

Spring Packet on Islamic Empire Achievements and West African Kingdoms

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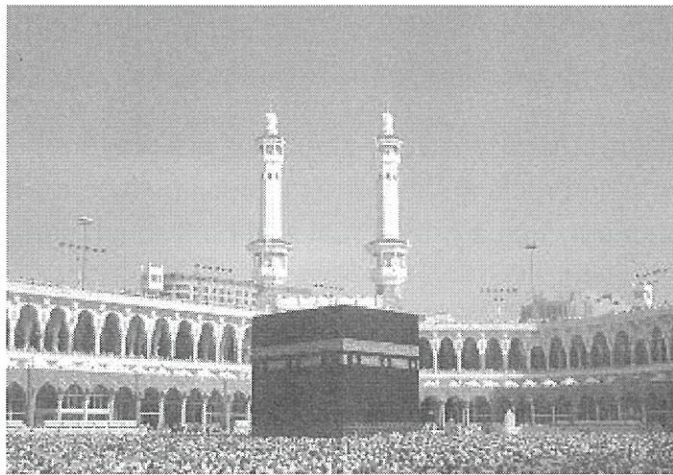
Early Islamic World

Islam

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What is Islam?

Islam is a religion founded in the early seventh century by the Prophet Muhammad. Followers of Islam believe in one god called Allah. The primary religious book of Islam is the Quran.



Pilgrims on Hajj to Mecca

What is the difference between Muslim and Islam?

A Muslim is a person who believes and follows the religion of Islam.

Muhammad

Muhammad is considered to be the Holy Prophet of Islam and the last prophet to be sent by Allah to mankind. Mohammed lived from 570 CE to 632 CE.

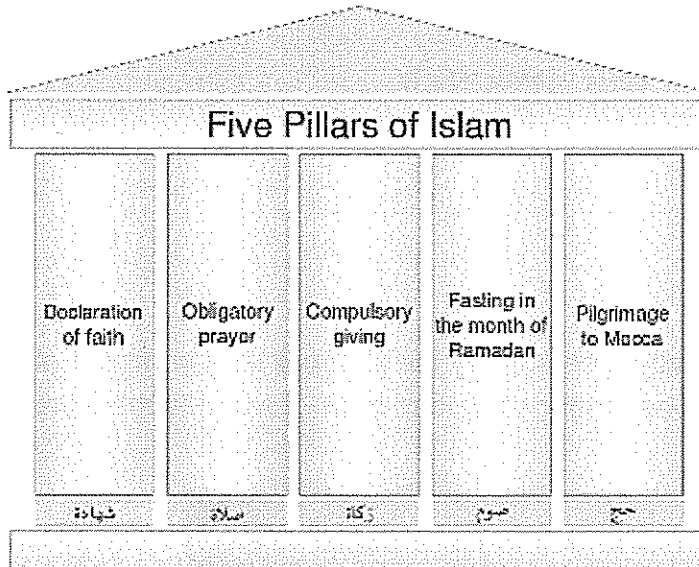
The Quran

The Quran is the sacred holy book of Islam. Muslims believe that the words of the Quran were revealed to Muhammad from Allah through the angel Gabriel.

The Five Pillars of Islam

There are five basic acts that form the framework of Islam called the Five Pillars of Islam.

1. *Shahadah* - The Shahadah is the basic creed, or declaration of faith, that Muslims recite each time they pray. The English translation is "There is no god, but God; Muhammad is the messenger of God."



2. Five Pillars of Islam
Salat or Prayer - The Salat are prayers that are said five times each day. When reciting the prayers, Muslims face toward the holy city of Mecca. They generally use a prayer mat and go through specific motions and positions while praying.
3. *Zakat* - The Zakat is the giving of alms to the poor. Those who can afford it are required to give to the poor and needy.
4. *Fasting* - During the month of Ramadan, Muslims must fast (not eat or drink) from dawn to sunset. This ritual is meant to bring the believer closer to Allah.
5. *Hajj* - The Hajj is a pilgrimage to the city of Mecca. Every Muslim who is capable of travel, and can afford the trip, is to travel to the city of Mecca at least once during their lifetime.

The Hadith

The hadith are additional texts that describe the actions and sayings of Muhammad that are not recorded in the Quran. They were generally gathered together by Islamic scholars after the death of Muhammad.

Mosques

Mosques are places of worship for the followers of Islam. There is generally a large prayer room where Muslims can go to pray. Prayers are often led by the leader of the mosque called an "imam."

Sunni and Shia

Like many major religions, there are different sects of Muslims. These are groups that share many of the same fundamental beliefs, but disagree on certain aspects of theology. The two largest groups of Muslims are the Sunni and the Shia. Around 85% of the world's Muslims are Sunni.

Interesting Facts about Islam

- The Quran is generally given a high place in the Muslim home. There is sometimes a special stand where the Quran is placed. Items are not to be placed on top of the Quran.
- Moses and Abraham from the Jewish Torah and Christian Bible also appear in stories in the Quran.
- The Arabic word "Islam" means "submission" in English.
- Worshipers must remove their shoes when entering the prayer room of a mosque.
- Today, Saudi Arabia is an Islamic State. Anyone wanting to immigrate to Saudi Arabia must first convert to Islam.
- Not all followers of Islam are required to fast during Ramadan. Those excused may include sick people, pregnant women, and young children.

1. What are people who believe and follow the religion of Islam called?

- a. Islams
- b. Muslims
- c. Arabs
- d. Middle Easterners
- e. Persians

2. What is the Quran?

- a. The most holy city of Islam
- b. The leader of the Muslim world
- c. The pilgrimage Muslims make to Mecca
- d. The holy book of Islam
- e. A place where Muslims go to worship

3. What are the five basic acts that form the framework of the religion of Islam?

- a. Five Holy Books
- b. The Five Caliphs
- c. Five Pillars of Islam
- d. Five Commandments
- e. The Sacred Five

4. What is the giving of alms to the poor and needy called?

- a. Shahadah
- b. Salat
- c. Zakat
- d. Fasting
- e. Hajj

5. What is it called when Muslims don't eat or drink from dawn to sunset during Ramadan?

- a. Shahadah
- b. Salat
- c. Zakat
- d. Fasting
- e. Hajj

6. What is the pilgrimage to Mecca made by Muslims called?

- a. Shahadah
- b. Salat
- c. Zakat
- d. Fasting
- e. Hajj

7. What is a Hadith?

- a. A place where Muslims worship
- b. A text describing the actions and sayings of Muhammad
- c. A Muslim holy city
- d. An Islamic religious leader
- e. A pilgrimage to the Islamic holy city of Mecca

8. What is a Muslim place of worship called?

- a. Mosque
- b. Church
- c. Cathedral
- d. Temple
- e. Tabernacle

9. What does the Arabic word 'Islam' mean?

- a. God
- b. Worship
- c. Submission
- d. Peace
- e. Religion

10. What direction do Muslim's face when praying?

- a. North
- b. Towards the city of Mecca
- c. East
- d. Toward the Sun
- e. They don't face any specific direction

Early Islamic World

Daily Life

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What was daily life like during the early part of the Islamic Empire?

The Islamic Empire was one of the largest empires in world history. It covered a wide range of cultures, climates, and geography. Below we will discuss what the daily life was like during this time for Arab Muslims living in the Middle East.

Homes

Like with all societies, the size and style of homes were different for the rich and the poor. Poor people lived in tents or mud huts, while the wealthy lived in large single family homes. The large homes usually had a courtyard in the center with a fountain where people could cool off from the desert heat. Sometimes they had wind towers that would force wind through the house like air conditioning.

Jobs

During the Middle Ages, the Islamic Empire had a booming trade economy. As a result, people worked a variety of jobs including farmers, merchants, craftsmen, teachers, herders, and soldiers.

Food

A common meal during that time would have consisted of dates, honey, and milk. This same meal is often used today by Muslims to break their fast during Ramadan. Other common foods included eggplant, lentils, and water to drink. Meat, such as lamb and chicken, was rare and typically only eaten by the wealthy. Some foods were forbidden by Islam including pork and alcohol. Forbidden foods are called "haram" and allowed foods are called "halal."

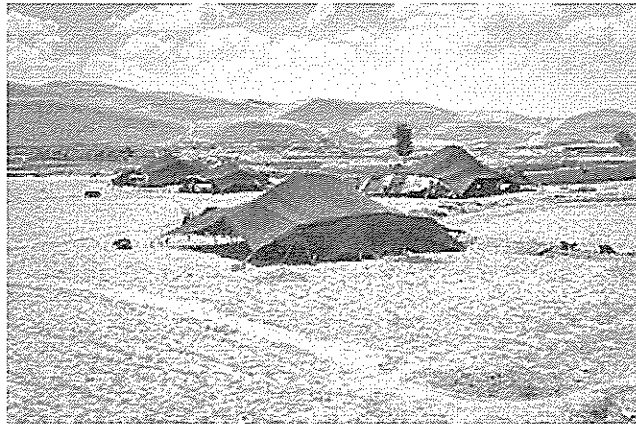
Clothing

To protect themselves from the hot sun of the [Middle East](#), early Muslims wore clothing that covered their entire bodies. Both men and women wore long shirts and loose pants. Women often wore head scarves and veils. Men also used head coverings including turbans. Dressing modestly and covering up was also part of the Islamic religion.

School

Education was an important part of the early Islamic Empire. Young boys attended school where they studied and memorized the Quran. They also studied other subjects including mathematics, philosophy, astrology, and Greek.

Nomads



Modern Day Nomads

While some people lived in towns and villages, others were nomads. Nomads moved about the desert looking for new pastures and water for their animals. They lived in long, low tents that were easy to move about. Some of the first converts to Islam were nomads. They helped Islam to spread rapidly throughout the Middle East as they moved from place to place.

Interesting Facts about Daily Life During the Early Islamic Empire

- Water was the most common drink. Sometimes water was flavored with mint, fruits, or roses.
- They didn't have a lot of furniture in their homes. Rugs were common, however, and were used as floor coverings, blankets, cushions, and pillows.
- Most marriages were arranged by the families. Women married very young, often at the age of 12 or 13. Men usually married around the age of 19 or 20.
- Islamic women today often wear a veil that covers the head and chest called a "hijab."
- A man could have up to four wives (but he had to be able to provide for them), while a woman was only allowed one husband.

1. What was usually at the center of a home in the Middle East?

- a. Herb garden
- b. Kitchen for cooking meals
- c. Courtyard and Fountain
- d. Dining Room
- e. Enclosure for the animals

2. What were wind towers in homes used for?

- a. To block the wind from the home
- b. To force the wind through the house like air conditioning
- c. To help predict the weather
- d. To defend from enemies
- e. To keep the house warm in the winter

3. What was a common meal in the Middle East during the Middle Ages?

- a. Dates, honey, and milk
- b. Wine, bread, and cheese
- c. Beer, bread, and olives
- d. Water, chicken, and potatoes
- e. Wine, fish, and rice

4. What was the most common drink at the time?

- a. Wine
- b. Beer
- c. Tea
- d. Water
- e. Fruit juice

5. What type of foods are called 'haram'?

- a. Foods allowed by Islamic law
- b. Foods that were considered healthy
- c. Foods that were for the wealthy
- d. Foods forbidden by Islamic law
- e. Foods that were cooked outside

6. True or False: Young boys attended school where they learned about the Quran, math, Greek, and astrology.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

7. What type of clothing did the women wear?

- a. Long shirts
- b. Loose pants
- c. Head scarves
- d. Veils
- e. All of the above

8. Who were the nomads of the Middle East?

- a. People that worked as farmers
- b. People that constantly moved about the desert
- c. People that lived in towns
- d. The religious leaders
- e. The soldiers of the Islamic Empire

9. What type of foods are called 'halal'?

- a. Foods allowed by Islamic law
- b. Foods that were considered healthy
- c. Foods that were for the wealthy
- d. Foods forbidden by Islamic law
- e. Foods that were cooked outside

10. True or False: Dressing modestly and covering up was part of the Islamic religion.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

Early Islamic World

Trade and Commerce

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Trade and commerce played an important role in the early Islamic world. Large trade networks spanned much of the globe including faraway places like China, Africa, and Europe. Islamic leaders used taxes from wealthy merchants to build and maintain public works such as schools, hospitals, dams, and bridges.

Money



A Gold Dinar

Money is important for any economy, and this was no different for Islamic merchants. The main Islamic coins were the dinar (a gold coin) and the dirham (a silver coin). However, large transactions were often carried out on paper using letters of credit called "suftaja." These letters were much easier to carry on long trade routes than heavy coins. After arriving in a new city, merchants could take the papers to a moneychanger to exchange for coins.

Trade Goods

Islamic merchants dealt in a wide variety of trade goods including sugar, salt, textiles, spices, slaves, gold, and horses. The expanse of the Islamic Empire allowed merchants to trade goods all the way from China to Europe. Many merchants became quite wealthy and powerful.

Trade Routes

Muslim trade routes extended throughout much of Europe, Northern Africa, and Asia (including China and India). These trade routes were both by sea and over long stretches of land (including the famous Silk Road). Major trade cities included Mecca, Medina, Constantinople, Baghdad, Morocco, Cairo, and Cordoba.



Caravan with Camels

Caravans

In the case where a trade route was over land, merchants travelled in large groups called caravans.

Caravans were almost like traveling cities including everything from doctors and entertainers to armed guards and translators. They provided protection for the merchants and their goods. A typical caravan would travel around 15 miles a day and would stop at night at rest stops called "caravanserai."

Spread of Islam

The expanse of Islamic trade had a direct result on the spread of the Islam religion. Traders brought their religion to West Africa where Islam quickly spread throughout the region. Areas in the far east such as Malaysia and Indonesia also became Muslim through traders and Islamic Sufis. Over time, large Muslim populations grew in other regions including India, China, and Spain.

Interesting Facts about Trade and Commerce in the Islamic Golden Age

- Islamic coins have been found by archeologists as far away as Sweden, Britain, and China.
- Merchants were respected in the Islamic world. The prophet Muhammad came from a merchant family.
- The slave trade was a large part of the economy. Some slaves were prisoners captured during the Islamic conquests, while others were purchased in slave markets in northern and western Africa.

- The vast expanse of Islamic trade allowed for the cultural exchange of art, science, food, and clothing throughout Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- The Quran guided many of the principals of Islamic merchants requiring them to deal fairly with one another and to not charge interest on loans.

1. What was a dinar?

- a. A trade route to China
- b. A letter of credit used to buy goods
- c. A gold coin
- d. A type of camel used to cross deserts
- e. A high ranking merchant

2. True or False: Trade networks in the Islamic Empire included far away places like Europe and China.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

3. What were letters of credit used in large merchant transactions called?

- a. Suftaja
- b. Dinar
- c. Checks
- d. Dirham
- e. Caravans

4. What did the Islamic Empire build with taxes gained from merchants?

- a. Hospitals
- b. Dams
- c. Bridges
- d. Schools
- e. All of the above

5. What were caravans?

- a. A type of silver coins
- b. Merchants who traded in gold
- c. Letters of credit
- d. Large traveling groups of merchants and their goods
- e. Trade routes used by ships to take goods to China

6. True or False: The expanse of the Islamic trade network helped to spread the religion of Islam.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

7. Why was paper a good way to conduct large transactions?
- a. Because it was worth more than gold
 - b. Because it was light and easy to transport long distances
 - c. Because it could be destroyed easily
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
8. True or False: Merchants were the lowest class and looked down upon in the Muslim world.
- a. TRUE
 - b. FALSE
9. Around how far would a large caravan travel per day?
- a. 1 mile
 - b. 2 miles
 - c. 15 miles
 - d. 100 miles
 - e. 300 miles
10. What helped to guide the principals of Islamic merchants?
- a. The Hippocratic Oath
 - b. The Code of Hammurabi
 - c. The Law of the Twelve Tables
 - d. The Quran
 - e. All of the above

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Science and Technology

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Science and Technology flourished during the Islamic Golden Age from around 780 CE to 1248 CE. During this time, scholars in the Middle East made great advances in the areas of mathematics, physics, geography, and medicine.

Why did science technology flourish during this time?

Science and technology advanced during the Islamic Golden Age for many reasons. First, the pursuit of knowledge was encouraged both by the Islamic religion and the Islamic government. Scholars were respected by the people and sponsored by the government. At the same time, paper technology was introduced from China, allowing for the production of books. Large libraries were built in cities throughout the Muslim empire helping technology and knowledge to be shared between scholars.

Mathematics

Islamic scholars studied the mathematics of earlier civilizations in Greece, India, and China. They then made advances in many areas including geometry and trigonometry. Perhaps the most important mathematical advancement was in the area of algebra. Two great Islamic mathematicians, al-Khwarizmi and Omar Khayyam, helped develop algebra into a separate field of mathematics. In fact, the name "algebra" comes from the Arabic "al-jabr", which means "reunion of broken parts."

Astronomy

Astronomy was an important part of Islamic science. It was used for navigation, determining an accurate calendar, and for religious purposes (determining the direction of Mecca and prayer times). Islamic astronomers built large observatories for viewing the stars. They also designed detailed celestial globes showing the positions of the stars and planets in relation to the Earth. New tools were developed including the quadrant and the astrolabe.

Medicine

Islamic medicine was well-advanced for this period of time. Doctors were required to attend medical school where they studied the works of the Ancient Greeks and Indians. Islamic scholars added to this work with new medical theories and ideas. Most major cities had a large hospital where anyone could go to seek healthcare. One of the largest hospitals in Cairo, Egypt was said to help 4,000 patients a day.

One of the most lasting influences of Islamic medicine was a medical book written by Ibn Sina called *The Canon of Medicine*. This book was used as the standard medical textbook both in the Islamic world and throughout Europe for hundreds of years.

Engineering

Due to the scarceness and importance of water in the Middle East, much of the efforts of Islamic engineers went into ways to store and move water. They built dams, irrigation canals, waterwheels, pumps, aqueducts, and cisterns. They also invented various ways to measure water and control the flow of water.

Islamic engineers also made significant contributions in the areas of optics, mechanics, clocks, wind power, and chemistry.

Interesting Facts about Science and Technology in the Islamic Golden Age

- Due to the large libraries and many books produced in the Muslim world, Arabic became the international language of science and learning.
- Islamic scholars helped to reproduce the work of many Greek scientists and mathematicians such as Aristotle.

- The work of Islamic astronomers had a significant influence on later astronomers such as Galileo and Copernicus.
- Arab scientist Ibn al-Haytham is considered one of the world's first theoretical physicists. He developed the scientific theory and wrote a famous book on vision and light called the *Book of Optics*.

1. What do historians call the period when science and technology flourished in the Islamic Empire?

- a. Bronze Age
- b. Age of Discovery
- c. Information Age
- d. Golden Age of Islam
- e. Age of Enlightenment

2. What technology arrived from China that helped science to flourish in the Islamic Empire?

- a. Gunpowder
- b. Paper
- c. Compass
- d. Kites
- e. Hot air balloons

3. What mathematical term comes from the Arabic 'al-jabr'?

- a. Geometry
- b. Calculus
- c. Combinatorics
- d. Algebra
- e. Trigonometry

4. True or False: The Islamic religion was against the pursuit of knowledge and science.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

5. Which of the following was an area where Islamic scholars made advancements?

- a. Mathematics
- b. Astronomy
- c. Medicine
- d. Engineering
- e. All of the above

6. Who wrote 'The Canon of Medicine' which became a standard textbook in medical schools for many years?

- a. Al-Khwarizmi
- b. Al-Nafis
- c. Al-Razi
- d. Ibn Sina
- e. Al-Haytham

7. How was the study of astronomy used for religious purposes?
- a. To tell the future
 - b. To determine the direction of Mecca
 - c. To help negotiate trade deals
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
8. True or False: Islamic doctors were required to attend medical school.
- a. TRUE
 - b. FALSE
9. Many inventions of Islamic engineers had to do with storing and moving what resource?
- a. Gold
 - b. Grain
 - c. Water
 - d. Sand
 - e. Diamonds
10. What language became the international language of science and learning during the Islamic Empire?
- a. Greek
 - b. Latin
 - c. English
 - d. Arabic
 - e. Russian

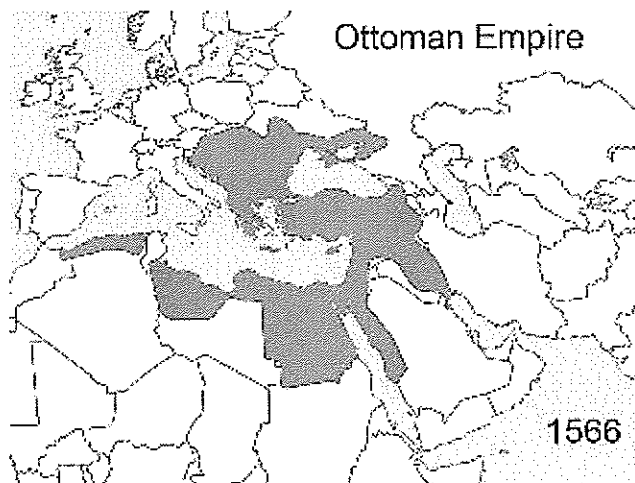
Ottoman Empire

Islamic Empire

The Ottoman Empire ruled a large portion of the Middle East and Eastern Europe for over 600 years. It first formed in 1299 and finally dissolved in 1923, becoming the country of Turkey.

Rise of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire was founded by Osman I, a leader of the Turkish tribes in Anatolia in 1299. Osman I expanded his kingdom, uniting many of the independent states of Anatolia under one rule. Osman established a formal government and allowed for religious tolerance over the people he conquered.



Capturing Constantinople

Over the next 150 years the Ottoman Empire continued to expand. The most powerful empire in the land at the time was the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire). In 1453, Mehmet II the Conqueror led the Ottoman Empire in capturing Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantium Empire. He turned Constantinople into the capital of the Ottoman Empire and renamed it Istanbul. For the next several hundred years the Ottoman Empire would be one of the largest and most powerful empires in the world.

When Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire, a large number of scholars and artists fled to Italy. This helped to spark the European Renaissance. It also caused the European nations to begin to search for new trade routes to the Far East, beginning the Age of Exploration.

Suleiman the Magnificent

The Ottoman Empire reached its peak during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. He ruled from 1520 to 1566. During this time the empire expanded and included much of Eastern Europe including Greece and Hungary.



Suleiman the Magnificent by Unknown

Decline

The Ottoman Empire began to decline in the late 1600s. It ceased to expand and began to face economic competition from India and Europe. Internal corruption and poor leadership led to a steady decline until the empire was abolished and the country of Turkey was declared a republic in 1923.

Timeline

- 1299 - Osman I founded the Ottoman Empire.
- 1389 - The Ottomans conquer most of Serbia.
- 1453 - Mehmed II captures Constantinople putting an end to the Byzantine Empire.
- 1517 - Ottomans conquer Egypt bringing Egypt into the empire.
- 1520 - Suleiman the Magnificent becomes ruler of the Ottoman Empire.
- 1529 - The Siege of Vienna.
- 1533 - The Ottomans conquer Iraq.
- 1551 - The Ottomans conquer Libya.
- 1566 - Suleiman dies.
- 1569 - Much of Istanbul burns in a great fire.
- 1683 - The Ottomans are defeated at the Battle of Vienna. This signals the beginning of the decline of the empire.

- 1699 - The Ottomans give up control of Hungary to Austria.
- 1718 - Beginning of the Tulip period.
- 1821 - The Greek War of Independence begins.
- 1914 - The Ottomans join the side of the Central Powers in World War I.
- 1923 - The Ottoman Empire is dissolved and the Republic of Turkey becomes a country.

Religion

Religion played an important role in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans themselves were Muslims, however they did not force the peoples they conquered to convert. They allowed for Christians and Jews to worship without persecution. This kept the people they conquered from rebelling and allowed them to rule for so many years.

The Sultan

The leader of the Ottoman Empire was called the Sultan. The title of Sultan was inherited by the eldest son. When a new Sultan took power he would put all of his brothers into prison. Once he had a son of his own to inherit the throne, he would have his brothers executed.

Interesting Facts about the Ottoman Empire

- The Sultan and his many wives lived in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. The Sultan would move to a different room in the palace every night because he was scared of being assassinated.
- Suleiman the Magnificent was considered the earthly leader of all Muslims. He was called "The Lawgiver" by the Ottomans.
- The Republic of Turkey was founded by revolutionary Kemal Ataturk.
- The elite battle troops of the Sultan were called Janissaries. These soldiers were selected from Christian families at a young age. They were considered slaves, but were treated well and paid a regular salary.
- The Tulip period was a time of peace when the arts flourished in the Ottoman Empire. Tulips were considered a symbol of perfection and beauty.

1. About how many years did the Ottoman Empire exist?

- a. 150
- b. 300
- c. 600
- d. 1000
- e. 2000

2. Who founded the Ottoman Empire?

- a. Osman I
- b. Suleiman the Magnificent
- c. Alexander the Great
- d. Mehmed II
- e. Julian II

3. What city did the Ottoman Empire conquer in 1453 putting an end to the Byzantium Empire?

- a. Rome
- b. Constantinople
- c. Vienna
- d. Budapest
- e. Athens

4. In what way did the fall of Constantinople lead to the European Renaissance?

- a. Artists began painting about war
- b. It reminded people about the civilization of Ancient Rome
- c. It helped the Europeans to become rich
- d. It put an end to all wars in Europe
- e. Many scholars and artists fled Constantinople and came to Italy

5. Under what Ottoman ruler did the empire reach its peak?

- a. Mehmed the Conqueror
- b. Osman I
- c. Mustafa I
- d. Suleiman the Magnificent
- e. Ahmed the Fortunate

6. What modern day country was created from the Ottoman Empire in 1922?

- a. Hungary
- b. Greece
- c. Turkey
- d. Bulgaria
- e. Iraq

7. What was the title of the ruler of the Ottoman Empire?

- a. King
- b. Sultan
- c. Emperor
- d. Duke
- e. President

8. What religion did the Ottomans follow?

- a. Islam
- b. Christianity
- c. Judaism
- d. Buddhism
- e. Taoism

9. True or False: The Ottomans required that all the peoples they conquered converted to the Islamic religion or they were executed.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

10. What flower was a popular symbol of the Ottoman Empire and stood for perfection and beauty?

- a. Rose
- b. Lilly
- c. Daffodil
- d. Tulip
- e. Hyacinth

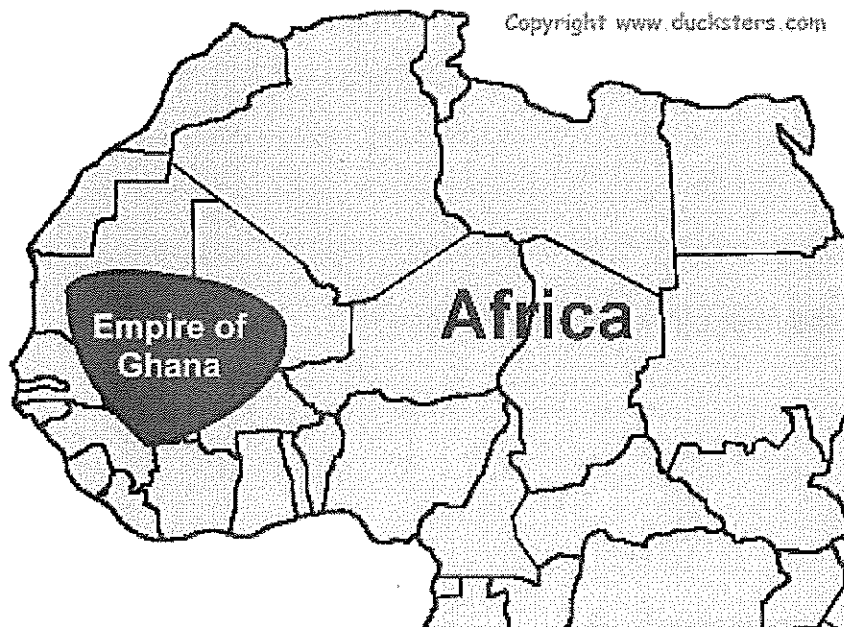
Ancient Africa

Empire of Ancient Ghana

Where was the Empire of Ghana located?

The Empire of Ghana was located in Western Africa in what is today the countries of Mauritania, Senegal, and Mali. The region lies just south of the Sahara Desert and is mostly savanna grasslands. Major rivers in the region such as the Gambia River, Senegal River, and the Niger River served as the means of transportation and trade.

The capital city of Ancient Ghana was Koumbi Saleh. This is where the King of Ghana lived in his royal palace. Archeologists estimate that up to 20,000 people lived in and around the capital city.



Map of Ghana

When did the Empire of Ghana rule?

Ancient Ghana ruled from around 300 to 1100 CE. The empire first formed when a number of tribes of the Soninke peoples were united under their first king, Dinga Cisse. The government of the empire was a feudal government with local kings who paid tribute to the high king, but ruled their lands as they saw fit.

Where did the name Ghana come from?

"Ghana" was the word that the Soninke people used for their king. It meant "Warrior King." People living outside of the empire used this word when referring to the region. The Soninke people actually used a different word when referring to their empire. They called it "Wagadu."

Iron and Gold

The main source of wealth for the Empire of Ghana was the mining of iron and gold. Iron was used to produce strong weapons and tools that made the empire strong. Gold was used to trade with other nations for needed resources like livestock, tools, and cloth. They established trade relations with the Muslims of Northern Africa and the Middle East. Long caravans of camels were used to transport goods across the Sahara Desert.

Fall of the Empire of Ghana

Around 1050 CE, the Empire of Ghana began to come under pressure from the Muslims to the north to convert to Islam. The Kings of Ghana refused and soon came under constant attacks from Northern Africa. At the same time, a group of people called the Susu broke free of Ghana. Over the next few hundred years, Ghana weakened until it eventually became part of the Mali Empire.

Interesting Facts about the Empire of Ancient Ghana

- The Empire of Ancient Ghana is not related either geographically or culturally to the modern African country of Ghana.
- A lot of what we know about Ancient Ghana comes from the writings of Arab scholar Al-Bakri.
- Iron smiths were much revered in the Ghana society. They were considered powerful magicians because they worked with fire and earth to create iron.
- Crossing the Sahara Desert from a coastal city to Ghana typically took around 40 days when travelling on a caravan of camels.
- Most of the people living in the empire were farmers. They didn't own the land. Each family was allotted a portion of the land by the local village leader.
- Salt was considered very valuable and the salt trade was heavily taxed by the king. Much of the salt was mined in the Sahara Desert at the city of Taghaza where slaves were used to mine salt. Salt was sometimes used as money and was about as valuable as gold.

1. Where was the Empire of Ghana located?

- a. Southern Africa
- b. Eastern Europe
- c. Western Africa
- d. South America
- e. Middle East

2. What was the capital city of the Empire of Ghana?

- a. Cairo
- b. Koumbi Saleh
- c. Mogadishu
- d. Addis Ababa
- e. Tripoli

3. What did 'ghana' mean in the language of the people of Ghana?

- a. Great people
- b. Beautiful land
- c. High desert
- d. Land of the trees
- e. Warrior King

4. Who was the first king of the Empire of Ghana?

- a. Dinga Cisse
- b. Mansa Musa
- c. Amenhotep
- d. Ezana Axum
- e. Sundiata

5. What two resources helped the Empire of Ghana to become wealthy?

- a. Fish and Cotton
- b. Silver and Diamonds
- c. Iron and Gold
- d. Wheat and Guns
- e. Bronze and Ivory

6. What major empire did the Empire of Ghana become part of after it collapsed?

- a. Egypt
- b. Empire of Mali
- c. Spanish Empire
- d. Chinese Empire
- e. Islamic Empire

7. True or False: The Empire of Ghana eventually became the African country of Ghana.

- a. TRUE b. FALSE

8. What kind of government did the Empire of Ghana have?

- a. Democratic
- b. Communist
- c. Socialist
- d. Feudal
- e. Republic

9. What type of workers were revered as powerful magicians?

- a. Farmers
- b. Salt miners
- c. Iron Smiths
- d. Traders
- e. Camel trainers

10. What major geographical feature was just to the north of the Empire of Ghana?

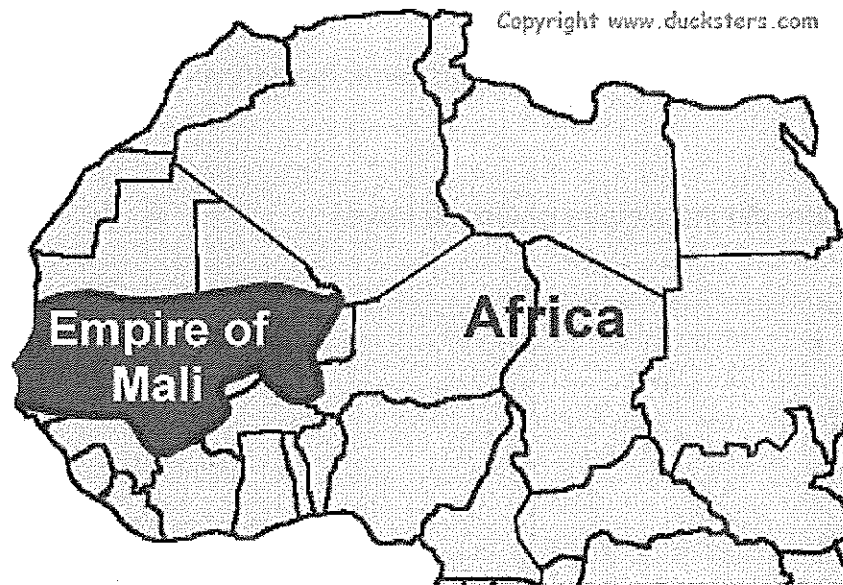
- a. Sahara Desert
- b. Pacific Ocean
- c. Nile River
- d. Andes Mountains
- e. Mount Kilimanjaro

Ancient Africa

Empire of Ancient Mali

Where was the Empire of Mali located?

The Empire of Mali was located in Western Africa. It grew up along the Niger River and eventually spread across 1,200 miles from the city of Gao to the Atlantic Ocean. Its northern border was just south of the Sahara Desert. It covered regions of the modern day African countries of Mali, Niger, Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea, and The Gambia.



Map of Mali

When did the Empire of Mali rule?

The Empire of Mali was established around 1235 CE. It began to lose power in the 1400s and fully collapsed in 1600 CE.

How did the Empire first begin?

The Empire of Mali was formed when a ruler named Sundiata Keita united the tribes of the Malinke peoples. He then led them to overthrow the rule of the Soso. Over time, the Mali Empire became stronger and took over surrounding kingdoms including the Empire of Ghana.

Government

The government of the Mali Empire was led by the emperor who was called the Mansa. The empire was then divided up into provinces that were each led by a governor called a ferba. The religion of Islam played an important part in the government and many of the government administrators were Muslim scribes.

The Mali Culture

Although there were many small tribes and cultural groups within the Mali Empire, most of these groups were considered part of the Mande peoples. The Mande peoples spoke similar languages and had similar cultures. People were divided into castes. One of the most respected castes were the farmers. Farmers were highly regarded because they provided food. Just below the farmers were the artisans. Other groups included fishermen, scribes, civil servants, soldiers, and slaves.

The religion of Islam was an important part of the Mali Empire. However, even though the kings, or Mansas, had converted to Islam, they did not force their subjects to convert. Many people practiced a version of Islam that combined Islamic beliefs with the local traditions.



Mansa Musa

Mansa Musa

Perhaps the most famous of the Mali Emperors was Mansa Musa. Mansa Musa became famous because of his lavish trip to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Mecca is the holy city of the Muslims and Mansa Musa decided to make a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324.

It is said that Mansa Musa was extremely rich and that he brought as many as 60,000 people along with him on his pilgrimage. He also brought camels loaded with gold. Mansa Musa must have made quite the impression during his trip with his large entourage and massive display of wealth. During his travels, Mansa Musa gave away and spent a significant amount of gold, but he also brought back a lot of new ideas to Mali. This included a number of scholars such as architects, poets, and teachers who helped to improve his empire.

Fall of the Empire of Mali

Not long after the rule of Mansa Musa ended, the Mali Empire began to grow weak. In the 1400s, the empire began to lose control along the edges of its borders. Then, in the 1500s, the Songhai Empire rose to power. The Mali Empire came to an end in 1610 with the death of the last Mansa, Mahmud IV.

Interesting Facts about the Empire of Ancient Mali

- Some historians estimate that Mansa Musa may have been the wealthiest person in history.
- The great wealth of Mali came from gold and salt mines.
- The capital city of the empire was Niani. Other important cities included Timbuktu, Gao, Djenne, and Walata.
- The Mali Empire controlled important trade routes across the Sahara Desert to Europe and the Middle East.
- The city of Timbuktu was considered a center of education and learning and included the famous Sankore University.

1. Where was the Empire of Mali located?

- a. Southern Africa
- b. Eastern Europe
- c. Western Africa
- d. South America
- e. Middle East

2. What ruler united the local tribes and formed the Empire of Mali?

- a. Mansa Musa
- b. Sundiata Keita
- c. Shaka Zulu
- d. Hannibal
- e. Dinga Cisse

3. What was the title of the ruler of the Empire of Mali?

- a. King
- b. Caliph
- c. President
- d. Ghana
- e. Mansa

4. What religion played an important role in the Mali government?

- a. Islam
- b. Judaism
- c. Buddhism
- d. Christianity
- e. Taoism

5. What city of Mali was considered a center of learning and education?

- a. Tripoli
- b. Gao
- c. Accra
- d. Timbuktu
- e. Luanda

6. What group of workers were highly respected because they provided food?

- a. Hunters
- b. Farmers
- c. Soldiers
- d. Fishermen
- e. Artisans

7. What ruler of Mali is famous for his lavish trip to Mecca?

- a. Shaka Zulu
- b. Ramses II
- c. Mansa Musa
- d. Hannibal
- e. Sundiata

8. What rival empire came to power near the end of the Empire of Mali?

- a. Egyptian Empire
- b. Chinese Empire
- c. Islamic Empire
- d. Songhai Empire
- e. Empire of Ghana

9. What was the capital city of the Empire of Mali?

- a. Alexandria
- b. Koumbi Saleh
- c. Mogadishu
- d. Addis Ababa
- e. Niani

10. What resource did Mansa Musa bring back to Mali after his trip to Mecca?

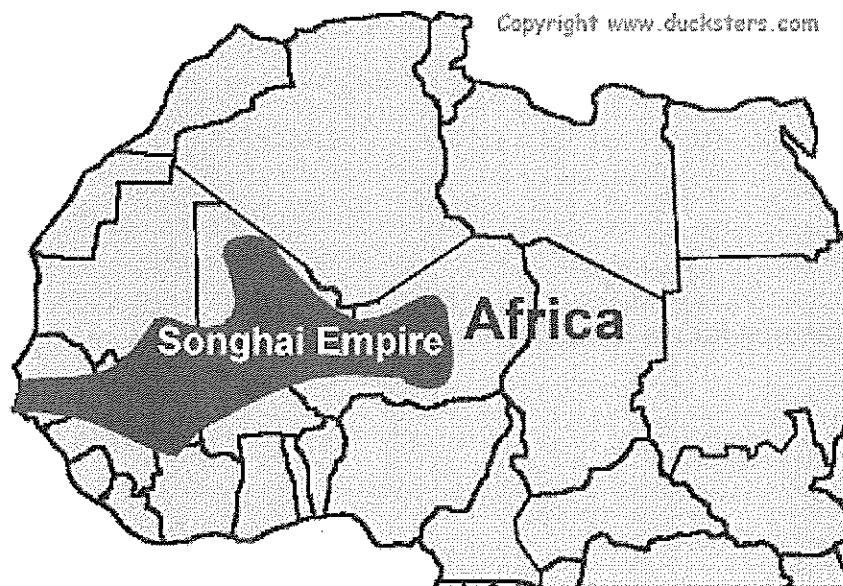
- a. Scholars
- b. Gold
- c. Salt
- d. Iron
- e. Silk

Ancient Africa

Songhai Empire

Where was the Songhai Empire located?

The Songhai Empire was located in Western Africa south of the Sahara Desert and along the Niger River. At its peak, it stretched well over 1,000 miles from the current modern day country of Niger to the Atlantic Ocean. The capital city of the Songhai was the city of Gao which was located in modern-day Mali on the banks of the Niger River.



When did the Songhai Empire rule?

The Songhai Empire lasted from 1464 to 1591. Prior to the 1400s, the Songhai were under the rule of the Mali Empire.

How did the Empire first begin?

The Songhai Empire first came into power under the leadership of Sunni Ali. Sunni Ali was a prince of the Songhai. He was being held as a political prisoner by the leader of the Mali Empire who ruled over the Songhai. In 1464, Sunni Ali escaped to the city of Gao and took control of the city. From the city of Gao, he established the Songhai Empire and began to conquer nearby regions including the important trading cities of Timbuktu and Djenne.

Askia Muhammad

In 1493, Askia Muhammad became the leader of the Songhai. He brought the Songhai Empire to its height of power and founded the Askia Dynasty. Askia Muhammad was a devout Muslim. Under his rule, Islam became an important part of the empire. He conquered much of the surrounding lands and took control of the gold and salt trade from the Mali Empire.

Government

The Songhai Empire was divided into five provinces each led by a governor. Under Askia Muhammad, all the governors, judges, and town chiefs were Muslims. The emperor had total power, but he also had ministers who ran different aspects of the empire for him. They also counseled the emperor on important issues.

The Songhai Culture

The Songhai culture became a blend of traditional West African beliefs and the religion of Islam. Daily life was often ruled by traditions and local customs, but the law of the land was based on Islam.

Slaves

The slave trade became an important part of the Songhai Empire. Slaves were used to help transport goods across the Sahara Desert to Morocco and the Middle East. Slaves were also sold to Europeans to work in Europe and the Americas. Slaves were usually captives of war captured during raids on nearby regions.

Fall of the Songhai Empire

In the mid-1500's the Songhai Empire began to weaken due to internal strife and civil war. In 1591, the Moroccan army invaded and captured the cities of Timbuktu and Gao. The empire collapsed and was divided up into a number of separate smaller states.

Interesting Facts about the Songhai Empire

- Sunni Ali became a legendary hero in Songhai folklore. He was often portrayed as having magical powers and was known as Sunni Ali the Great.
- If a prisoner of war had already converted to Islam before being captured, they could not be sold as a slave.
- A West African storyteller is called a griot. History was often passed down from generation to generation through the griots.
- The city of Timbuktu became an important city of trade and education during the Songhai Empire.

1. Where was the Songhai Empire located?

- a. Southern Africa
- b. Eastern Europe
- c. Western Africa
- d. South America
- e. Middle East

2. What river ran along much of the Songhai Empire?

- a. Congo River
- b. Niger River
- c. Nile River
- d. Amazon River
- e. Yangtze River

3. What leader first established the Songhai Empire?

- a. Shaka Zulu
- b. Mansa Musa
- c. Hannibal
- d. Sunni Ali
- e. Sundiata

4. True or False: The slave trade was an important part of the Songhai economy?
- a. TRUE
 - b. FALSE
5. What was the capital city of the Songhai Empire?
- a. Gao
 - b. Koumbi Saleh
 - c. Mogadishu
 - d. Addis Ababa
 - e. Tripoli
6. What religion played an important role in the Songhai government and culture?
- a. Taoism
 - b. Judaism
 - c. Buddhism
 - d. Christianity
 - e. Islam
7. What was one way to avoid being sold into slavery?
- a. Be captured in an enemy raid
 - b. Prove that you were a Christian
 - c. Convert to Islam
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
8. What was a griot?
- a. A governor of a province
 - b. A storyteller
 - c. A slave trader
 - d. A high ranking Islamic leader
 - e. An iron worker
9. What major geographical feature was located just to the north of the Songhai Empire?
- a. Sahara Desert
 - b. Pacific Ocean
 - c. Nile River
 - d. Andes Mountains
 - e. Mount Kilimanjaro
10. What empire ruled the region prior to the Songhai Empire?
- a. Egyptian Empire
 - b. Empire of Mali
 - c. Spanish Empire
 - d. Chinese Empire
 - e. Islamic Empire