served as a judge, but little is known of his later life. He died in Morocco in either 1368 or 1369.



Conclusion

Ibn Battuta journeyed 75,000 miles (120,000 km) during his lifetime. That's like going all the way around the world three times! He visited and lived in dozens of countries. He was not an **explorer**. He visited no unknown lands. Nevertheless, he remains one of the greatest travelers in history.

Glossary

empire (<i>n.</i>)	a collection of nations or people ruled by one person or government (p. 8)
explorer (<i>n.</i>)	a person who visits and learns about new places (p. 15)
invaders (<i>n.</i>)	people who aggressively enter a place to conquer, weaken, or injure its people (p. 7)
Muslim (<i>adj.</i>)	of or relating to people who follow the religion of Islam (p. 4)
rebels (<i>n.</i>)	people who speak or act out against authority (p. 10)
silk (<i>n.</i>)	a type of fabric made from the threads of a silkworm (p. 11)
traitor (<i>n.</i>)	a person who betrays his or her own country or friends by supporting an enemy (p. 9)
travelers (<i>n.</i>)	people who journey from one place to another (p. 4)
unpredictable (<i>adj.</i>)	impossible to know ahead of time; able to change without warning (p. 7)

World Traveler Ibn Battuta

A Reading A-Z Level S Leveled Book
Word Count: 1,030

Connections

Writing and Art

Pretend you are Ibn Battuta. Write a postcard home to your family describing your experiences at one of the places you visited.

Social Studies

Make a timeline of Ibn Battuta's travels, including at least five events and their locations. Compare your timeline with a partner's.



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